

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



Today's Readings:

The Lord comes like the dawn. Hos 6:3-6
The faith of Abraham and Sarah. Rom 4:18-25
Jesus calls sinners. Mt 9:9-13

Next Week:

Compassion for the crowds
Ex 19:2-6; Rom 5:6-11;
Mt 9:36-10:8

In a nutshell

Jesus had a 'soft spot' for sinners. Today's Gospel shows him calling Matthew the tax-collector and reaching out to those considered the 'bad guys' of society, much to the dismay of the religious establishment. Jesus didn't just befriend people, he loved, healed and challenged them.



Freed to follow

'I can't think of a single sin to confess,' I said to the priest as I sat down to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. 'In fact, I really don't think I'm in the right frame of mind to receive this sacrament,' I added, hoping he would agree and suggest that I come back later.

'Well,' said this wise priest. 'How about we just take a moment to get in touch with God's great love.' In that prayerful pause a thought jumped to mind which I verbalised. 'I've been reading the lives of the saints lately, and I am repeatedly touched by their radical love for Christ.' (And now, to my surprise, I felt myself choking back tears.) 'As I read, I recognise myself. I know what they mean: I too love Jesus so deeply. But the trouble is, there are so many social pressures - even in church circles - that discourage me from really expressing the true depths of that relationship. It's as if I have to hide the real force of my love for Jesus and his Church because I'm afraid of being seen as 'over-the-top', 'uncool', or branded

as a 'conservative', 'old-fashioned'.

I continued to probe the issue until the priest summed up my dilemma with simple clarity. 'So perhaps what you're saying is that you are not living your faith as passionately as you are called to do. Whether out of fear or hurt, it's half-hearted.'

Bingo. From a vague starting point, we had succeeded in uncovering the wound and the sin had been named. How enlightening! How freeing! And, dare I say, how obvious.

I left the church enthused at the prospect of a fresh start, and equipped with a wonderful penance: 'Do something that will help to heal the hurt that is blocking your zeal for Christ and his Church.' Amen to that.

Real friends

A wealthy man fell into the habit of playing cards, seriously. He graduated to the company of millionaires who played for high stakes. For a while he held his own at the card table, but in the long run his associates had far too much money for him. They fleeced him. He even had to sell his mansion to pay his debts. A sociable man, he had a vast number of friends, but these all fell away as his money ran out. All but one: an old school mate. He and his wife stood by their friend in his misfortune. In fact, as they owned a block of flats they made one of the flats available to the now homeless man. To help him preserve what little self-esteem he might still have, they asked him to keep an eye on the block of flats. Which he did faithfully till he died. (PK)



Jesus heals

Think of an area of your life which is 'infected' by sin. This week, take a healing step.

E.G. If you are affected by:

- *A lack of a sense of the sacred*
Then: Gaze upon a newborn. Wonder at the sunset. Sit in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.
- *Selfish / Individualistic tendencies*
Pray for a sense of relationship
- *Materialism; consumerism*
You know that luxury item you were going to buy? Don't.
- *Reliance on opinion polls, rather than deep truths.*
Take the time to read a solid book or pamphlet that explains the Church's stance on a key issue

A healing Sacrament

This week, receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (Check your parish bulletin for Reconciliation times.)



RealPeople offers faith reflections from the saints and prophets of everyday life.

A publication of
The Story Source, © 1992-2002.

www.TeresaPirola.net