

# realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



## In today's readings:

Hospitality for a holy man. 2 Kings 4:8-11,14-16  
Dead to sin, alive for God. Romans 6:3-4,8-11  
Who welcomes you, welcomes me. Matthew 10:37-42

## Next week:

Come to me...  
Zechariah 9:9-10; Romans  
8:9,11-13; Matthew 11:25-30

## In a nutshell

Central to the message of today's gospel is the radical and absolute nature of Christian discipleship. Inevitably this will cause tensions, even within families. Yet the challenge remains: all our relationships must take their lead from our relationship with Christ. How does today's Gospel challenge and disturb you?



## A controversial figure

When I first met Neil I couldn't stand him. In fact, I would have avoided him completely except that it was impossible. He was a friend of the family and there was always some reason why our paths would cross.

Frankly, I thought he was an arrogant so-and-so. I resented his bluntness and the way he had an opinion on everything, especially social issues. He had a habit of making provocative statements, like: 'Anyone who wants to do something about world poverty should think twice before they renovate their kitchen.' And: 'It's not just what you give to the poor that counts but whether you count the poor among your circle of friends.'

'Stop sticking your nose into other people's business!' I snapped at him one day. 'If you're so concerned about social justice, go and sign up with the missionaries in South America!' (Of course, the fact that I had been thinking about renovating my own kitchen had

nothing to do with the force of my reaction!)

We argued vigorously on that occasion. Then, to the credit of us both, we apologised to each other and had a good laugh at ourselves. The ice was broken. The air was cleared. Dialogue was possible.

As time went on and we got to know each other better, my feelings about this unusual character began to change. I came to see his bluntness as a form of zeal for a better world, and his 'intrusive' statements as revealing rare insights into the way people tick. In fact, I recognise now that Neil was a prophetic kind of figure; a man whose sense of justice was not 'out there' but grounded in the practicalities of modern living. You could not stay 'neutral' around Neil. It was like he always drew a response. People loved him or hated him. I grew to love him. (Caroline)

## A challenge for our times

I was in a barber's shop getting a hair cut. Upon discovering I was a priest, the barber told me he was a Catholic and launched into a tirade of lament about the state of the Church. Ah, if only we had more priests. I have two sons in high school and there is not one religious man on staff. Well, how about encouraging your sons to be priests? I asked. Oh, no! he said. He wanted them to be doctors. He wanted grandchildren. He wasn't prepared to make that kind of sacrifice. Well then, I said, that's probably one reason why we're not getting more priests. (VC)



## church below the rooftops

### Think...Talk

Talk about some of the 'costs' of discipleship in terms of:

- relationships • money • time
- position/status • physical and psychological energy...

*'Anyone who welcomes you, welcomes me.'*

## From the diary of a hospital chaplain

Barbara, a young girl with an intellectual disability, has had a tracheotomy and is unable to talk or eat. I gave her a fifty cent crucifix that I had bought from Rome. It's touching to see just how much she treasures it. Her little hands reverently take hold of the crucifix with awe and sheer delight. Now, whenever I appear, her face lights up as she recognises me as the one who gave her this holy object. So beautiful to see. Almost other-worldly that she could treasure this so much. Our society reveres other icons. But this little one recognises what's important. (John)



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