

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

My God is irresistible! Jer 20:7-9
Be influenced by Christ, not the world. Rom 12:1-2
Straight talk from Jesus. Mt 16:21-27

Next week:

The power of Christian community.
Ezekiel 33:7-9; Romans 13:8-10;
Matthew 18:15-20

In a nutshell

As the time of his death draws closer, Jesus speaks to his disciples of the meaning of the cross. His words are disturbing, especially to Peter who remonstrates: 'This must not happen to you.' Jesus responds strongly: There is no room for compromise. There is no resurrection without the cross.



Lifestyle choices

At an international conference I met an Italian couple who for many years have been part of a Catholic movement that builds small communities of love inspired by the gospel. This couple struck me as being exceptionally prayerful, loving and generous. One day the husband related to me this story from their early years of marriage:

'My parents were uncomfortable with our church involvements. My mother accused us of "going all Protestant" because we gave so much attention to the scriptures. My father told me to stop fooling around and get serious with life because I spent a lot of time and energy helping the poor. Many of our friends and relatives said much the same.

'As years went by, I became a successful engineer. I built a beautiful new home which my wife and I filled with nice furniture. It was all ready for us to move in.

'Then one evening, as we prayed, we believed the Lord was calling us to a simpler lifestyle. So convinced

were we of this call that the next day we sold all our furniture and made arrangements to move into a simpler home. We knew it would go down badly with my parents, and it sure did. They cut us off completely. My father said that we were religious fanatics, that we had left the Church and he wasn't going to have anything to do with us.

We were both crying as we parted. We were terribly upset, and at the same time we had a certain sense of fulfilment. We could say to the Lord: "Now we are all yours." It was some years before my parents would speak to us again. Eventually we were able to be reconciled, but for a number of years our relationship was very strained.'

(RP)

Tell the story of someone who has put the gospel before his/her own comfort.

Following a dream

The year I undertook studies in childcare there was one solitary male in my course. You wouldn't believe the suspicion he faced because of his choice of career. This was the '90s. Against the backdrop of media headlines about pedophiles, rumours circulated on campus about this guy's intentions, his sexuality and so on. In actual fact he was a happily married man, a tradesman, with a dream to open a child care centre. I thought it was great that he was so committed to making his dreams come true.

(Anne)



Take up your cross

When I think of the cross in daily life, I think of aspects of parenting. As a mother, I recall years of sleepless nights walking the baby or anxiously awaiting a teenage son's return home after midnight.

I think, too, of those who would love to have children but cannot. They are spared the cross of parenting, and yet embrace a different kind of cross; a 'death to self' which means letting go of precious dreams... (Maria)
Continue this reflection from your own experience of life and love. How have you seen people embrace the cross?

Think . Talk

In what way has the cross been present in your life through:

- uninvited suffering?
- difficult personal/lifestyle decisions?
- following your conscience in the face of opposition?



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

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