

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

A stern warning to priests. Mal 1:14-2:2,8-10
We offered you the Good News and our lives as well.
1 Thes 2:7-9,13
Practice what you preach. Mt 23:1-12

Next week: A parable about
being prepared.
Wis 6:12-16; 1 Thes 4:13-18;
Mt 25:1-13

In a nutshell

With Christian leadership comes an awesome responsibility. Self-interest has no place. Leadership involves a radical humility; indeed, a willingness to suffer and die for the sake of those entrusted to one's care. In whatever leadership role we find ourselves we must take the words and witness of Jesus to heart.



Seeds of leadership

'What is one of the most noble things you could do in your life?' This was the question I had assigned my sixth grade students and now I was reading their responses. As I read Jamie's words, my skin felt clammy. 'I could choose to die,' he had written.

With today's statistics on youth suicide I was immediately worried and decided to seek advice from my school principal, a wise and thoughtful woman. She suggested I talk individually with a number of students and include Jamie among them. As Jamie and I faced each other I was praying for guidance and doing my best to calm my nerves.

'Jamie, you had some interesting responses too,' I began. 'This comment here: I choose to die. What did you mean by that?'

Jamie's face lit up. 'Oh yeah,' he said. 'I've thought about that a lot. It's a big choice. I'm not sure if I could actually do it.'

'Uh huh. Do what... exactly?'

'Like, I reckon Jesus thought a lot

about giving his life for others...so much that he was prepared to die. I reckon soldiers who go to war have to think about the same things.'

My exhalation of relief was almost audible, followed by a sense of wonder at the maturity of an eleven year old. Jamie's focus was not the dark thought of suicide but the challenge of giving one's life for others. Here he was reflecting on issues I myself had never contemplated. (Nathan)

Find simple ways to affirm a child in his or her capacity for Christian leadership.

Everyday heroes

Our suburb is still recovering from the damage done by hail storms. Recently a ticker tape parade was held for all the CES workers. As I stood in the parade I couldn't help but feel total admiration for these volunteers who have helped so many people in times of disaster - like bush fires, the Thredbo disaster, and not least my own family when our roof was decimated by hail stones. I thought back to their many gestures of kindness and generosity. I came to this country sixteen years ago and I'm convinced that Australians have a 'look after your neighbour' attitude. (MM. 1999)

Think . Talk

Who is a role model of Christian leadership to you?

In what way would you like your own leadership style to be influenced by this person?

Pray

Father, may we cherish and empower those you have entrusted to our care. Amen.



church below the rooftops

Humble yourself and you will be exalted (Mt 23:12)

I am old now, but half a lifetime ago I complained to the Lord that 'I have no cross' - no sickness, no rebellious children, no wayward spouse, no debt-collectors badgering me, no argumentative neighbours! Into my heart came four little words that changed my life: Your cross is love. The Lord didn't have to spell it out, I knew what he meant: my resentments, bouts of anger, selfishness - it would not be an easy path to overcome these deeply ingrained patterns.

So I took these vices to the Confessional at regular intervals and, by degrees, the pent-up hurts of years gradually dissolved in my heart, giving place to Love Himself.

So now, at the end of my life, I can look back with gratitude to the Divine Wisdom who uttered those precious words: 'Your cross is love.' (Lizzie May)



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

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