

# realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



## In today's readings:

Goodness shines through. Prv 31:10-13,19-20,30-31  
The Lord comes like a thief in the night. 1 Thes 5:1-6  
Use your talents to grow and give. Mt 25:14-30

## Next week:

Christ the King.  
Ezek 34:11-12,15-17; 1 Cor  
15:20-26,28; Mt 25:31-46

## In a nutshell

The body of Christ is a complex interplay of diverse gifts and talents. Such gifts must not be wasted, they are to be used for building up the Church into a vibrant, Spirit-filled community. As today's parable of the talents suggests, use of gifts involves the courage to take responsibility and take risks.



## Gifts in action

When fourteen year old Amanda Ralph expressed her dream to fill a jumbo jet full of supplies for the Kosovo refugees, many said it couldn't be done. But Amanda persisted and, with the help of friends, family, the media, the business community and the support of her school, *Wings of Hope* became a massive campaign to help the refugees and others in need, within Australia and abroad.

The school hall became a warehouse for three weeks where many volunteers worked for long hours sorting, packing and labelling boxes full of warm coats, jumpers, warm pants, baby things, toys, shoes, blankets and food. The final count came to 780 huge boxes of clothing, 160 boxes of food, 500 boxes of personal hygiene items, 30 boxes of bottled water, \$25,000 in funds. Amanda had this to say:

'The entire project has been an indescribable experience. I learnt more about life, the business world and human compassion than I thought I would during the course

of my life. It restored my faith in humanity and proved that no hand is too small to make an imprint, especially when you have the support of friends, family and the community behind you!

'So many people, who didn't have anything in the value of gold to give, came and helped with the packing and sorting. One lady decided to do a neighbourhood collection for us, then found out the next day her grandson had been killed in an accident. She continued the collection despite her own loss, because it was the kind of thing he would have done. There is no price that can be placed upon the unconditional love that this project drew out. This is the spirit of a country we should be proud of!'

A teacher from Amanda's school said: 'In a career as a teacher certain special things stand out. *Wings of Hope* will definitely be one of those things.'

*What gifts and talents lie dormant in our own home, school, parish or neighbourhood?*

## Enjoy God's gifts!

I admire Aiden. We were school mates last year. He was never a 'top of the class' kind of student—'Mr Average' he called himself—but it's never really bothered him. He enjoys life and has put a lot of effort into using his gifts well: sports, organisational skills, and a talent for getting along with people. This year he was offered a traineeship at the football stadium and is enjoying it immensely. 'I guess Mum was right,' he said to me. 'If you do what you enjoy you will excel.'



## Gifts in action

Being a male primary school teacher in a female dominated part of the profession is an interesting experience. ('Boys can't be teachers!' one of the kindy girls said to me on the first day I started work at a new school.)

As the only male on staff I notice how the children will respond to me differently. For instance, the Year 5/6 boys are more likely to come up to me and talk sport. This sports connection has proved an invaluable asset on occasions. One boy was having trouble grasping multiplication. So instead of saying to him, 'What's six times four?' I would say: 'If Ricky Stuart scored six tries how many points did he score?' He came up with the answer immediately. (Ian, 1999.)

## Think . Talk . Pray

Do a 'stocktake' of all the gifts you observe on a given day:

i) at home ii) at school iii) in your workplace iv) in your parish v) in your neighbourhood.

Lord, we marvel at the diverse and creative ways you are at work in your people!



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

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