

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Your goodness will dispel all shadow. Isaiah 58:7-10
I rely on the power of the Spirit. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5
This is a light that cannot be hidden. Matthew 5:13-16

Next week:

Something new.
Sirach 15:15-20; 1 Corinthians
2:6-10; Matthew 5:17-37

In a nutshell

Today's Gospel contains an affirmation and a challenge. Followers of Jesus are called 'light to the world,' 'salt of the earth.' Through their good works and faithful witness people will recognise the presence of God. If they hide their faith they will be as ineffectual as blocked light and salt that has lost its flavour.



Still shining

Amanda, a nine year old student in my class, came to ask if she could raise money for a special cause. The funds would go towards helping a baby in hospital who suffers from a life-threatening disease. 'Amanda, I'm very proud of your initiative. Of course you can raise funds,' I said.

During the next few days Amanda rallied a group of friends and together they set about selling cakes and conducting a raffle. In all they raised over \$200.

I was intrigued as to what motivated Amanda to set out to help this child. 'I want to help her Miss 'cos she might die and not know that other people care about her,' was her answer. 'Your parents must be very proud of you, Amanda,' I said. She made no comment.

Later that afternoon, I noticed Amanda's mother parked near the school waiting for her daughter. I walked across to share with her my admiration for Amanda's efforts. To my surprise the woman was rather tight-lipped and seemed reluctant

to talk. I persisted a moment more, praising Amanda for her efforts and as I did so her mother began to cry. As she shifted her sunglasses I was horrified to notice that her face was bruised and one eye quite swollen.

'Yes, Amanda is an amazing girl,' said this hurting woman. 'She has such a strong spirit. I know she will make a difference in the world. We need more people like Amanda.'

At that moment Amanda came running over. She tried to appear unaware of her mother's condition.

Shakily I walked back to my classroom, trying to order my thoughts as to how best respond to the situation which had just presented itself. One thing was clear: Amanda was an extraordinary girl, a shining light in a storm of pain. (Rachel)

Describe someone who is 'light to the world'. Thank this person for his/her courage.

The light within

A participant at an international Faith & Light conference shares:
At the conference I met three people, each with disabilities, who moved me to tears by their gentle witness. I felt that Jesus was showing me, through them, that there is more to people than their appearance. What really counts is not how one looks but to discover the inner beauty that shines within. As someone with a physical disability who has always envied bodily perfection, I realised that I, too, could be a source of encouragement and inspiration to others by simply being myself. (Phil)

Gift of love

A parish priest tells this story:

At Mass one Sunday I was encouraging my parishioners to attend a weekend retreat specifically designed for married couples. Later a number of couples signed up.

Then June approached me. 'Father, I'm interested in this weekend you were speaking about...' she began. My heart sank. June was a widow. I presumed she had misunderstood my spiel and I braced myself for the awkwardness of the next moment as I had to explain she was ineligible.

'No, no,' June laughed seeing my discomfort. 'I don't want to go on the weekend, I would like to pay for a couple to go. A lot of young couples are struggling these days and a bit of assistance might help them to sign up. Besides, it's just the way Frank would have helped out if he was alive.'

I was touched by her thoughtful generosity and greatness of heart. June and Frank's gift of marital love was lighting the way even now. Love is indeed stronger than death.

Pray

Lord, make us shine with your light!



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

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