

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

The choice before us: life or death. Sirach 15:15-20
Our faith rests on the power of God. 1 Cor 2:6-10
Jesus has come to bring us to wholeness. Mt 5:17-37

Next week:

First Sunday of Lent.
Gn 2:7-9; 3:1-7; Rom 5:12-19;
Mt 4:1-11

In a nutshell

The message of Jesus Christ reaches beyond religious precepts into the very heart of each person. In today's Gospel Jesus challenges his listeners to embrace a deep faith commitment. Outward observance of the law must be fuelled by the true spirit of the law which is always an extension of God's merciful love.



Making more of Sunday

In 1998 the Pope released *Dies Domini*, a document about keeping the Lord's Day holy. For Christians, Sunday is more than 'a day off', it is an invitation to refresh the inner spirit and revisit the 'big picture' of what life is all about.

'The Pope's letter *Dies Domini* was great timing for us. Just a couple of months before it came out, my wife and I had been talking about setting aside Sunday as a day of 'being at home with the Lord.' Our lives were becoming so busy that we felt we needed to be more 'present' to each other. So we decided to keep Sundays as free as possible and just relax at home, available to chat with our children or with friends who might call around.

The first Sunday we tried it was really weird. It was a shock not to be racing out to the shops or madly working at the computer. We sat there with withdrawal symptoms! It's a lifestyle change which doesn't come easily, but we're working at it.' (John)

The following comments emerged in a practical discussion on ways to keep the Lord's Day holy.

'Mass is usually squeezed into my weekend without preparation. I would like to be more proactive - perhaps reflect on the Sunday readings beforehand.'

'We rarely visit my grandmother's grave. It would be nice to do this one Sunday - perhaps share some memories and prayers at her grave.'

'A Sunday stroll around the markets - that's what I enjoy.'

'On one Sunday a month we serve meals at a refuge for homeless people.'

'A simple chore like dusting the furniture can be fun if you tackle it with the company of your flatmates and some loud boppy music.'

'If something in the Mass bulletin touches me, like a prayer or a story, I keep it and think about it during the day.'



Old traditions, brand new

In our parish there is a practice of passing a statue of Mary from home to home. Each week parishioners pray the rosary at the home that hosts the statue.

One day I was asked if I would host the statue and the rosary. 'Uh, okay,' I said. I can't say I was thrilled. I associated Marian statues and rosaries with the 'old fashioned' church of my childhood

and not all the memories were positive. Still, as a parishioner I was prepared to co-operate.

What I wasn't prepared for was the reaction of my children. To my amazement they were thrilled at the idea! They looked forward to seeing the statue all week and were so excited when it finally arrived. 'Look, Mum, it's here, it's here!'

I was touched by the joy they found in this age-old tradition and by the way they treated the whole affair with such reverence, even bringing out some special family symbols which were dear to my heart to place near the statue.

All this was an eye-opener to me. My children, free of the 'baggage' that I carried, seemed to have no trouble embracing the 'old' traditions, and with such a fresh spirit. In their eyes these were not 'old' things, they were completely new. (Julie)

Think . Pray . Act

What 'old' Christian tradition are you ready to discover in a new way? Lord, may our faith bring 'tired' rituals to life.



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

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