

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



Today's Readings:

Do not oppress the stranger. Ex 22:20-26
You embraced the gospel. 1 Thes 1:5-10
Laws of love. Mt 22:34-40

Next Week:

Be humble and truthful.
Mal 1:14-2:2,8-10;
1 Thes 2:7-9,13; Mt 23:1-12

In a nutshell

'Master, which is the greatest commandment?' Jesus' responds to the question by drawing on not one, but two teachings firmly embedded in his Jewish tradition: love of God and love of neighbour. Love of neighbour is not a lesser priority down the list; it is right up there at the level of loving God.



Love your neighbour

I was walking through the city streets one afternoon. I had just been to see *Molokai*, a beautiful film about Saint Damien, the missionary priest who cared for lepers. Perhaps it was because I had been sensitised by the film, but I noticed a homeless man on the footpath attempting, without success, to get to his feet. At first I walked past him. Then I stopped and hesitated. Part of me—that part which held fast to my Christian values—wanted to go to the man's aid. Another part of me—that selfish part—wanted to keep walking, afraid to become involved, to be delayed and to risk missing my bus.

Well, guess which part won out? I went over to the man and helped him to his feet. I could smell alcohol on his breath, but he was quite sober, sensible and civil. 'I've got a bad leg,' he told me. And, sure enough, he had clean bandages on one leg.

At that moment, I saw my bus sail past.

'Can you help me to get something

to eat,' said the man, adding that he had his own money. So with him leaning on me, we made our way to a nearby cafe.

A waiter came out to meet us—or rather, to intercept us. There was no way he was going to let a homeless guy with alcohol on his breath into this restaurant. I tried to reassure him that the man had money, that he would cause no trouble, that he just wanted to sit in the outdoor area and have a quiet meal. But we got nowhere.

Leaving the restaurant, we walked further along until we reached a more modest looking cafe. There the man was allowed to be seated. He chose a sandwich from the selection and paid for it. I left him there, happily enjoying his snack, and caught the next bus home. (CM)

A talking point

The five year old looked quizzically at me, her parish priest.

'Father, have you got any children?' she asked.

'No,' I said.

'That's unfair!' she replied.

'Why is it unfair?'

'Well, it means you can't be happy.'

'What makes you think I'm not happy?'

'Well,' she said confidently. 'My Mum told me that the happiest times in her life were getting married and having children.'

I smiled. 'I don't have children,' I said. 'But I'm still happy.'

She seemed content with this response.

What lessons about loving are our children learning from us?



Prayerful love

Senior students from my parish mostly attend one of two schools, each about half an hour away. As the Higher School Certificate approaches, parishioners are invited to take from a basket an envelope containing the name of a Year 12 student from the parish. During the exam period, we are encouraged to remember that student in our prayers and perhaps to send a card or make a gesture of support. It's a simple way of reminding the student—and all of us—that we are a community even though we head in many different directions each day. (TE)

Think . Talk . Act

What loving gestures from others do I really appreciate?

What gesture of support and love will I offer someone today?

As an Australian, what gesture of love can I offer the people of a neighbouring country?



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