

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

A song of joy and freedom. Isaiah 61:1-2,10-11
Be happy, pray constantly, give thanks to God.
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
Witness to the light! John 1:6-8,19-28

Next week:

The annunciation.
2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-12,14,16;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

In a nutshell

In today's Gospel John the Baptist points not to himself but to Christ. Jesus is the one in whom hope, healing and liberation find their deepest meaning. Our hope is in Jesus Christ. With faith we look forward to his presence - in the events of today and in his coming at the end of time.



Bearing witness to Christ can be as simple as allowing our friends to see our own desires and struggles to practice our faith.

Witness!

Sandra, a young mother in her thirties was at lunch with six other young mums. They were all girlfriends from her school days, catching up on the news of the last few years. Somehow the conversation moved to the topic of choosing schools for their children. It was in this context that Sandra mentioned she had been talking to a parishioner about this topic last Sunday after Mass...

A stunned silence descended upon the group.

'You mean you actually go to Mass?' said one friend incredulously.

'Guilty as charged,' said Sandra lightly, as if confessing to a dreadful crime.

'You mean...every week?' said another in a mystified tone.

'Well, maybe not every week. I'm not perfect. But I do try to go every week.'

'And you take all your *kids*?' came yet another question.

'Yeah! We usually try to go together as a family.'

By now it was Sandra who was mystified. I mean after all, she didn't see herself as 'the religious one' of the group. During her schooling she had hardly been the candidate for the religion prize. And the last twenty years had been anything but smooth sailing, her faith having survived more than a fair share of life's struggles and heartaches. There had been times when she had found herself so angry at God... but at least they were still on talking terms.

Now here she was emerging as the committed Catholic, giving her friends plenty to think about.

The witness of our children

First Reconciliation is always a special celebration in our parish. We have learnt over the years to allow extra time for this event. Invariably the children come forward, nervous and excited. Then, in the pause after the children have received the sacrament, the parents start to come forward. They see their child receive Reconciliation, something niggles away at them, and they respond. So it's a case of the children witnessing to their parents. (RC)



church below the rooftops

Imagine...

You are producer of a new TV Show called Witness. In your heart of hearts you know that the greatest witness one can give is to the love of God... How do you design the show? What stories will you seek? Who will you interview?

Prayer Prompt

Who has been your greatest support and role model in the Christian life? As you listen to a popular song such as *Wind Beneath My Wings* (Bette Midler) pray a prayer of thanksgiving for this person's influence on your life.

Think...Talk... Act

How does God surprise you in unexpected events and people?

This week, start a 'grateful' list. Jot down all the blessings of your life. You may like to start a family grateful list. Attach it to the 'fridge door and invite everyone to add to it during the week.

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from the saints and prophets
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