

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



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

John the Baptist was sent to prepare the people of Israel for the coming of Christ. Today's Gospel speaks of the fiery prophet as 'a witness for the light'. During this season of Advent, may our words and actions shed light on the essence of the Christmas message: *God is with us.*



A tribute to ordinary people who 'witness to the light.'

Larry's story

I first met Larry at 3 am on a cold and wintry morning. A drug addict making a brave attempt to kick the habit, Larry had reached back to some vague memories of his Catholic upbringing, and knocked at the presbytery door where I was assistant priest.

That was the beginning of our acquaintance as I walked with him for part of his precarious, yet somehow graced journey. From detox unit to the courts, from AA to the employment office, over time I saw this courageous man gradually recover his dignity and build a new life for himself. For one who had fallen so far and so often, I was surprised by his willingness to get up again and to keep trying.

What struck me was that here was a man honestly trying to change. Inspiring, really. I see so many people who remain stuck in their ways because they are afraid to admit their mistakes and

seek help; afraid to step out into the unknown. Larry was a great witness to me, simply because of his openness to change, his preparedness to 'make the move', and to keep on moving. (Paul)

Kindergarten prophet

'Write something about Christmas' was my instruction to the kinder class as I handed out a stenciled sheet displaying a Santa Claus. The results were predictable: misspelt words about presents and lollies scrawled next to multi-coloured Santas. But Matthew was different. No Santa could distract him from the message that clearly came to his mind: 'Its Jezus birfdy' he wrote alongside a hand-drawn nativity scene. (Bev)

This week: take time to notice examples of quiet, prophetic witness.

Give joy!

I dropped in to see Maureen, an elderly parishioner whose husband is in hospital. One look at her face told all: she missed him terribly. Although pressed for time, how could I not offer to drive her to see him? (Her age and health made public transport out of the question.)

What a privilege to see her husband's face light up as she walked through the door of his hospital room. Their love of fifty years of marriage seemed to spill over before my eyes. I felt so enriched by the experience. There is no joy like giving joy to others. (John)



Think . Talk

Think back over the past week:

In what way did you see someone 'witnessing to the light'?

Read and reflect on today's first reading from Isaiah (61:1-2;10-11): *The Spirit of the Lord has been given me...*

In what ways have you:

- been anointed (blessed, chosen)?
- been sent, missioned?
- brought good news to the poor?
- soothed a broken heart?
- freed a prisoner?
- drawn attention to God's presence?
- rejoiced in God's love?

Share some of your reflections with a friend.

Pray for peace

What burden weighs on your heart? Bring your heart to Jesus and receive his peace.

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A publication of
The Story Source

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