

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



Today's readings:

Speak to my people's hearts, says God.
Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11
While you wait, live holy lives. 2 Peter 3:8-14
Prepare a way for the Lord! Mark 1:1-8

Next week: Witness to the light.

Isaiah 61:1-2,10-11;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24;
John 1:6-8,19-28

In a nutshell

'Prepare a way for the Lord. Make his paths straight,' says the prophet crying out in the wilderness. As we listen to today's Gospel let us ask ourselves: In what ways will I be that voice this Christmas? In a world suffering division and negativity, how will I be a sign of peace and hope?



Prophets of hope

Hospitality

A beautiful Christmas story I have heard is the story of the doctor who places a sign in the waiting area of his surgery in December saying: 'My wife and I will be hosting a Christmas lunch and all my patients are cordially invited...' What a generous act of hospitality and a way of sharing the Christmas spirit with others, especially those who may have nowhere else to go on Christmas Day. (MC)

Courage to speak up

Mum and Dad have always been a steady witness to me as to what it means to live your Christian faith in everyday life. I remember one holiday period they went on an organised tour to Sydney. The tour included a number of city sights, among them a notorious night club in Kings Cross, Sydney's red light district. Mum and Dad took exception to this. Surely this was not entertainment but exploiting the pain of less fortunate people,

they said. Their objection released a chain reaction in the group. A number of people felt the same way. The end result was that a harbour cruise replaced the Kings Cross stop. Interestingly, it was the harbour cruise that turned out to be the highlight of the tour. (Phil)

True friendship

When we were younger, we saw tensions in our friends' marriages but out of sensitivity we didn't do or say anything. Then they broke up. And we were left thinking: 'If only we had reached out. Maybe we could have helped.' So now, if we know a couple is in trouble, we will at least ask them, 'Is there anything we can do to help?' If they don't want to talk about it, OK that's their decision. But we believe we must at least be trying to reach out. (M&J)

Christmas connections

Three weeks before Christmas I brought out the Christmas tree and left it, unadorned, until the little four-year-old next door was ready to decorate it with me. Opportunity presented itself and Rebecca assumed her responsibility with due seriousness. As she placed the little candy sticks on the tree, she enquired who was going to eat them. I told her that I hoped to see herself and her brother, and the other children in the units on Christmas day, and they could come in and take one. This made sense to Rebecca: 'That's because we are your friends,' she said. And I agreed! (Jill)



Think . Talk

- Share stories of people who have been 'prophets' of hope and peace in a troubled world.
- 'Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight!' is the cry of the prophet in today's Gospel. What is one 'path' in your life that needs straightening? (What lifestyle habit or attitude is blocking God's grace?)
- How might you make a fresh start this Advent?

Pray . Act

For people who have lost a loved one, Christmas can be a sad time. Think of someone you might visit, phone, write or e-mail to say: 'Thinking of you. Keeping you in my prayers.'

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