

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

God's promise. Sirach 3:2-6,12-14 or Gn 15:1-6, 21:1-3
Family of faith. Col 3:12-21 or Heb 11:8,11-12,17-19
Presentation of Jesus in the temple. Lk 2:22-40

Next week:

Epiphany Sunday.
Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3,5-6;
Mt 2:1-12

In a nutshell

In today's Gospel we hear how, as faithful Jews, Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the Temple 'to present him to the Lord' according to the religious requirements of their day. There the figures of Simeon and Anna give witness that Jesus is the saving presence of God. Salvation is described as both gift to Israel and 'light' to the nations.



After Christmas Day

It was three days after Christmas Day. I was waiting to be served at the chemist. An elderly woman was being served ahead of me. 'How was Chrissy?' the chemist asked cheerfully. 'Terrible,' replied the woman. 'The worst ever. There was just me and him.' (The him obviously referred to her husband.)

I had an immediate urge to speak with this woman. My heart ached for her. I wanted to share with her a new vision, new possibilities. I wanted to tell her that my wife and I had experienced our very first Christmas dinner as a twosome. Our children were travelling on the other side of the globe and, without other relatives near, this Christmas had been a very 'small' affair - just the two of us. But what a memorable occasion. Low on numbers, but huge on grace!

We had prepared a traditional baked dinner with the works, nothing was spared. As we sat down together, we had prayed an extended prayer. It was a special

moment. We both felt a powerful presence. The memories of our parents and relatives who have gone before us filled us with a warmth and love that gave spontaneous praise to God.

What some would consider a very ordinary, low-key Christmas turned out to be one filled with joy. I wanted to step forward and share my experience with the woman who stood at the counter with the chemist, but how? How do you share a gift almost beyond words? (Vic)

Think about it

- How would you have responded in such a situation?
- How can you share some of your Christmas spirit with those who lack joy?

'How was Christmas?' Each time you ask the question, really listen to the heart of the respondent.

Signs of growth

I was part of a group of men who initiated a 'Fathers and Sons' program in our parish. I had asked a number of senior people to pray for our endeavour. Gwen was one of those people.

On the day of the program, Gwen came to my door. 'I've made a candle for your group,' she said holding out her handwork. 'I've decorated it with the bush environment. I want you to tell the boys what each symbol means.' She then outlined her choice of decorations and what each signified.

As we began our program that evening, I was able to repeat Gwen's

words:

'The bark is a sign that as we grow, we leave things behind. Sometimes we leave behind what we thought we needed most. If you look closely at the leaves, you will notice they have different shades of green—we are each colourful and different. The gum nut seeds are signs of hope that fall out of sight only to burst into life when you least expect it.'



church below the rooftops

Think . Talk . Act

- Am I attentive to God's presence in the ordinary things of family and community life?
- What is one thing I treasure about those who are family to me?
- What is one area in which we need help and healing?
- What action might flow from my reflections?

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