

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Saul enters the Church. Acts 9:26-31

Love is more than mere words. 1 John 3:18-24

Make your home in me. John 15:1-8

Next week:

No greater love.

Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48;

1 John 4:7-10; John 15:9-17

In a nutshell

Today's Gospel reminds us that our Christian lives will only ever be as fruitful to the extent to which we remain united with Jesus and his body, the Church. Union with Jesus is not a static thing. As long as we are connected to 'the vine', we will always be growing and developing in our relationship with God.



Staying faithful to our Christian values amidst the pressures of contemporary society can be a real challenge! This story highlights one simple, practical example of faithfulness.

A faithful man

Friday night. The music blared, the crowd swelled, the party rocked and I just couldn't help noticing the cute guy standing over there. He was good looking, athletic and had a great smile. There was something different about him, too. He was obviously part of all the social fun and yet, in another sense, he wasn't quite entering into it. While his mates were frantically chatting up or dancing with every girl in sight, he stood back looking on, seeming content to just take it easy and converse quietly. Which intrigued me all the more. Mmmm. I sent out a few feelers among the singles' grapevine. Who is he? What's his name? No one seemed to know, but already a couple of girlfriends were working on my case. As I passed him on the way to the bar I threw

him a 'Next dance, okay?!' over my shoulder. He gave a friendly, surprised smile but other than that - no vibes. Then word came through. He's married. His wife's a friend of so and so's...visiting relatives interstate. Oh well. Let that one go. Plenty more fish in the sea...

Later I reflected back on the incident and found myself quietly impressed by this man's presence that night. With hindsight one could say (as we did): here was a guy who knew how to be faithful. He exuded attractiveness but he wasn't sending out any conflicting messages. In the midst of a sea of hormonally charged singles his heart was taken and it 'showed'. I never did get to know his name. And he will never know that he became the subject of a church bulletin. But I guess the gospel is often like that: quiet, unnoticed, ordinary acts of fidelity.

Make it a daily habit: Pray for the grace of perseverance in faith and love.

Think...Talk

- Name some of the relationships that are channels of God's grace in your life.
- The story above highlights a practical example of being 'faithful', of staying connected to the relationships which give one life. Share other examples of fidelity; e.g., being faithful to Sunday Mass even when you are not 'in the mood.'
- How does one stay 'connected' to loved ones who have died?

Mrs Jamison

'I pray every day for perseverance in the faith,' said my elderly neighbour Mrs Jamison. At the time I was puzzled. Why would such a lovely woman who had been devoted to her family and her Catholic faith all her life, a daily communicant and a member of the Rosary Society who still gave money to the missions, be worried about losing her faith?! Surely at age 90, with a track record like that, you can start to take some things for granted.

Ten years later I began to appreciate the wisdom of this holy woman. In the zeal of my youth I never doubted that my faith would carry me through for life. I was committed and I was prepared to make that commitment every day. Or so I thought. With the passage of time and the strain of trials I am more conscious now of my own vulnerability. The key to faith is not my own efforts but God's grace. Its not self-reliant strength but my utter dependence on God that will keep me faithful to the end... Which is why - whether I am 19 or 90 - I must never cease praying for the gift of faith. Thank you, Mrs Jamison, for your wisdom and witness. (Anna)



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

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