

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Elijah finds new strength. 1 Kings 19:4-8
Walk in love. Ephesians 4:30-5:2
I am the living bread from heaven. John 6:41-51

Next week:

Eat this bread and live forever
Proverbs 9:1-6; Ephesians 5:15-20;
John 6:51-58

In a nutshell

In today's Gospel Jesus speaks of himself as 'the bread of life'. Despite the grumblings of many of his listeners, he boldly calls them to believe in the gift of eternal life. To have faith in Jesus is to be drawn by the Father. It involves divine initiative and a personal decision.



A Lifegiving bus ride

As a eucharistic people nourished by Jesus, the bread of life, how can we give life to others?

I was travelling home on a crowded bus. A man with an obvious physical disability boarded the bus, sat directly facing me and attempted to strike up a conversation. His speech was slurred and, perhaps because of his speech impediment, he spoke very loudly. He was saying something about it being faster to walk than catch the bus.

I felt quite awkward in his presence. I desperately wanted to respond to him as I would any other friendly person but I felt embarrassed and self-conscious, as if my response was on show for the whole bus to judge my reactions. The woman sitting next to me came to my rescue.

'Oh, do you like walking? I love walking,' she said enthusiastically. 'Where do you walk?'

The man responded just as readily. 'And do you have good walking shoes?' asked the woman. The man continued to respond and the two

chatted for about 15 minutes. It was a warm and engaging conversation. As they talked and laughed together I noticed the whole atmosphere around them become lighter and more friendly. Fellow commuters smiled supportively and some looked as if they were on the verge of joining in.

What a gift! I thought to myself. I was filled with admiration for this woman who displayed no sign of discomfort and didn't miss a beat as she reached out to the man, treating him with the dignity he deserved, simply having a conversation. I greatly admired, too, this man who was not afraid to be the catalyst for a spontaneous community experience. (Claire)

Giving life: a parable

On her daily walk my grandmother noticed a row of trees that had been freshly planted in her street by the local council. The trouble was, after planting no one bothered to water them. She notified the council and spoke to neighbours but no action ensued.

In the months ahead she sadly watched all the trees die. All except one. That was the one she cared for. On her walk each day she carried a jug of water from her home and poured it at the base of the young tree.

All this happened 15 years ago and now that tree stands tall and sturdy, giving shade and beauty to a corner of the neighbourhood.



Lifegiving neighbours

My husband was working night shift on the evening our toddler jumped off the bed and cracked her head. I was on my own and breast-feeding our baby when it happened. It was a frightening episode because I wasn't sure how serious her injuries were. In response to my phone call for help, my neighbour, who is a committed Christian and a doctor, came immediately. He was there within minutes, along with his wife who came 'just in case you need some help with the baby.' Fortunately, all turned out well for my child. I was deeply grateful for their display of practical concern. People like this show us what the world can be. (Louise)

As you receive Jesus in the Eucharist this Sunday be conscious of this precious gift of life and the call to be lifegiving.



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

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