

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Spirit-filled prophets. Numbers 11:25-29
Material riches don't last. James 5:1-6
Jesus teaches his disciples. Mark 9:38-43,45,47-48

Next week:

What God has joined, no one must divide. Genesis 2:18-24; Hebrews 2:9-11; Mark 10:2-16

In a nutshell

Sin, the weakening or severing of one's relationship with God, is regarded with utmost seriousness in today's Gospel. It is so important not to sin that even situations which open themselves to the possibility of sin must be avoided. This may require self-sacrifice on the part of the Christian, but nothing is worth risking one's relationship with God.



Witness

Some years ago I heard a story about the powerful consequences of a young nurse's determination to live out her faith. In her mother's words this is what happened:

When my daughter, a nurse, went to Sydney she began work in the operating theatre of a public hospital. She did not realise that abortions took place in public hospitals in NSW. She was told that she had to assist in these which were performed by a doctor on Thursday mornings.

She refused because this was against her religious beliefs. The nurse in charge told her she would be sacked if she didn't comply. She rang me for advice. We began to pray. After consulting her parish priest, she decided to speak to the head of the hospital and tell him she would not take part in abortions, even if it cost her her job. She was told that she would not be forced to do anything against her beliefs and the nurse in charge of the theatre was told not to roster her on Thursday mornings.

Because she was now free on Thursday mornings, my daughter began teaching RE in the state school. She got her prayer group to form a prayer chain every Thursday morning. One would start the prayer and each would ring the next when their prayer time was up. So there was continuous prayer while abortions were being performed. There was a gradual change in the doctor who performed the abortions. About six months later, he started counselling his patients, telling them the consequences of abortion. About 12 to 18 months later, he became a committed Christian and stopped doing abortions. His practice, which he thought would fall away without the abortions actually flourished. Intercessory prayer is a powerful weapon, so I urge you to pray often. (PW)

Making memories

One family has found a creative way to improve on their Sunday gatherings...

My family used to have that obligatory Sunday lunch at Grandma's. But family tensions would come into play and we would all end up irritable with each other. Now we have a new routine. On Sundays we take Grandma down to the local beachside park. We sit in the sun for a couple of hours and sip coffee while the kids run around and my husband and my brothers spend a macho half hour plucking up the courage to go for a swim (in very cold water!). It's better for Grandma because we're all much more relaxed with her. Instead of

being a 'duty', our time with her is a pleasure, and we are creating wonderful family memories in the process. (JC)



Choices

When I was much younger I made a conscious decision that, at that stage of Saturday night when all my football mates were switching to the bourbon, I would stick with the beer. That might not sound all that heroic to some people! But believe me, when you're young and the peer group rules, it's hard to make those sorts of choices. At least, for me, it was a significant step in the right direction. Later, in the early years of my marriage I deliberately stopped going to after-work drinks altogether. I realized it was part of a 'singles lifestyle' whereas now I was married and had other priorities. (VAC)

What tough decisions have you made as part of your commitment to follow Christ?

Is there an area of your present life which needs reviewing in the light of your Christian values?



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

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