

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

The Lord defends his flock. Jeremiah 23:1-6
Christ, our peace, unites us. Ephesians 2:13-18
Sheep without a shepherd. Mark 6:30-34

Next week:

Five loaves, two fish
2 Kings 4:42-44; Ephesians 4:1-6;
John 6:1-15

In a nutshell

In the bible the term 'shepherdless sheep' is frequently used to indicate the people's needs for guidance, nourishment, protection and healing. In today's Gospel a compassionate Jesus teaches the crowd about their relationship with God. May our own hearts find rest and new life in God's Word.



The arrest

'You can do your job and still show compassion,' says the police officer who tells this story:

My partner and I were called to the airport. A woman in her thirties had been caught with an illegal drug. As we spoke with her it quickly became apparent that she was as much a victim of the drug trade as a perpetrator. She had had a sad life and got mixed up with the wrong crowd. She wasn't a drug dealer but had been caught with a very small amount of narcotic substance for personal use.

Her tough exterior only thinly disguised a very frightened woman. She was terrified because with a drug conviction she was in danger of losing her job which she needed to support her child. As the arresting officer I could see that she needed help more than punishment. At the same time, the law required that she be charged.

There is a section in the Crimes Act which allows a court to find a person guilty but without recording a criminal conviction. In conference with the DPP (Dept of Public

Prosecutions) I was able to relate the facts of the case as well as the woman's personal circumstances in the hope that the court would take them into consideration.

The woman had to appear in court the following day. I took the time to explain to her what to expect and how best to present herself. Things turned out relatively well. She pleaded guilty and was fined, but her conviction would not appear on record. Afterwards she waited for me outside the court and thanked me for helping her. She seemed genuinely grateful, and hopefully a little wiser next time. I was pleased with the outcome. The law had dealt with her fairly, but she had also been given a second chance to make a go of her life. Who knows, it could be a turning point. For some people an experience like this is all they need to get their lives back on track.

Family in faith

I find it humorous (and inspiring!) to hear Dad say: 'I give some of the elderly folk a lift to church each week.' Dad himself is in his late seventies! He has an energy and an enthusiasm for his parish which is as strong today as when he was a much younger man.

I recall one particular parishioner whom Dad drove to church every Sunday for two years. Mabel was an elderly woman who lived alone. Life had not been easy for her. At Christmas Mabel joined us for lunch. When I heard recently that she had passed away I was genuinely sad. It was like an extended family member had died. (M)



Compassion

When I was 12 years old I was crazy about animals. I collected every stray cat and dog on the street and had a range of other pets which were my pride and joy. One day my rabbit attacked my guinea pig and left it with a nasty bite wound. What I will never forget is my father's compassion as he carefully tended the wound. Using his skills as a doctor he even added a few stitches. It might seem trivial, but when you're 12 years old it makes a deep impression on a young mind to have an adult show such care and concern. With hindsight I can see that his compassion was for me as much as my pet! (CL)

Think...Pray...Act

- Who is one of the most compassionate people you know?
- Pray for the gift of Christ-like compassion.
- In what area of your life could you be more compassionate in your dealings with others?



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

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