

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Suffering servant. Isaiah 50:5-9

Act on your beliefs. James 2:14-18

The way of Jesus involves the cross. Mark 8:27-35

Next week:

Welcome the child.

Wisdom 2:12,17-20;

James 3:16-4:3; Mark 9:30-37

In a nutshell

In today's Gospel Jesus is revealed as the Christ. Closely connected is the summons to discipleship. To be a disciple of Jesus is not easy. It includes choices and decisions that involve a costly gift of self. The Christ in whom we believe is not just the exalted one but also the crucified one. The path to resurrection is by way of the cross.



Training disciples

As part of their training to be Jesuit priests, seven second year novices were sent for fifteen days live-in experience with very poor dalit (harijan) families in the Karnpura Valley in India. They not only lived with these families and ate what they had to offer but joined them in the fields, ploughing, planting and preparing new fields.

Here are some of the reflections of the novices.

'For two days I cut paddy. As a boy I knew nothing of ploughing and digging. Many times I cut my fingers as the sickle was very sharp. I had more than 18 cuts.'

'At their suggestion I started to dig and remove the roots. After about three hours I felt giddy... So they showed me a small stream and I drank from it. My palms were full of blisters.'

'I had very little food. The family was very poor. In the morning at 6 am I ate some maize flour and again at 3 pm the same maize. I

felt hungry. I wondered how these people bear hunger all their life long..'

'During my stay there I observed that they were very hard working and honest - even in small things - obedient, hopeful... The other thing which affected me most was their openness and readiness to share what they have... On the overall experience I can say I was very happy there. The life they live became my life. This experience gave me a desire to be with the people and to adjust myself to their ways. I came to know the real purpose of my entry into the Society of Jesus.'

Source: *News From India*: Australian Jesuits in India, Jan/Feb 2000.



Life: gift or burden?

When I was pregnant I used to whinge about feeling sick, about getting fat, about the 'dorky' hand-me-down maternity clothes. But my friend, Julie, who has had a difficult time achieving pregnancy, says she longs for all these things. She wants to look 'dorky' in pregnancy wear, she yearns to feel sick, to cope with looking fat and feeling tired - if it means bearing the life of her child. Julie is a constant reminder to me of what's really important and the gifts I take for granted. (Claire)

Surrender

A young mother says:

Our daughter became dangerously ill just days after her birth and had to be hospitalised for two weeks. At home, before bringing her to casualty, I had felt quite scared, but in the hospital - as I watched doctors and nurses frantically working on her tiny little body - I found myself in a curious state of calm. I knew there was nothing more I could do, except pray and trust in the skills of the medical personnel. I remember thinking, 'If she dies, she dies. There's nothing I can do.' That might sound a bit odd or callous to some people, but actually I believe that in those difficult days I received the grace of surrender. (CL)

Describe a person you know who has been through a 'crucifixion' and yet who exudes the hope of the resurrection. What do you most admire about this person?



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

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