

# realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



## In today's readings:

About the last days... Daniel 12:1-3  
The greatest sacrifice. Hebrews 10:11-14,18  
Earth passes; heaven is eternal. Mark 13:24-32

## Next week:

Christ the King  
Daniel 7:13-14; Revelation 1:5-8;  
John 18:33-37

## In a nutshell

Mark's Gospel depicts a vision of the end of time, with Christ coming in a blaze of glory. The author's intention is to encourage the struggling Christian community. The Christian view of God's judgment is shaped by hope in the victory of Christ over sin and death. Such hope involves a challenge: to be vigilant, alert to the Lord's presence at all times.



## Sacred distraction

I was sitting in the church, spending some quiet time with the Lord, a custom of mine after dropping my youngest child, Lara, at school each morning. This particular morning I was filled with doubts. My feelings of closeness to Jesus had seemed to have disappeared lately. I was seized with an inexplicable fear: What if I could not sustain this loving closeness? What if I became separated from the Lord?

And then it came. The sacred distraction. In my mind a tiny voice was saying: 'Remember when you taught Lara to swim?' At first I was annoyed by this interruption to my prayer! Again it came: 'Remember...?'

So I recalled what it was like to teach swimming to this precious child. At first Lara had the support of floaties and my arms to hold her safe. Then, as she became stronger, I let the air out of the floaties. At last, when I was sure she could make it on her own, I let her go and called her to swim towards me. Panic! 'I'll drown!' she cried. 'Please don't let

me go, Mummy!'

I soothed her fears, and thought, 'I would never let you drown my darling child! I suffered pain and shed my blood to give you life. I am here, beside you. If you begin to sink, my hands will hold you up. Don't be afraid; you can do it.'

Still I could not make the connection! The niggling fear that I might not remain faithful to the Lord persisted. I recalled my many failures in loving, in living justly. How could I possibly be good enough to come to you, Lord?

'My child! When you die, I will be there waiting for you. At that moment, I will enfold you in my loving arms. I will transform you in my goodness, and I will present you to the Father. That is how you will be seen - perfect!'

Through a sacred distraction I finally knew what the Lord wanted me to hear and understand. (Julie)

Source: *Network News*



## Faith: what a mystery!

A woman of great faith says: I marvel at the hand of God in my childhood.

My father was not a Catholic. My mother didn't practice her Catholic faith for fear of the tensions it would create in their marriage, and so religion was never spoken of at home. However, my mother did insist on sending me to Mass with the neighbours each Sunday (a routine which I deeply resented) and to a Catholic school (where I

was terrified of the nuns).

And yet, despite all these unfavourable memories associated with religion, I remember - at the age of 12 and without any coercion - praying every day for the conversion of my father.

A year later my father was received into the Catholic Church. (MCP)



## Pray now

I woke about 4.30 one morning with a sense of urgency: '*I must pray. I must pray now.*' At first I thought I was dreaming and I rolled over to go back to sleep. But the thought persisted: '*I must pray.*'

I stumbled out of bed and knelt for about half an hour, praying without really knowing why or for whom. I didn't 'feel' particularly prayerful but I persisted, trusting that God would receive my sleepy efforts.

Later that day I was told that the father of a dear friend of mine had died that morning about the time that I was praying. (Robert)



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

A publication of  
The Story Source, © 1992-2002.

[www.TeresaPirola.net](http://www.TeresaPirola.net)