

Breaking Open the Word

JESUS, GOD'S GREATEST GIFT

The build-up to Christmas and the festive season has a way of leaving many people tired and stressed as many tasks call for our attention. It is probably impossible to avoid much of this as the feast of Christmas marks the end of the year and the beginning of the summer break. The readings for today can help each of us to determine more clearly what are our major priorities as Christians in preparing for Christmas.

Within the readings today two dimensions of our preparation are stressed. The first is the call to witness to our faith by sharing in God's life-giving, freeing, and healing love. The second dimension is that of finding time to give thanks and praise to God for the gifts we have received through the presence of Jesus among us.

Isaiah's mission of proclaiming liberty and God's love to those in exile comes out of his own experience of this love. Because of this experience, he is able to be a witness to what God is doing in his own day. John the Baptist provides us with a powerful example of a person of faith who is prepared to stand up and bear witness.

As Paul concludes the letter to the Thessalonians he reminds them that the best way to prepare for the Lord's return is by living at peace with one another and being constant in their prayer. One relationship nourishes the other. Making time for the Lord in prayer enables us to make time for each other.

Christopher Monaghan CP