

# realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



## In today's readings:

The story of the Ascension. Acts 1:1-11  
Testimony to Christ's authority. Eph 1:17-23  
The great commissioning. Matthew 28:16-20

## Next week:

Pentecost Sunday.  
Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians  
12:3-7,12-13; John 20:19-23

## In a nutshell

In the Gospel of the Ascension Jesus is taken up into heaven after imparting to his disciples a great commissioning: 'Go and make disciples of all the nations.' This mission is just as applicable to us today. Our relationship with Christ is not something just for our private benefit; it is a gift to be shared far and wide.



## Jim's story

*Out of our relationship with God arises the call to mission.*

I was never an altar boy. In fact, by the time I was 14 I had all but given up going to Mass and decided that God had nothing to do with my life. That was until I went to an Anchor Weekend (for youth) run by Disciples of Jesus Community. There the team showed me by their testimonies how real Jesus was and what an incredible difference he could make in someone's life. I wanted a relationship with Jesus like these people had. So I continued going to these Anchor Weekends every few months and I began praying and reading the Scriptures.

I began to see the changes the Spirit was making in my life, and this spurred me on to continue working at a relationship with God. However my faith experience seemed to me to have little to do with my local parish community. I needed to anchor my faith in my local parish, because I faced the risk which many young people face of

having an intense faith experience in a particular context (e.g. school retreat) but outgrowing the context and therefore outgrowing their faith.

The solution for me came in the shape of a national Christian Music Seminar at Cooma (NSW). There I was so moved by the musical and liturgical worship that I felt God was calling me not to complain about the lack of such worship for young people in my own parish, but to do something about it. So, with the support of my parish priest, I started a group to lead the music at our Sunday night Mass.

Now I was involved in my own parish, and this became the source of my faith and community life. As our music slowly improved and began attracting the younger people in our parish to the Sunday night Mass we were also able to start a youth group.

## Jim's story (Cont'd.)

It was during the two years that I was involved in my local parish, taking leadership in the music and youth group, that I realised that my faith could really make a difference. In doing this I felt most alive, and in time I discerned that God was calling me to full time ministry as a priest. I entered the seminary and began studies for the diocesan priesthood.

During this time I became concerned that, as a young adult, I had never lived independently away from home. I had never paid rent and bills, cooked and budgeted. I felt the call to learn some of these basic living skills and to learn to find God in them. So I took a year

and a half out of the seminary. I held several jobs including working as a cook in the Snowy Mountains during the snow season.

In 1997 I returned to the seminary to complete my studies and to consolidate all that I'd learned in readiness to be ordained.

*[Jim was ordained a deacon in January 1999 and ordained a priest for Broken Bay Diocese the following year.]*



## Think...Talk

Trace the highlights of your own journey in faith and mission.

- Who and what were the key influences along the way?
- In what way is your life different as a result?
- How have you made a difference in the lives of other people?



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

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