

realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



In today's readings:

Life in the early Church. Acts 2:42-47
We are born anew as children of God. 1 Peter 1:3-9
The risen Christ brings everlasting peace. John 20:19-31

Next week:

Revelations on the road to
Emmaus. Acts 2:14,22-33;
1 Pt 1:17-21; Lk 24:13-35

In a nutshell

In today's Gospel the risen Jesus appears to the disciples, bestowing the Spirit and commissioning them to bring peace and forgiveness to the world. He challenges them to 'Believe!' The skepticism of Thomas gives way to an act of faith. In our own moments of doubt may we find the courage to believe.



Jubilee. Justice.

Jubilee 2000 was a worldwide movement that sought to bring pressure on governments to cancel the crushing international debt of the most impoverished countries by the year 2000. Catholic Christians, and many other groups across the world, became involved as a response to the initiative of Pope John Paul II in his call to cancel the unpayable debt of the poorest developing countries.

The stories and information on this page are from the *Jubilee 2000 Education Kit*, a discussion and action resource designed for parishes, schools and other groups. It was made available in Australia by St Columban's Mission Society, Victoria, in 1999.

From 2001, the work of Jubilee 2000 continues through a variety of organisations.

Niele's story

Niele, a young girl of twelve, lives with her family in the province of Sind in southern Pakistan. Their home is built of reeds and sticks. Niele's father works as a farm labourer for a feudal landlord. He tills the land, plants rice and cuts sugar cane.

One day Niele had a bad headache. Gradually it became worse. She felt her neck stiffen and become hard to move. When her father returned from the fields he immediately took her to Matli town, a bus journey of over an hour. In Matli town they entered Dr Kishore's small hospital and before long Niele fell asleep. When she awoke a day later she heard Dr Kishore saying that she was very lucky to have survived. What a strange thing to say, thought Niele, when all I had was a bad headache.

In fact, Niele had meningitis, a disease which, if not treated, can kill within 36 hours. Her father recognised the symptoms because Niele's brother had died of the same disease.

In Pakistan there is no health insurance for the poor, and only a fraction of the budget is set aside for health care. Each year the government allocates more than 40% of the national budget to repay the country's foreign debt. Still, the debt continues to increase.

Source: *Jubilee 2000 Education Kit*

Those who pay the price

A woman brought her two children, aged 3 and 13, to a Zambian doctor. Both were very sick. The doctor prescribed treatment. She thanked him and left. When he saw her some time later and asked how the children were, she told him that the younger one had died. She explained that she had not had enough money to pay for treatment for both children, so with much pain she decided to pay for the older child's medicine. He got better quickly, but the mother had to watch her youngest child die.

This kind of choice faces many across the world today who have neither work nor state benefits to help them provide for their families.

What is the debt crisis?

A number of developing countries are practically bankrupt. They owe foreign creditors so much money that just paying the interest means their governments can't afford basic infrastructure or proper education and health systems. It is the poor who ultimately pay the price.



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

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