

# realpeople

## the gospel in everyday language

### at a glance

#### In today's readings:

We are to care for each other. Ezekiel 33:7-9

Love is the ultimate rule. Romans 13:8-10

The power of Christian community. Matthew 18:15-20

#### Next week:

Forgive again and again.

Sirach 27:30-28:7;

Rom 14:7-9; Mt 18:21-35

### In a nutshell

Today's Gospel reminds us that prayer and compassionate love are the most effective ways to resolve disagreements and reform the Christian community. As the body of Christ we are entrusted with the power to heal and reconcile in the Lord's name. May we use that power wisely and often.



### Towards reconciliation

'Lessons can be learned in the most unusual places and from the most unusual sources,' says Tania, an Aboriginal student who took part in a *Let's Talk* Conference.

*Let's Talk* is a major international project that brings together young people aged 15-22 from areas of conflict and unrest to work on the skills necessary for lasting reconciliation. The project also gives them a voice in peacemaking and reconciliation processes.

Originating in Northern Ireland, the *Let's Talk* project involves more than 15,000 youth from Northern Ireland, Ireland, the UK, Rwanda, the Middle East and Australia.

Tania Major is from Kowanyama, a small Aboriginal Community situated in the Gulf of Carpentaria. She had this to say about her experience of *Let's Talk*.

'Looking at somebody else's problems helped me to realise the importance of my culture and my people. It's strange that I had to sit in a foreign land to understand something that I had witnessed four

years ago: I saw the grief of an old man over the loss of his family, his culture, his identity. Sitting within the stone walls of an Irish castle I finally cried for I realised that his loss was also my loss.

'At *Let's Talk* I was privileged to find not only a global perspective but an inner perspective of situations that I have faced all my life. I see now that we all should learn from our past, embrace it and grow from it - not dwell in it. The past should not be ignored and thus reconciliation is very important, but as the theme of the *Let's Talk* Conference advises us, we should approach the future side by side to work together for coexistence.' [1999]

### Staying friends

*A young woman in her late teens shares this story:*

I could have made her feel really bad. I could have cut her off completely. After all, she did betray me. Me: her best friend! When I discovered she had been telling people things I had told her in confidence I felt violated. I mean, some topics - like the guys I am interested in - are not the sort of things I want spread around! But we talked things through. She was sorry; she said she had told the secrets to feel accepted by others. I chose to forgive her and give our friendship another chance. After all, we all make mistakes. We live and learn. (Veronica)



### Think . Talk

Think of a situation of conflict which presently affects you. What insight does your Christian faith offer in resolving the tension? How can your faith community support you in resolving the conflict in a loving and just manner?

### Pray

Father, through your compassion may we find new possibilities for handling our grievances.

### Act

In facing a difficult relationship this week, pray before you speak or act.



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

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