

# realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



## In today's readings:

[Entrance: Mark 11:1-10. Hosanna to the king!]  
The Lord comes to my help. Isaiah 50:4-7  
Jesus emptied himself for us. Philippians 2:6-11  
The passion of Jesus Christ. Mark 14:1-15:47

## Next week:

Easter Sunday.  
Acts 10:34,37-43;  
Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-9

## In a nutshell

For Jesus, what began as a triumphant entry into Jerusalem ended in an episode of apparent failure, disgrace and devastating loneliness. And yet, in the divine plan it was through this very experience that God chose to bring about the salvation of the world. On Passion Sunday let us open our hearts the mystery of the cross.



## A dark year

1999 in Australia was the Year of the Older Person. But for me it was the Year of the Break and the Fall: broken collarbone, fractured vertebrae, nervous breakdown and almost, broken toe.

Lord, I wonder what is the meaning of all this? The broken bones were soon mended, but the breaking of my spirit seemed to go on forever. The dark side, my shadow, demon, black dog, nervous breakdown, what else do I call you? I feel as though the black dog\* has all but devoured me.

I am forsaken, lost, condemned; the gates of hell are ahead of me. But somewhere in the midst of the darkness, a flickering light is still burning.

I am sustained in that light by the comforting words of family and friends, prayer, letters, phone calls and visits.

Gradually the light pushes back the darkness, the black dog is subdued. Victory is clutched from the jaws of defeat.

Father, have you anything to say?

I wait with baited breath.

'My son, my chosen one, your suffering has not been in vain. I have made you anew. Your story will now be richer in its telling. Your heart is transformed; it beats stronger than before. My crown of thorns has pierced you to the core. But from your heart flows love and life. I have anointed you with the oil of suffering and pain, so you can be my wounded healer.'

Thank you Jesus for claiming me as your beloved and naming me as your son. (Philip)

\* The term 'Black Dog' is sometimes used to describe the battle with depression.

## Remember East Timor

Dec 1999. Liz and I just had a phone conversation with a young East Timorese couple. They are back in East Timor after having been evacuated to Darwin when the UNAMET compound was under siege. They told us first hand of the devastation in East Timor. They speak of people who spend their time crying; people who have absolutely nothing. Many of their family members have been killed and all their earthly belongings have been taken or burned. Without access to medical supplies people are dying from curable diseases. We went through our cupboards yesterday and bought some basics from the supermarket. We packed it all up and, as I write this message, it's on the way to Darwin to our RAAF contacts who will get them to East Timor. (Vic)

## A hospital minister says:

Standing at the nurses' station, I noticed a doctor speaking on the telephone to a family whose father lay in the cardiac unit in a serious condition. What caught my attention was the intensity with which the doctor spoke. Deep concern filled her voice and marked her body language. Anyone would think it was her own father whose life was at risk.

I am often impressed by the personal dedication of the hospital staff here. Being present to people in their suffering is part of their everyday. (KM)



## Think . Pray . Act

Think of a person (or group) who is living Christ's passion at this very moment. In prayer, express your yearning and concern for this person/group. Cry out to God on their behalf. What practical support can you offer to ease their pain?



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

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