

# realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



## In today's readings:

Thanks to the Lord, plenty to eat. 2 Kings 4:42-44  
One body, one Lord. Ephesians 4:1-6  
The feeding of the multitude. John 6:1-15

## Next week:

Bread from God.  
Exodus 16:2-4,12-15; Ephesians  
4:17,20-24; John 6:24-35

## In a nutshell

In John's Gospel the miraculous feeding of the crowd is one of the great indicators of Jesus' identity. When the Israelites of Moses' day hungered, the Lord cared for them with the gift of manna in the desert. The Gospel presents Jesus as the Messiah, Son of God, who provides abundant bread to satisfy the deepest hungers of our hearts.



## Tony's story

*This story, of how one woman's efforts went a very long way, is contributed by an Australian reader living in Florida, USA.*

One Saturday morning Sue was roaming through the crowd at a neighbourhood garage sale when she noticed a young African-American man looking at her intently. Catching her eye he came up to her with an air of hesitancy and hope. 'Mrs Liester?' 'Yes?' replied Sue, wondering how he knew her name.

'Mrs Liester,' said the man. 'I was hoping so much that I would see you when I came back to Florida.' Then he poured out his story. Years ago Tony had been a student at the school where Sue was a teacher (and still taught). The school was the 'end of the road' on the socio-economic scale. As the locals bluntly put it, if the kids didn't make it there, next stop was prison. Tony himself came from a poverty-stricken and dysfunctional home. The one bright spot in his life was

the kindness and encouragement shown him by his teacher, Mrs Liester.

'Day after day, when everybody else was telling me I was stupid and bad, you believed in me,' he said to Sue. 'You would sit me down in your office and say, "Tony, you can do anything you want with your life if you set your mind to it." You even invited me and some of the other kids into your home. By the way, do you still have that blackboard with the coloured numerals in your garage...?'

Tony had returned to Florida after having graduated from a university interstate and was soon to start work with a reputable firm.

The unexpected reunion between teacher and former student continued in the midst of the garage sale, with Sue inviting Tony to come back to his old school to tell his story to the students there. (GJ)

## Loaves and fishes?

Leonie tells us that in celebrating her husband's 50th birthday, they told their guests 'No gifts please, just a small contribution towards a hamper for a family in need. They were not prepared for the generosity that ensued. Some guests even brought along whole hampers. The end result was not just one hamper but twenty-five! Leonie's comment was that it shows that many people WANT to give generously but often don't know how to go about it. A practical opportunity like this can be really appreciated.



## Think...Talk... Act

Describe a time when a small, sincere effort resulted in an unimaginably greater result. Gather a few friends and plan a simple action to alleviate another's 'hunger'.

## The song

Originally the song was written as a prayer. Working as a therapist with children with disabilities, Gen wrote the song to express her own appreciation of her children. But when teachers at the school heard it, they were so touched by its message that they wanted to use it for their school promotional video. Then the physical therapy association heard it. A demo CD was made and next thing, Gen was being flown interstate to perform her song for a thousand delegates at a conference. Further, the local TV station wanted to interview her and a record company wanted to talk about a contract... Says Gen, 'What began as a simple prayer has had an extraordinary ripple effect in the community...'



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

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