

# realpeople

the gospel in everyday language



## In today's readings:

We will serve the Lord! Joshua 24:1-2,15-18  
Marriage: a great mystery. Ephesians 5:21-32  
Lord, to whom shall we go? John 6:60-69

## Next week:

Jesus under scrutiny. Deuteronomy 4:1-2,6-8; James 1:17-18,21-22,27;  
Mark 7:1-8,14-15,21-23

## In a nutshell

Jesus upset people with his teachings. At times even his own followers expressed dismay, doubt, ambivalence. For many it was all too much - they walked away and followed him no more. For others, like Peter in today's Gospel, their loving acceptance of Jesus won out over their inability to fully comprehend his words.



## Why do you stay?

*The gospel demands a great deal from the Christian disciple. Staying committed to Christ and his church can be difficult, especially amidst life's disappointments and hardships. We asked four people why they haven't 'walked away'. Here is what they said:*

'In all honesty I'd have to say it's partly because I've grown up Catholic and I'm comfortable with that. But it's also because I have had undeniable experiences of God within the Catholic Church - through prayer, through the Eucharist and with other Catholics.' (Bob)

As an older single woman, I sometimes feel discouraged about the way the single life is underrated by many people in the church. But I stay committed to the church because they are my faith family, because I believe in my baptism, and because I know in faith that my vocation to be a disciple of Christ is

as valid as any other vocation, even if the commitment is not as clearly defined or as "public" as marriage or priesthood or religious life.' (Anne)

'Sure, the church has its problems. But it also has grace and goodness and a lot of love. Besides, as St Peter said, "To whom would we go?" I can't see how leaving the church offers any better solutions!' (Chris)

'I stay because I believe. If I didn't believe, maybe I wouldn't stay. Also, I view the church like a family, a committed relationship. I don't walk away from my husband or my children and I don't walk away from my church. I've had a lot of very positive experiences as a Catholic. There's a lot of joy that keeps me here. (Louise)

## Think about it:

How would you answer the question: *Why do you stay?*

## A community challenged

'Australians are always talking about the weather,' said the new parishioner, a visitor to this country from Africa. Really? I began to listen more intently. He was right! I couldn't believe the number of times I had conversations with parishioners that basically consisted of: 'Hello, lovely day isn't it?' After a while the superficiality of these conversations started to grate on me. I began to long for more substantial interactions with people. How were they really? What was God doing in their life? After all, we are supposed to be a Christian community alive in the

risen Lord! Fascinating how it took an 'outsider' to point this out to me. I am grateful for his challenge to a deeper community life.



## Jesus in his Church

People who have worked in hospitals over the years often tell of the great support the Church's prayer traditions are to many Catholics when they find themselves in difficult circumstances—like waiting for a spouse to come through an operation or sitting beside a dying parent. It can be difficult to know what to do or say. And sometimes you are not sure that the person who is ill can hear you. It is wonderful to be able to turn to these great prayers of the church - like the rosary with its repetition of the Hail Mary ('..now and at the hour of our death'). They not only provide a formula, they connect us with the whole Church and its life of prayer.

*Think of a time when, with nowhere else to turn, you turned to God.*



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

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