

# Millennium Development Goal 6



*Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/Aids*

*Begin to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases*

### *Scripture Reflection:*

The people there recognised Jesus and sent word to all the country round. They brought to him all who were ill and begged him to let them simply touch the edge of his cloak; and all who touched it were completely cured. (Matt 14:35-36)

### *Food for thought*

The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus responding with compassion and pity when he encounters people who are sick. To be afflicted with illness in the first century was often seen as a punishment for sin, ones own, or even the sins of ones

parents. Some illnesses like leprosy carried with them a stigma of being 'unclean' and resulted in total exclusion and isolation from the community. It is not difficult for us to draw the comparisons with the HIV/AIDS sufferers of today.

The discrimination and misunderstanding experienced by those with this illness is often more debilitating than the disease itself. Other major killers like malaria and tuberculosis can be both prevented and treated but most often the people who die from such diseases are unable to afford the medication or the preventative measures.

### *A story from the field*

Since 1990, Columban Sr Maureen McGinley has been working with HIV/AIDS sufferers in Hong Kong. She had become aware that there existed a wall of silence and exclusion around this deadly disease and that those infected experienced a terrible fear of disclosure and rejection. Even in the hospital where Sr Maureen volunteered, patients were often left unwashed and smelling because staff feared to touch them.

# 6

## To make poverty history

Since 1990, Columban Sr Maureen McGinley has been working with HIV/AIDS sufferers in Hong Kong. She had become aware that there existed a wall of silence and exclusion around this deadly disease and that those infected experienced a terrible fear of disclosure and rejection.

In response, Sr Maureen established an independent Centre which now has 30 staff and outreach programmes to train others to tend patients in their homes.



In response, Sr Maureen established an independent Centre which now has 30 staff and outreach programmes to train others to tend patients in their homes. Educational work about HIV/AIDS is also carried out in schools and Universities. The government in Beijing has since adopted the programme from the Hong Kong Centre as a model for their own response to HIV/AIDS and many doctors and other health workers from the mainland have visited the Centre to gain experience. Central to the approach in Hong Kong is the dignity, care and respect for the patient.

**How should we respond?**

\* Volunteer at a local hospital, nursing home or hospice. Spend time listening to others. Allow people to share their stories without fear of judgement.

\* Invite a group to come together in reflection on the idea of human dignity. Identify those situations in our world where the dignity of the human person is devalued or compromised.

**Number of new tuberculosis cases per 100,000 population (excluding HIV people) 1990 and 2004**

	1990	2004
Sub-Saharan Africa	148	281
South-Eastern Asia	272	217
Southern Asia	173	166
Oceania	203	166
CIS, Asia	60	117
CIS, Europe	48	104
Eastern Asia	116	102
Latin America & the Caribbean	98	59
Western Asia	68	50
Northern Africa	59	49

**New tuberculosis cases are on the rise, even excluding those associated with HIV**