



MAY 20, 2012

LIVING THE JUBILEE PRINCIPLE
IN A MODERN WORLD



COVER PHOTO: PHILIPPINES SUNSET, MANILA HARBOUR

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE ASCENSION

“Live in a manner worthy of the calling you have received” Eph 4:1

The second reading for the Solemnity of the Ascension urges us to live with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another through love. Eph 4:2

In a globalised world that means being in solidarity with those struggling with life in extreme poverty.

On Jubilee Sunday, we are asked to focus on one of the root causes of this type of endemic global poverty, the unjust and unpayable debts of many countries. Developing countries send the equivalent of \$550 billion overseas each year to pay back their debts, much of which was accumulated by corrupt and undemocratic regimes of the past. They lose another \$230 billion every year through tax dodging by big companies. Now they also suffer from the immoral practices of some private investment firms known as “Vulture Funds”. (Source: www.jubileeaustralia.org.)

THE JUBILEE PRINCIPLE

Based on Old Testament scripture, the traditions of Sabbath rest and Jubilee renewal require that those enslaved as a result of debt are freed, lands lost because of debt are returned and communities torn by inequality are restored. The scriptures tell us that the Spirit of God has called us to be good news to the poor, to forgive each other's debts, to heal the broken, to announce freedom to those who are imprisoned by suffering, to proclaim the Jubilee (Isaiah 61:1-2). In Luke's Gospel, Jesus gave the ancient Law of Jubilee new meaning when he invoked it at the beginning of his mission (Luke: 4:19). As Christians, we are challenged to join the struggle to break the chains that bind our global brothers and sisters, preventing them from realising full and dignified lives.

HOW DO WE APPLY THE ESSENCE OF THE JUBILEE PRINCIPLE IN TODAY'S WORLD OF GLOBAL FINANCE?

The causes of poverty and inequality in our world are complex. Living the Jubilee Principle today means understanding that poverty is not simply about lack of money, and that charity alone will not bring it to an end. Our approach to helping the poor must have two facets: a focus on the actual conditions of those in poverty, and a corresponding focus on the systems, laws and policies that make and keep people poor.

* LEARN *

Learn more about some of the hidden aspects of the global finance system. Look at the **STOP THE DEBT VULTURES** website <http://stopdebtvultures.org.au>

* REFLECT *

Communication technology can bring us closer to those experiencing extreme poverty in highly indebted poor countries. But often the real stories are not told by mainstream media. When they are, people switch off because they feel powerless. Reflect on the basic Christian social principles of the dignity of the human person and solidarity with the poor. In the spirit of the Law of Jubilee, it is pertinent for us to ask: what kinds of laws/policies (national and international) do we have? Do they espouse human freedom, or put people in bondage? Are there opportunities for ordinary people like us to change some of these laws or make new ones? What role can we play? Ask the questions: “Are our superannuation funds involved in practices such as the acts of Vulture Funds? How can we find out?”

* PRAY *

Include these prayers, or your own prayers of petition, in your worship on Jubilee Sunday, May 20, or on another day on which you choose to remember the spirit of the Jubilee Law.

Let us pray to God through Jesus Christ in whose name we are gathered, that through the Holy Spirit all people may live as one family.

Response: Save us from our indifference and give us courage to work for justice.

1. For leaders, govern their hearts and minds that Your holy will of justice and forgiveness will come through their actions to all the world.

Response: Save us from our indifference and give us courage to work for justice.

2. For people who live in situations of extreme inequality, where there is a wide disparity between the few who are rich and the many who are poor.

Response: Save us from our indifference and give us courage to work for justice.

3. For all people that we may not succumb to materialism.

Response: Save us from our indifference and give us courage to work for justice.

4. For powerful organisations which use weaker nations of the world as means of promoting their own economic interests.

Response: Save us from our indifference and give us courage to work for justice.

5. For countries where there is exploitation of natural resources and where the earth is desecrated for profit.

Response: Save us from our indifference and give us courage to work for justice.

God, source of all life and truth, you are our strength and your Word is our guide.

Help us to do what is right.

Help us to challenge the structures of today that keep the poor oppressed by debt, while the rich profit.

Help us take action and proclaim freedom for the poor. We ask this prayer through Christ Our Lord.

Amen.

*** TAKE ACTION TO STOP DEBT VULTURES IN AUSTRALIA ***

Here are some ways you can join us:

Participate in our postcards campaign. Call Jubilee Australia on 02 8259 0817 to order postcards.

Take further action by sending an electronic message to Attorney General, The Hon Nicola Roxon from the <http://stopdebtvultures.org.au> website. Just click on the **TakeAction** link.

Add your name to an online petition addressed to the Prime Minister the Rt Hon Julia Gillard which calls for Urgent action against sovereign debt vultures. The petition is posted on the Care2 website, which is accessible from the Stop Debt Vultures website (scroll down a little).

Make the problem of sovereign debt vultures **a topic for an upcoming meeting** of your church or community social justice group. Please refer to the "Preying on the Poor" briefing note which can be downloaded and printed from the Stop Debt Vultures website. Just click on the Briefing Note link on the home page (scroll down).

Help us spread the word. We encourage you to post these links on your community, organisation or church electronic newsletter. It is also possible to embed the Care2 petition referred to above on your website. Visit the Jubilee Australia website to learn more about other economic justice projects www.jubileeaustralia.org

For further information email phil@stopdebtvultures.org.au.

Many thanks for your support. Together we can ensure that sovereign debt vulture funds no longer use the Australian judicial system to pursue profit in impoverished nations.

To order *Debt Prayer Bookmarks* from PEJ Centre, Columban Mission Institute, visit: www.columban.org.au/our-works/peace-ecology-justice/resources/debt-prayer/



**JUBILEE
SUNDAY 2012**

Support Jubilee Financially

Jubilee Australia does not receive money from government or corporate donors. We rely on our supporters to produce independent research and powerful grassroots campaigns.

We welcome your contribution to help sustain an independent Australian voice on the causes of global poverty.

Cut here and return your donation to Jubilee Australia, Locked Bag 199 QVB, NSW or phone (02) 8259 8017



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Jubilee Australia emerged out of the successful international Jubilee 2000 Drop the Debt Campaign. Today, Jubilee plays a unique role in Australia, digging to the roots of poverty and injustice worldwide, exposing and challenging unjust Australian laws and practices that hurt the poor and marginalised, and speaking up for policies which reflect the spirit of Jubilee. Our work is driven by our relationships of solidarity with civil society groups and peoples movements in the Global South who are on the front line in the struggle against extreme poverty and environmental degradation, and who call for economic transformation and global justice, not just charity.

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