

Jubilee Sunday May 18, 2014.

5th Sunday of Easter

“Whoever believes in me will do the works that I do.” John 14:12



Image: Women in Yehimbole Village, Yangoru-Saussia District, East Sepik Province, PNG.
Photo credit: Richard Kendall / OxfamAUS

A Christian worship and education resource for your faith community.



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1. Invitation

Join us in remembering the biblical idea of 'Jubilee' on Sunday May 18, 2014.

Dear Jubilee friends,

True wisdom doesn't age or expire. And so it is with the ancient idea of 'Jubilee'. Each year, on the third Sunday in May, people across Australia unite in heart, mind and spirit to recall and be re-inspired by the ancient Old Testament idea of 'Jubilee', a time when debts were cancelled, slaves were freed and land was redistributed.

As a congregation, a social justice group, a school group, a family or even as an individual, Jubilee Sunday is an opportunity to set aside time to reflect on our role in building a fair, equitable and compassionate society.

As Christians, we are called to live in step with the spirit of Jubilee renewal, to break the chains that bind our global brothers and sisters and prevent them from realising full and dignified lives, and to actively seek ways to release from poverty those who live on the outer margins of society.

Many of us have a deep desire to do something about the plight of the world's poor. We may even have our own ideas about how best to help. But the causes of poverty and inequality in our world today are complex. Living the Jubilee Principle means understanding that poverty is not simply about lack of money, and that charity alone will not bring it to an end.

Jubilee Australia's challenge for you in 2014, and especially as we remember together the biblical idea of 'Jubilee', is to put your traditional ideas aside for a moment, and join us as we *listen*.

We invite you to join us on Jubilee Sunday to *listen* to the voices of the poor, the oppressed and the powerless, to *deepen* your understanding of the structural causes of global poverty and injustice, to *pray* for long-term solutions to the global poverty crisis, and *collect* a special offering to support the work of Jubilee Australia.

Enclosed you will find reflection, worship and action materials. We encourage you to adapt and use them in any way that works for your congregation. Incorporate one prayer and/or dedicate your entire service or social justice group to the vision of Jubilee.

Through your prayers and actions, your congregation can be part of the worldwide Jubilee movement to fight greed and inequity, and build a just and fair global economy, for the sake of the world's poorest communities.

Our warmest regards, *The staff and board of Jubilee Australia.*

Jubilee Sunday 2014

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2. Reflection

Hearing the voice of God in voices of the poor.

“My metaphor for thinking about the world is ‘the beloved of God’. It means that I must tie my life to the voice of God in my heart as I hear it through the poor, the oppressed, the disenfranchised, and those voices other than the voice of the institutions. For that I may be rejected by the system, of course, but I cannot keep my soul and do otherwise.”

Joan Chittister OSB *Called to Question: A spiritual memoir.*

In this beautiful and challenging picture, Benedictine Sister Joan Chittister, well-known author and international speaker, talks not only of hearing the voices of the poor, the oppressed, and the most vulnerable, but of attaching the very meaning of her life to what she hears through those voices. This pursuit of Sister Joan is a tough challenge for all of us.

But there is a second idea raised in the passage above, about the need for us to take care that we hear the *right* voice. This second challenge is a tall order in today’s media saturated world where we are inundated with news and information, and the opinions of this person and that. When we hear of a new development plan or mining development which affects a poor community, more often than not we get the positive stories crafted by clever Public Relations staff wrapped in language of ‘progress’ and ‘benefits’. The voices of communities affected are too far away, and become drowned out by the voice of those more powerful.

All the more reason for us to heed the words of Sister Joan. If we want to uphold the dignity of people, regardless of their financial wealth and power, the first thing we are called to do is to *listen* to them...not to institutions which purport to speak on their behalf.

The citizens who are risking much by speaking out on the streets of the Philippines, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste and more - what are they asking for, what do they have to say, and what does ‘justice’ look like to them.

In response to what we hear, we have the opportunity to ask questions of ourselves - 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?



(Listening and responding to the grassroots struggles in our region is the essence of Jubilee Australia’s mission. Learn more in part 4 of the Jubilee Sunday 2014 material.)

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3. Worship

Liturgical resources for Jubilee Sunday

Jubilee Sunday May 18th 2014

5th Sunday of Easter: *“Whoever believes in me will do the work that I do.” John 14:12*

Notes:

- This year Jubilee Sunday falls on the 5th Sunday of Easter.
- An introduction, Prayers and Closing Blessing are enclosed, as well a Powerpoint slide.
- Brief homily notes are included for reflection on the above reference in John’s Gospel.
- Have two candles ready.

Introduction (Gathering) to be read by Welcomer

Today across Australia, people of faith focus on Jubilee Sunday. We gather as a faith community in the Great Southern Land of the Holy Spirit on the traditional country of the people.

* Light Candle One

Based on Old Testament scripture, the ancient Hebrew traditions of Sabbath and Jubilee renewal required that those enslaved as a result of debt be freed, lands lost because of debt be returned and communities torn by inequality be restored.

Jesus expressed the Jubilee Principle when in Matthew’s Gospel, he asked the people to pray, “Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also forgive those who have debts against us”. Matthew 6:12.

As a local community which is part of the global community, we pray together in hope for a world made new where those struggling under the weight of poverty because of economic injustice will be able to live in dignity and peace.

* Light Candle Two

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Prayers of the Faithful (Bidding Prayers)

(Celebrant) God of all, you created us in your image and call on us to serve you and do your will on Earth.

Response: Send forth your Spirit and renew the face of the earth.

1. We give thanks for the presence of God in the world. We give thanks for the gift of Jesus, the Incarnation of God. We give thanks for God's Spirit who empowers us to love as Jesus loves, to bring peace and justice for all peoples and the earth.
2. We pray for church and world leaders that they will be inspired by your Spirit to act to change a global economic system which is creating an increasing gap between the rich and the poor.
3. We pray for the global family of peoples. Help us to show the same solidarity with our brothers and sisters far away as we do with those close to us.
4. We pray for all those who are suffering through no fault of their own under the weight of poverty caused by economic injustice and for all those who seek just economic relationships.
5. We pray that we will have the strength to work towards a world that reflects the love, mercy and justice of Jesus. Give us courage to live our lives for justice so we fulfil your commandment to love one another.

(Celebrant) Compassionate God, help us to embrace the love we receive from you, that comes to us through the most unlikely people in the most unlikely of places. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.)

After Communion Announcement (by Presider or by Social Justice Group member)

Jubilee Australia is a small, dynamic organisation formed at the turn of the millennium when 24 million people signed a petition calling for 'Third World' Debts to be cancelled by the year 2000. This is what Pope John Paul II called for. In response to the Jubilee 2000 campaign, around \$125 billion of debt was cancelled, and governments were able to start spending money in ways that benefited their people.

But the 'Jubilee' idea goes beyond cancelling some debt. Jubilee Australia is still working because of its belief that the global economy has been structured in a way that is deeply unfair, worsening poverty and inequality in many parts of the world. Over the long term, our efforts have to change the economic rules of engagement if less-developed countries and communities are to do anything more than struggle against the tide.

Today, Jubilee Australia collaborates with groups in 50 other countries that are working against greed and inequity, and towards a global economy that is fair, sustainable, and protects the most vulnerable from exploitation.

We invite you to take the printed material to read and lend your support to.

Final Blessing

God of all, give us the strength and the desire to minister to those who struggle to live under oppressive conditions. Allow us to see your presence in our lives and in the lives of others. Breathe the fire of your love into our hearts. Amen.

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Homily Notes.

Scripture points to connect with (John 4:12):

1. The global world, solidarity.
2. Hearing Jesus' message of compassion and love, if we have the ears to hear.
3. Action for justice for the poor is not an option. It is our responsibility.
4. We are blessed by the Spirit to give us courage and constancy in living this out.

The Jubilee Principle

Based on Old Testament scripture, the ancient Hebrew traditions of Sabbath rest and Jubilee renewal required that those enslaved as a result of debt be freed, lands lost because of debt be returned and communities torn by inequality be 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).

Jesus gave the ancient Law of Jubilee new meaning when he invoked it at the beginning of his mission (Luke: 4:19). when he read from the scroll, "He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor... to set the downtrodden free, to proclaim the Year of the Lord's Favour."

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 complex and globally connected world?

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.

*Prepared by the Columban Mission Institute Centre for Peace, Ecology and Justice.
For Debt prayer bookmarks, please contact Anne Lanyon 02 9352 8021 or
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4. Learn

What does Jubilee justice look like today?

Not On My Watch

On the island of Bougainville, located 500km off the PNG mainland, the Panguna copper and gold mine was established. It was potentially one of the largest reserves in the world and once a lucrative operation for Australian mining giant Rio Tinto and the PNG state.

Being a large, open-cut mine, surrounding villages suffered from land appropriation, poisoned rivers, village relocation and social disruption, while receiving little over 1% of the earnings.

When negotiations with the company to address these problems failed, local people revolted. This led to closing of the mine in 1989. The PNG government responded with military force which evidence suggests was funded, facilitated and encouraged by both Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL), a local subsidiary of Rio Tinto, and the Australian government.

Civilians faced the most brutal campaign of state violence witnessed in the region since WWII. When the blockade of the island, and war finally ceased in 1998, between 10,000 and 20,000 people are estimated to have died, close to 10% of the island's population. The majority of those who died were civilians.

No truth commission has been held for this war, nor has there been an independent investigation into the systematic violations against the people of Bougainville, reparations for injuries suffered, or necessary steps taken to prevent a recurrence.

Rio Tinto is now negotiating to restart the highly controversial mine. Wanting to take advantage of skyrocketing copper and gold prices, the Chairman has told media he believes only a minority of Bougainvilleans oppose the mine's reopening.



Top: Women in Yehimbole Village, Yangoru-Saussia District, East Sepik Province, PNG.
Photo credit: Richard Kendall / OxfamAUS
Bottom: Abandoned mine equipment, Bougainville.
Photo credit: Antony Lowenstein.

The Company has yet to explain how it will remove the huge amount of toxic waste still polluting much of the site. Its role in defence force operations during the bloody years of 1988-1990 has not yet been acknowledged to the impacted communities.

Until Rio Tinto commits to full disclosure, any attempt to reopen the Bougainville mine will harm an already deeply scarred people.

We believe people have the right to say *no* to socially and environmentally harmful projects on their land.

While theoretically, a country's natural wealth in underground minerals should provide a large economic boost, in reality the opposite has proved to be true - the economies of developing countries rich in natural resources have, almost without exception, grown at a slower rate than the economies of those countries that are natural resource- scarce.

This phenomenon has become known as the 'resource curse'.

Furthermore, time and time again, these projects fail to live up to their lavish projections. The scale, complexity and the deep impact on local communities means...

"The extraction industries are seen, not always without reason, as unjustly exploiting resources and local populations, resorting even to slavery and the forced removal of entire populations. ... Mining, like many other industrial activities, has ecological and social consequences which go well beyond national borders and pass from one generation to the next".

Pope Francis' message for the day of reflection on the mining industry, 2013.

Take Action

What can we do to bring justice?

Through its various agencies, the Australian Government is supporting Rio Tinto in its attempt to re-open the mine without addressing the grievous concerns of the people living in the vicinity of the mine.

Jubilee Australia's [#NotOnMyWatch](#) campaign seeks to put the people of Bougainville at the negotiating table so that they can determine their own future.

The campaign involves two parts:

1. The publication of a report in September documenting how Bougainvilleans living near the Panguna mine feel about the possible reopening of the mine.
2. An Australian tour by representatives from Bougainville. They will meet with academics and other experts on human rights, corporate accountability and

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sustainable development, government officials and others to express the concerns of their people.

You can support this work.

1. Join Jubilee Australia's [#NotOnMyWatch](#) list to keep informed about details of the campaign and tour.
2. Jubilee needs financial support for this crucial work. Help us help communities in our region to determine their own future by:
 - Giving online <http://www.jubileeaustralia.org/page/donate> or
 - Sending your gift to Jubilee Australia at Level 7, 379 Kent Street, Sydney NSW 2000, or;
 - Calling Jubilee on 02 8259 0817.

Your gift makes a big difference as Jubilee does not receive government or corporate funding.

3. By participating in the [Not on My watch](#) Campaign, Australians have the opportunity to ask:

What role do we have in contributing to this cycle and how can we help to change it, allowing people to be engaged with, and truly benefit from, development that sustains and supports their communities rather than causing deep suffering, poverty, loss of culture, land and heritage.

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5. Collection

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Or sign-up and/or donate online www.jubileeaustralia.org

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