

The gift of mercy

SUNDAY *Plus*

2nd Sunday of Easter **Divine Office Week II** Year A**Divine Mercy Sunday**

The quality of mercy

The man advanced three paces and approached the lamp which was on the table. "Stop," he resumed, as though he had not quite understood. "That's not it. Did you hear? I am a galley-slave, a convict. I come from the galleys." He drew from his pocket a large sheet of yellow paper, which he unfolded. "Here's my passport. Yellow, as you see. This serves to expel me from every place where I go. Will you read it? I know how to read. I learned in the galleys. There is a school there for those who choose to learn. Hold, this is what they put on this passport: 'Jean Valjean, discharged convict, native of' – that is nothing to you – has been nineteen years in the galleys: five years for house-breaking and burglary.

Fourteen years for having attempted to escape on four occasions. He is a very dangerous man.' There! Everyone has cast me out. Are you willing to receive me? Is this an inn? Will you give me something to eat and a bed? Have you a stable?"


"Madame Magloire," said the bishop, "you will put white sheets on the bed in the alcove." ...

The bishop turned to the man. "Sit down, sir, and warm yourself. We are going to sup in a few moments and your bed will be prepared while you are supping." ...

At this point the man suddenly comprehended. He began stammering like a crazy man. "Really? What! You will keep me? You do not drive me forth?"

Victor Hugo, *Les Miserables*



Lord of love, help me to look for happiness in the right places. Help me to be realistic in my hopes and dreams. May I find my happiness in loving you.  Amen.

Give of your best

Often, we simply don't notice that our response to a hurt is an over-reaction. Someone says or does something that hurts or offends us and we let a sense of grievance take root in our heart, creating a wound that is out of all proportion to the event that inflicted it. It's hard to detect such moments in one's own life: after all, my over-reaction usually seems entirely reasonable to me, at least at the time!...

Meet what is worst in your enemy with what is best in you. Let his wrongdoing bring out the best in you. What is best in you is not born of retaliation or hate, but of compassion and forgiveness. What is best in you is that which preserves your humanity. This is the new twist we can give to the old idea of "getting our own back" on an enemy: getting back the best and not being reduced to the worst.

Stephanie Thornton,
Finding Forgiveness

Peace be with you! It is the peace of the risen Christ. A peace that is unarmed and disarming, humble and persevering. A peace that comes from God, the God who loves us all, unconditionally.

Pope Leo XIV

Feast of the week
Thursday 16 April

St Bernadette of Lourdes (1844-1879)

St Bernadette had asthma. Interestingly, her biographers mention that she suffered from the condition before meeting Our Lady at the rock of Massabielle in Lourdes – and are silent about any adult asthma attacks. Did she "grow out" of it? Did Bernadette herself receive the first cure when obeyed Our Lady's instructions to bathe her face in the muddy pool which became the miraculous spring and future pilgrimage destination of millions of people? Was it such a "normal" part of her life that biographers overlook asthma when writing about Bernadette's other health issues which led to her death at the age of thirty-five?

Anybody who is familiar with asthma, either personally or through a family member, knows the limitations on activities – including food allergies – and freedoms which everybody else enjoys.

As we remember St Bernadette, perhaps it is also an opportunity to remember and pray for all those who suffer from asthma.

READINGS

Today:
Acts 2:42-47
1 Peter 1:3-9
John 20:19-31

Monday:
Acts 4:23-31
John 3:1-8

Tuesday:
Acts 4:32-37
John 3:7-15

Wednesday:
Acts 5:17-26
John 3:16-21

Thursday:
Acts 5:27-33
John 3:31-36

Friday:
Acts 5:34-42
John 6:1-15

Saturday:
Acts 6:1-7
John 6:16-21

Next Sunday:
Acts 2:14, 22-33
1 Peter 1:17-21
Luke 24:13-35