

SUNDAY PLUS

Sow hope!

Hidden heroes

By James Gallogly

The hidden heroes within prison walls sow seeds of hope each day. Life inside the little village of the prison is as varied and complex as any small community. Every moment is rich in opportunities to respond to the needs of others and affect the lives of others.

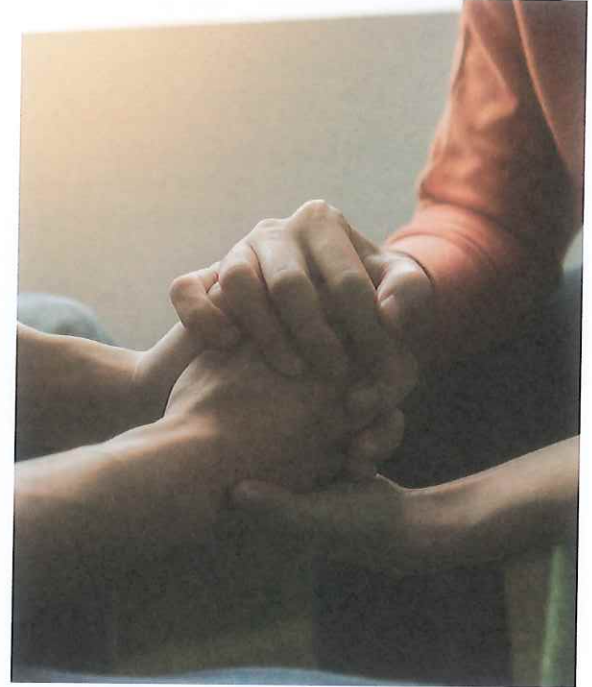
Is your local community a model of peace and harmony among all people?

Does everyone have everyone else's best intentions at heart?

Those who bring peace, harmony and the best intentions to a prison environment are building a restorative and rehabilitative environment which heals wounds, changes lives and potentially saves others: wing staff making the time to really listen and respond; mental health nurses providing gentle, clinical support; teachers addressing the needs of those whom an education system has failed; drug workers walking patiently with those plagued by addiction... All care and nurture like any good gardener.

Chaplains also walk alongside people, supporting staff and inmates in a myriad of ways. As the fig tree needs good soil in which to flourish, so those in the prison community need an environment that provides support and sustenance. Through presence, patience, persistence and prayer, chaplains till the ground around them. It can be very poor soil.

James Gallogly is a Catholic lay chaplain in a UK prison.



Faithful God,
How boundlessly you bless.
How generously you give.
How completely you love.
How faithfully you provide.
How tenderly you understand.
How fully you forgive.
How endlessly you invite.
How willingly you welcome.
How lovingly you cherish.
How compassionately you shelter.
The fullness of your kindness
Expands beyond my expectations.

Source unknown

Lord of life, the poorest people in this world are those who don't know what it is like to give or to receive love. May they discover the richness of love.
✚ Amen.



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Feast of the week
Sunday 23 November

Bl. Miguel Agustín Pro (1891-1927)

"If I meet any long-faced saints in heaven, I will cheer them up with a Mexican hat dance!"

Blessed Miguel Pro SJ joined the Jesuits in Mexico in 1911 and was ordained a priest on 31 August 1925. Known for his infectious humour, ingenuity and acting ability, Mexico's anticlerical laws forced Miguel to practise his ministry secretly and in disguise – but so successfully that he was eventually arrested and sentenced to death by firing squad on 23 November 1927. Miguel refused the blindfold and addressed his executioners, saying, "May God

have mercy on you. May God bless you! Lord, you know I am innocent! With all my heart I forgive my enemies." He then raised his arms, making of himself a crucifix, and shouted out, "Viva Cristo Rey!" (Long live Christ the King!)

The government published many photographs of Miguel's death, hoping – but failing – to intimidate Catholics, who venerated them as relics.

40,000 people accompanied his funeral procession whilst another 20,000 waited at the cemetery.



Pope Francis

A Church that sows hope is young: a prophetic Church that, by her presence, says to the broken-hearted and the outcast of the world, "Take heart, the Lord is near. For you too, summer is being born in the depths of winter. From your pain, hope can arise". Brothers and sisters, let us bring this outlook of hope to our world.

Today:
Daniel 12:1-3
Hebrews 10:11-14, 18
Mark 13:24-32

Monday:
Apocalypse 1:1-4; 2:1-5
Luke 18:35-43

Tuesday:
Apocalypse 3:1-6, 14-22
Luke 19:1-10

Wednesday:
Apocalypse 4:1-11
Luke 19:11-28

Thursday:
Apocalypse 5:1-10
Luke 19:41-44

Friday:
Apocalypse 10:8-11
Luke 19:45-48

Saturday:
Apocalypse 11:4-12
Luke 20:27-40

Next Sunday:
Daniel 7:13-14
Apocalypse 1:5-8
John 18:33-37

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