

SUNDAY PLUS

Second chances

Rebuild lives

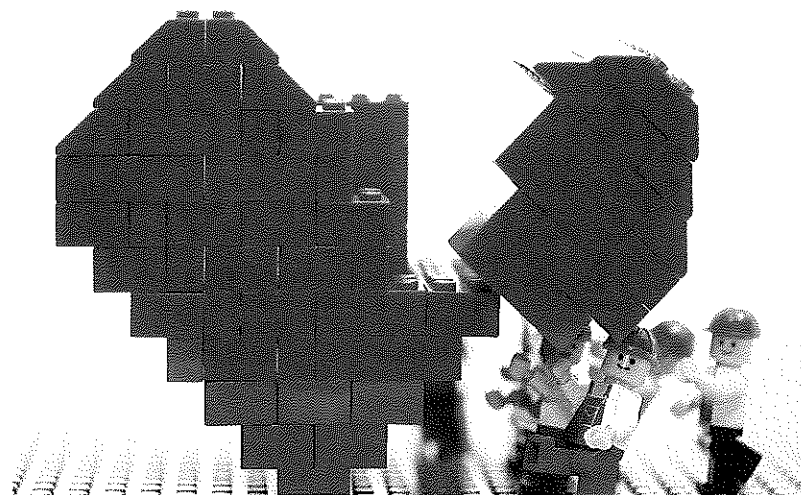
By James Gallogly

Prison lends itself to the opportunity to seek a second chance. Those who seize that opportunity can rebuild their lives and return to society to repair damage and offer a positive contribution. In most cases seeking such an opportunity requires a firm purpose of amendment and fruitful conditions for this to flourish.

Sadly, our prison system is currently anything but fertile ground. However, that does not stop the love of God if it is made welcome and embraced. Increasingly, our men are meeting God on the "holy ground" of our World Faith room where the Alpha group gathers. Here, the

spiritual food and drink St Paul explained to the Corinthians is shared in the programme and the witness of its outstanding volunteers. They "dig round and manure" the faith of men who recognise God's love and mercy for them.

In these lively encounters, fuelled by caffeine and better biscuits than usual, God's plan becomes a clearer path. He promises us that there is a way out of any trial and that we will be granted the strength to bear it. Our Alpha group is a reminder that this is not a solitary exercise. Second chances benefit from having someone to grant them, to remind us that there is a better way than the one to which



we have become a slave. We need someone to help us dig and nourish the growth. We need others to help guide us, forgive us, welcome us

into that new way which secures that second chance.

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

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This is how Jesus deals with each of us: he asks us to welcome him into the boat of our life, to begin again with him and set out on a new sea, that turns out to be full of surprises. Jesus' invitation gives new meaning to our existence.

Try again


By Natalie Claveria

None of us goes about our lives planning mistakes. However, on life's bumpy track, sometimes we stumble and find ourselves somewhat fallen. Our kind and wonderful God wants us to enjoy our life and make the most of every moment we have. He sees the good in us, even when we do not see it ourselves. Aren't we lucky to have that never-failing love and compassion and, most importantly, forgiveness. It is said that a mistake is only a mistake if we do not learn from it. Of course,

Pope Francis

we do not plan to mess up, but if we do, God will forgive us. When I was out driving the other day, my son commented on a bright orange, old rusty Land Rover. He said, "Wow, Mum, look at that car, I bet that's been on some journeys!" I replied, "Yes, but far better for it to have been loved and used and on adventures, rather than sat idle, static, in pristine condition, never daring to venture anywhere." So, in this Jubilee year, let us each be a pilgrim of hope and keep journeying on the road of life, to become the best version of ourselves, as God intended.

In addition to being a busy mum and active in her parish, Natalie Claveria is also the Head of Sales, Distribution & Customer Experience for Redemptorist Publications.

Jesus, Lord, on Palm Sunday the same people praised you who would condemn you to death only a few days later. Yet you didn't blame them. You forgave them and prayed for them. Help me to follow your example.  Amen.

Jubilee 2025:
Pilgrims of Hope

28 March:
24 Hours for the Lord



"24 Hours for the Lord" is an annual worldwide event which Pope Francis began in 2014 and takes place on the Friday and Saturday before the fourth Sunday of Lent. It focuses on prayer and reconciliation, offering people the chance to receive the sacrament of reconciliation within the context of Eucharistic adoration. For this reason, a church in every diocese across the world keeps its doors open for the entire 24-hour period.

As Pope Francis said in 2024, "Let us not renounce God's forgiveness, the sacrament of reconciliation: it is not a practice of devotion, but rather the foundation of Christian existence; it is not a question of knowing how to say our sins well, but of recognising ourselves as sinners and throwing ourselves into the arms of the crucified Jesus to be set free; it is not a moralistic gesture, but the resurrection of the heart. The risen Lord resurrects us, all of us."

Today:
Exodus 3:1-8a, 13-15
1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 10-12
Luke 13:1-9

Monday:
2 Kings 5:1-15b
Luke 4:21-30

Tuesday:
Isaiah 7:10-14; 8:10
Hebrews 10:4-10
Luke 1:26-38

Wednesday:
Deuteronomy 4:1, 5-9
Matthew 5:17-19

Thursday:
Jeremiah 7:23-28
Luke 11:14-23

Friday:
Hosea 14:2-10
Mark 12:28-34

Saturday:
Hosea 5:15 - 6:6
Luke 18:9-14

Next Sunday:
Joshua 5:9a-12
2 Corinthians 5:17-21
Luke 15:1-3, 11-32