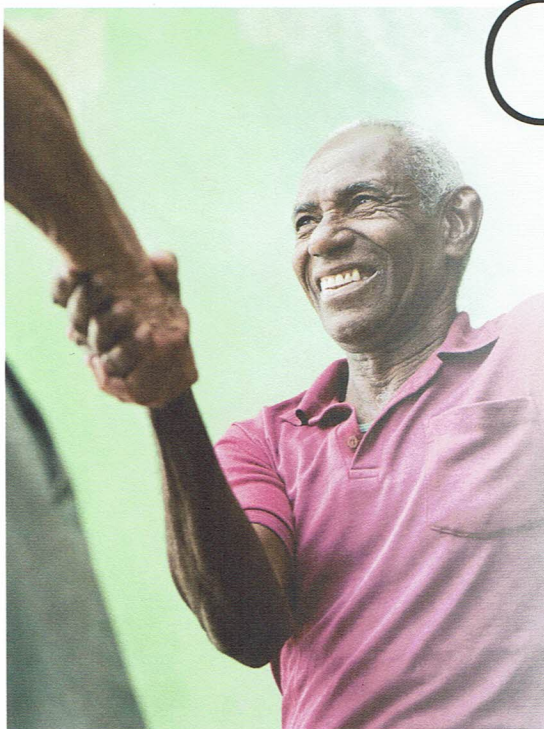


# SUNDAY PLUS



Make peace

A Year of the Word



## Choose peace

by James Gallogly

**W**hen the cell door slams shut and the jangle of keys slowly fades into the distance, the space for reconciliation grows large. This void holds a myriad of monsters. Among them are guilt, shame and despair. Self-pity is sometimes found; at other times self-loathing. None help.

What does help is the recognition that to “be reconciled” is the pathway to rehabilitation.

Our daily lives are overwhelmed by the quick fix, the short cut, the fast track. We are constantly

bombarded with images on a variety of platforms which seductively sell a better everything. A beautiful tomorrow is only a swipe away. A happy-ever-after is available in several monthly instalments.

No surprise then, that when disaster strikes, we are unable to see the wood for the trees. There should be a quick and easy, reasonably priced answer. There isn't.

By the time the cell door has shut it is likely that many opportunities to be reconciled have been missed. It is also likely that the list of those with whom one has to be reconciled is long.

Jesus tells his audience in no uncertain terms to “be reconciled” on the way to court: otherwise prison looms.

In the courtroom of daily life there are opportunities to make peace with each other before the situation gets out of hand. A smile rather than a frown, a pause rather than a cutting remark, praise rather than a put down; each has its merit in seeking a peaceful outcome.

James Gallogly is a lay Catholic prison chaplain.

## It's worth it!

by Sue McDermott OBE

I love sharing the sign of peace during Mass, especially when eyes and hearts speak with love and meaning, truly recognising the depth and importance of those simple human words: “Peace be with you”.

I struggle when the words “Peace be with you” are said mechanically without eyes and heart and love. That tends to happen when we have been “invisible visitors” to parishes where we receive no words of welcome, no recognition, no “Happy Easter”. With a six-foot six husband, it's not that folk don't notice us!

Each of us needs to be aware of the danger of hypocrisy, even when offering “Peace be with you.” The Gospel requires me to speak “heart to heart” and that means putting my own house and my own heart in order. But I need to remind myself that God calls me to be authentic, not perfect.

It's often difficult but it's worth it!

Sue McDermott OBE is the Non-Executive Director of Rainbows Bereavement Support GB, is also the author of *Children and Loss: caring for yourself and others*, available from Redemptorist Publications, [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk)

**Peace is never still but always moves forward. It starts with the soul, and after making its journey of peace, returns to the soul. Making peace is a bit like imitating God. When he wanted to make peace with us and forgave us, he sent his Son to make peace, to be the Prince of Peace... The Lord will give you the ability to understand how to make peace and will provide you with the strength to make it.”**

Pope Francis

**Lord of Peace, why is it so hard for us to build a world of peace? Teach us compassion and understanding. Give us the wisdom to know when to speak and when to keep silent. Help us to become peacemakers ☩ Amen.**

## Classroom creativity

by Mary Bell

Many years ago, a supply teacher was sent to teach maths to our class of thirteen-year-old girls. She was meek and apt to get flustered. Ours had the reputation of being the worst class in the school. It was decided that we would all give false names, so the Esmeraldas, Ermintrudes and Hermiones all giggled uncontrollably throughout the lesson and the poor woman dissolved into tears.

Sitting out our punishment on the hard gymnasium floor, we fell to recriminations: “It was your idea.”

“No, it wasn't. You thought of it.” As the form captain, it fell to me to confess what had happened to the headmistress.

The class decided to hold a collection for some flowers and a suitable note accompanied the bouquet. The teacher was magnanimous in accepting our apology and peace was restored. As I recollect, I resigned as form captain although nobody seemed to hold anything against me.

This is a true story. We continued to be the best of friends.

Mary Bell is a grandmother and a retired teacher who continues to use her skills in the University of the Third Age.

Today:  
Ecclesiasticus 15:15-20  
1 Corinthians 2:6-10  
Matthew 5:17-37

Monday:  
James 1:1-11  
Mark 8:11-13

Tuesday:  
James 1:12-18  
Mark 8:14-21

Wednesday:  
James 1:19-27  
Mark 8:22-26

Thursday:  
James 2:1-9  
Mark 8:27-33

Friday:  
James 2:14-24, 26  
Mark 8:34 - 9:1

Saturday:  
1 Peter 5:1-4  
Matthew 16:13-19

Next Sunday:  
Leviticus 19:1-2, 17-18  
1 Corinthians 3:16-23  
Matthew 5:38-48

