

Bring us bread – and roses

SUNDAY *Plus*

Divine Mercy Sunday

16th Sunday in Ordinary Time **Divine Office Week IV** Year A

They didn't walk alone

Liverpool at the time had a population of about 210,000. But 1847 saw the Irish potato famine at its height, and some 300,000 people in this single year paid the sixpence fare to flee to Liverpool. There, those that stayed – some 60,000 to 80,000 – found themselves living in appalling poverty, in overcrowded and insanitary courts, alleys and cellars. Epidemics of fever, cholera, and dysentery ran rampant...

The number of orphans skyrocketed, and homeless children were everywhere, with some 23,000 running wild along Liverpool docks... "Nobody's Children", who, as [Fr James Nugent] said: "roam unheeded about those crowded thoroughfares and along those five miles of docks, desolate and homeless wanderers, without a heart to love them or a hand to guide them. They prowl about that busy city, the keen and cunning succeeding by various devices to live, whilst others suffer all the hardships of hunger and absolute want."

"In the long cold winter nights, when the snow lies thick upon the ground, and the stormy winter's blast makes comfortable luxury draw close to the fireside, the birds of the air have their resting places,

and the very dogs their warm kennels, but these poor little ones huddle together under railway arches, in empty boxes, over bakers' ovens; in fact, anywhere to get a little heat and protection from the frosty and nipping night air. How many die of actual starvation and are buried in the paupers' heap without a mourner to follow their coffin, or a single tear shed over their grave?"

For children, the streets became "the schools of crime". Yet Fr Nugent saw not only potential criminals in the making, but "genius and talent running to waste in the gutters"... opening "Ragged Schools", of which some thirty-two existed by 1853. They provided shelter, food and clothing, and endeavoured to find work for the children. Since the children still had to fend for themselves at night, the next step was the creation of night shelters and refuges, which later added the teaching of trades...

Such work could not be accomplished by one man alone, and Fr Nugent was able to enlist the help not only of other clergy but concerned lay people and various associations – not all of which were Catholic. Fr Nugent welcomed the help

of all charitable people.

As noted by Canon Bennett, "To enlist the aid of enlightened Protestantism in Liverpool for the salvation of the child was Fr Nugent's greatest service to the Church in Liverpool, if not the whole of England. It broke down barriers, scotched prejudice where it did not make it hang its head in shame, created a more tolerant atmosphere, and... brought about the recognition of the social work performed by the priests of the town, and its influence on the character of the Catholic citizens."

Andrew Seddon,
This England, 5 August 2020



Fr James Nugent, Wikipedia



Feast of the week
Wednesday 22 July

St Mary Magdalene

St Mary Magdalene, a devoted follower of Jesus, is celebrated as the Apostle to the Apostles for her profound witness to Christ's resurrection. Originating from Magdala near the Sea of Galilee, Jesus healed her by apparently casting out seven demons, symbolising her deep spiritual restoration. Mary became a steadfast disciple, supporting Jesus' ministry and remaining with him through his passion. She stood at the foot of the cross when others fled, and on Easter morning, she was the first to encounter the risen Christ. Her experience in the garden, where Jesus called her by name, marks a pivotal moment of recognition and mission. Though often misidentified as a repentant sinner, modern scholarship distinguishes her as a woman of courage, faith and leadership. She invites us to embrace healing and proclaim hope. Her faithfulness to Jesus even in sorrow and uncertainty, exemplifies a woman's ability to support someone she loves, regardless of the personal cost.

READINGS

Today:
Isaiah 55:10-11
Romans 8:18-23
Matthew 13:1-23

Monday:
Micah 6:1-4, 6-8
Matthew 12:38-42

Tuesday:
Micah 7:14-15, 18-20
Matthew 12:46-50

Wednesday:
Song of Songs 3:1-4
John 20:1-2, 11-18

Thursday:
Jeremiah 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13
Matthew 13:10-17

Friday:
Jeremiah 3:14-17
Matthew 13:18-23

Saturday:
2 Corinthians 4:7-15
Matthew 20:20-28

Next Sunday:
1 Kings 3:5, 7-12
Romans 8:28-30
Matthew 13:44-52

Lord Jesus, teach me to listen, love and rest in your presence, but let me not forget the needs of the people around me. + Amen.

I encourage you to remain committed and present: present within history as a leaven of unity, communion and fraternity.

Pope Leo XIV