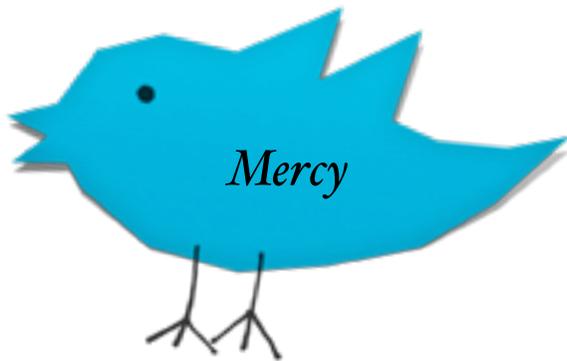




easter



lectionary  
reading

## Cycle C

### Second Sunday of Easter (Sunday of Divine Mercy)

Lectionary #45

#### Reading I: Acts 5: 12-16

On this Second Sunday of Easter, now commonly referred to as Divine Mercy Sunday, we hear this reading about the extraordinary **mercy** of God. Peter and the other disciples, formerly crippled by their fear, have now found great strength in the resurrected Christ and fearlessly preach and heal in his name. This **mercy**, as emphasized by Pope Francis, is to be the dominant mark of what it means to be the Church of Jesus Christ in the world today.

#### Reading 2: Revelation 1: 9-11a, 12-13, 17-19

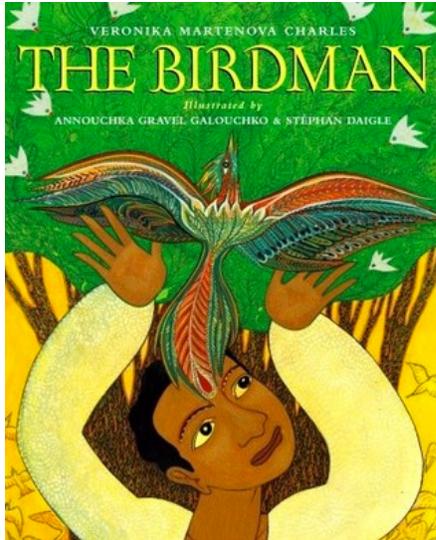
The Book of Revelation is often referred to as apocalyptic literature and is distinct in its imagery and mystery. Saint John writes to others who are caught in the *distress*. He himself has been exiled to an island but is not saddened by this, for he experiences the **mercy** of God. In a vision, John is told to *write down, therefore, what you have seen, and what is happening, and what will happen afterwards*. These words of hope reveal the unending **mercy** that God wishes to bestow upon the human race through the person of Jesus Christ.

#### Gospel: John 20: 19-31

The setting for this passage finds the apostles clinging to one another out of fear and hiding because they have lost their anchor (Jesus). When Jesus appears to them, he greets them with **mercy**: *Peace be with you*. As the story progresses, Jesus says another **merciful** phrase and gives the apostles the command to be elements of forgiveness in the world. The Church is called to continue extending this **mercy** today.



## children's story



### *The Birdman*

Written by Veronika Charles

Illustrated by Annouchka Galouchko and  
Stephan Daigle

Publication: 2006 Tundra

ISBN-10: 0887767401

ISBN-13: 978-0887767401



character  
education  
activity

**Our prayer and God's mercy  
are like two buckets in a well;  
while the one ascends the  
other descends.  
-Mark Hopkins**

## *The Birdman*

Set in Calcutta, this story is based on a real person. Noor Nobi sews clothes to support his three children. When they are lost in an accident, he is overwhelmed with despair and is unable to work. After some time passes, he finds himself walking through a market when he notices a cage crammed with birds. He longs to free them. With the little money that he has in his pockets, he buys one of the birds and sets it free. He is moved by **mercy** and compassion for the birds and their condition. He resolves to work harder and earn more money in order to free more of the birds. He continues this work of **mercy** and compassion and finds that he not only enjoys freeing the birds, but that he is able to nurse the injured birds back to health. This is truly a story of grief that is transformed by **mercy**.

## *Who Has Shown Mercy?*

This is an opportunity for the students to identify and look at some of the official saints of the Church and other saintly people that they know of who have and continue to be examples of God's **mercy** in the world.

Step One: Explain the virtues of **mercy** and compassion using the story of one saint that you know to have shown **mercy** in the world, such as Saint Vincent de Paul. Then, offer an example of someone who you know personally who lives out God's **mercy** and compassion in the world.

Step Two: Brainstorm two sets of saints with the students: those men and women who have been canonized by the Church, and people who they know who have done works of compassion and **mercy**.

Step Three: Provide the students with a piece paper. Have them fold it in half; on one side, have them depict a saint of the church who is committed to **mercy**, and on the other side, have them depict the person who they know personally who does works of **mercy**.

Step Four: Have them label the top of each panel with the title: God's **Mercy** Made Known Through Us!

**Mercy: the bridge that connects God and humanity, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.**  
-Pope Francis



case study

**Look.  
Feel.  
Know.  
Act.**

## What could you do today?

In the story of *The Birdman*, you were able to see that even in the midst of his sorrow and despair, Noor's heart was moved out of **mercy** for the caged birds. Think of someone that might be held down by some sorrow or hurt in their life, and think of how you might do something kind to be an element of **mercy** in their life. It might be as simple as a smile. Look around and see people who seem sad or burdened and think about what you might be able to do to lighten their burden, for lightening someone's burden is an act of **mercy**.

## Look Feel Know Act

Think about a time when you felt sad or "caged in" like the birds in *The Birdman*. Try to remember whether someone said or did something that helped you feel better. Once you have recalled this story and the effect that that kindness or **mercy** had on you, realize that you are also able to be an element of God's **mercy** in very simple ways. Commit yourself to doing those things and being that element of God's **mercy**, love, and kindness in the world around you and beyond. Remember that acts of **mercy** and kindness can be done for people that we don't even know if we support organizations like the Salvation Army, Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities, and other service associations. This could also be an activity that you and your family members may wish to do together.



closing  
tool

The word of God can actually free us and motivate us to be God's **mercy** in the world. Just as Noor Nobi was moved to free the caged and injured birds in the story *The Birdman*, so too can we be moved by **mercy** to make things better for others. Saint Teresa of Lisieux, also known as the Little Flower, was known to say that **mercy** and kindness can be expressed in something as simple as a smile or a gentle hello. Surely we can all do these things to alleviate the difficulties that others face.

**Lord God, may I give you honor and praise by doing the good and kindly things that are needed by the people and the opportunities you place in my life's path. Allow me, Lord, to clearly see the people who are in need of your mercy and help me to respond as you would. Amen.**



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