

In the hot summer of 2021, Italy faced extreme heat, especially in Rome. Pope Francis, known for his compassion, wanted to help those suffering the most—prisoners. Recognising how difficult the heat would be in prison, he sent 15,000 ice creams to inmates in several Roman prisons, offering relief and comfort during the heatwave.

This gesture went beyond just a cold treat; it showed compassion, kindness, and that even those in prison deserve dignity and care. The prisoners, who had little relief from the heat, were moved by the Pope's thoughtful action, feeling connected to the outside world. It reflected Pope Francis's message of mercy and care for the marginalised, reminding us that everyone, no matter their situation, deserves to feel valued.

Q. What do you think the Pope's decision to send ice creams to prisoners teaches us about showing kindness and compassion to others, even in tough situations?

Q. How can small acts of kindness, help make people feel valued and cared for, even in difficult circumstances?



St. Pachomius was an Egyptian pagan captured by Romans in 313 A.D. During his captivity, Christians often brought food and comfort to him and the other prisoners. Moved by their kindness, Pachomius became curious about Christianity. After his release, he converted and went on to become one of the founders of communal monastic life. He is now known as St. Pachomius.

Q. How does the story of St. Pachomius teach us about the significance of supporting those in prison?

Q. How does this inspire us to live out our faith and care for others in our daily lives?



The Church is more than just a service provider; it is a powerful voice for social justice and change. Through its understanding of both the beauty and struggles of humanity, the Church can bring light to the darkness of crime and punishment, while upholding the dignity of everyone involved in the justice system.

Visiting those in prison is seen as visiting Christ himself. As Christians, we are called to support not only the victims and offenders but also their families and the wider community affected by crime. At the core of this is the belief that justice and mercy can go hand in hand, both in principle and in action. *Taken from Remember Me: CBEW Document*

Q. What does justice look like? What does mercy look like? What do they look like when they work together?

Q. As Vincentians, how can work to bring both justice and mercy into our communities? How can we balance justice and mercy in our actions?



'Loving an oppressor does not mean allowing him to keep oppressing us, or letting him think that what he does is acceptable' *Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti (2020)*

Q. What does Pope Francis mean in this statement? What does that love look like?

Q. What do you think Pope Francis meant when he said loving an oppressor doesn't mean allowing them to keep oppressing others? How can we show love while standing up for justice?



Punishments should protect society while respecting the dignity of every person, as all are loved by God and capable of redemption. Sentences should balance maintaining order and punishing crime, while giving hope for change. This is central to Catholic social teaching, which values the dignity of every individual. *Pope John Paul II, Address to the National Association of Magistrates on Contemporary Role of the Judiciary (2000)*

Q. How do you think can we balance holding people accountable for their actions while also offering them a chance for redemption and change? How does Hope change things?

Q. How can we ensure that justice system protects society while also respecting the dignity and potential for change in every person?

"Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.'" *Matthew 18:21-22*

Q. What do you think Jesus' teaching on forgiveness means for how we should treat those in prison or those who have wronged us?

Q. How can Jesus' teaching on forgiveness guide the way we respond to those within the justice system, especially repeat offenders, while still recognising both accountability and the possibility of change?



Two prisoners from Rome's Rebibbia prison received special permission to attend Pope Leo XIV's general audience. Accompanied by the prison chaplain and director, they were deeply moved by the Pope's kindness and his words: "He said that we can all be called by the Lord at some point in life; even in the worst moments when we feel most inadequate, the Lord always comes to meet us." Despite their crimes, the inmates were encouraged by the message that everyone has the right to start over. In gratitude, they handcrafted a silver "Cross of Hope" as a gift for the Pope, symbolising their desire for renewal and a positive future.

Q. In what ways can acts of kindness and personal connection, like the prisoners meeting the Pope, impact someone's journey toward redemption?

Q. How can we as a community support people who are seeking a fresh start after making mistakes?

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven." *Luke 6:37*

Q. How challenging is the above scripture?

Q. What are the biggest barriers and challenges to forgiving and not judging others?