



Dear Friends,

The second Sunday after Easter – this Sunday coming - has a lot of names!

In the Eastern tradition it is called Thomas Sunday, because, as John 20:24-29 recounts, it was one week after Easter morning that Jesus' disciple Thomas encountered the risen Jesus and saw his wounds for himself.

In Western Christianity, the second Sunday has been known as White Sunday, from the white robes worn throughout that week by those who had been baptised at Easter. It was also called Quasimodo Sunday, from the Latin liturgy for this day, which begins with the phrase; *Quasi modo géniti infántes...* (English: As newborn babes...) And this is why, fans of Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* will know, the character Quasimodo gets this name because he was abandoned on the doorstep of Notre Dame cathedral on the Sunday after Easter!

This Sunday is also called Low Sunday and there are several theories why. Perhaps because Easter Sunday is High Sunday or because the word 'low' is a corruption of *laudes*, the first Latin word to appear in one of the liturgies, or because – and this is my own theory – after all the energy required for the Easter weekend, ministers feel a little 'low' the Sunday after!

In the Catholic church, this Sunday is now designated Divine Mercy Sunday and the Sacrament of Reconciliation is offered on this Sunday.

Another name for this Sunday in the Eastern tradition, however, is Bright Sunday, the Sunday after Bright Week, the week of celebrations that follow Easter Sunday. According to the 66th canon of the Council of Trullo, "From the holy day of the Resurrection of Christ our God until New Sunday for a whole week the faithful in the holy churches should continually be repeating psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, rejoicing and celebrating Christ, and attending to the reading of the Divine Scriptures and delighting in the Holy Mysteries."

In many places this week and day was marked by clergy and congregations playing practical jokes on each other, singing, dancing and having fun, and in more recent times this tradition has been rebirthed as Holy Humour Sunday. So the second Sunday in Easter has yet another name!

I don't know about you, but the events of the last six weeks, and the escalation of both language and loss of life in the US and Israel's war against Iran, feels like an impossible time to mark Bright Sunday or Holy Humour Sunday. But maybe laughter is what we need now. As G.K. Chesterton wrote: "Angels can fly because they take themselves lightly. Never forget that the devil fell by force of gravity. He who has the faith has the fun."

So rather than continue to despair (and also pray) over the news, I thought, this week, I would also look for some Trump jokes, which if you have tried to do, is not that easy. But here, in honour of Holy Humour week, are two. May he or she who has the faith have the fun! And may the fun help us to keep the faith, and keep praying for peace, and keep working for peace in every area of our lives that we can.

A man died one day and went to heaven. As he stood in front of St. Peter at the Pearly Gates he saw a huge wall of clocks behind him.

He asked, "What are all those clocks?"

St. Peter replied, "Those are lie clocks. Everyone on earth has a lie-clock. Every time you lie the hands on the clock will move."

"Oh," said the man as he pointed at one of them, "Whose clock is that?"

St. Peter replied, "That's Mother Teresa's. The hands have never moved, indicating that she never told a lie."

"That's incredible," said the man.

St. Peter pointed to another clock, "That's Abraham Lincoln's clock. The hands have moved twice, telling us that Abe only told two lies in his entire life."

The man was impressed, and then asked, "Where's Donald Trump's clock?"

St. Peter said, "His clock is in Jesus' office. He's using it as a ceiling fan."

The Pope and Donald Trump are on stage in front of a huge crowd.

The Pope leaned towards Trump and said, "Do you know that with one little wave of my hand I can make every person in this crowd go wild with joy? This joy will not be a momentary display, like that of your followers, but go deep into their hearts and for the rest of their lives whenever

they speak of this day, they will rejoice!”Trump replied, “I seriously doubt that. With one little wave of your hand? Show me!”

So the Pope slapped him.

Grace and peace – and laughter – be with you,

Belinda