

same man Paul greets in his letter to Rome, whom he calls “chosen in the Lord” and whose mother “has been a mother to me “(**Romans 16:13**). Paul’s knowledge of Rufus’ family indicates that at some point they lived further east.

So, does this mean that Simon was African? Ultimately, we don’t know for sure. It’s possible that he was an African who converted to Judaism, or that he was of mixed descent. Does his inclusion signify/stress the universality of the gospel?  
**-Bernard Kellett**

**Entrance antiphon: Like newborn infants , you must long for the pure, spiritual milk, that in him you may grow to salvation, alleluia.**

**First Reading: Acts 2: 42-47**

**Psalm 117: Response: Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his love has no end.**

**Second Reading: 1Peter 1: 3-9**

**Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! Jesus said : ‘You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe’. Alleluia!**

**Gospel: John 20: 19-31**

**Memorial Acclamation: Save us, Saviour of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection you have set us free.**

**Communion Antiphon: Bring your hand and feel the place of the nails, and do not be unbelieving but believing, alleluia.**



## **Second Sunday of Easter (Or Of Divine Mercy)**

### **Cycle A, 2023 Weekly Reflection:**

**Simon of Cyrene?** Simon of Cyrene is mentioned in three of the four Gospels as the man impelled by the Romans to carry Jesus’ cross out of Jerusalem. His

place of origin has led many to wonder if he was of African descent, or if he was simply born there as were many others of Greek, Roman and Jewish descent.

Cyrene was situated in modern day Libya, on the northern coast of the African continent. Settled by the Greeks in 630 B.C. and later infused with a significant Jewish population, Cyrene was the capitol of the Roman district of Cyrenaica at the time of Jesus’ crucifixion. By then, Cyrene was home to a large number of Greek speaking, or Hellenistic Jews. It was a major cultural centre of Greek philosophy and medicine.

Many Jews from Cyrene had returned to their native Israel and were part of the community in Jerusalem called the Synagogue of the Freedmen comprising Jews from many other provinces including Alexandria (Egypt), Cilicia and Asia (**Acts 6:9**). Luke records men from Cyrene being among those converted at Pentecost (**Acts 2.10**). After the martyrdom of Stephen (**Acts 7**), believers from Cyrene were among the first to be scattered by the persecution of Jerusalem; arriving in Antioch they preached to the Gentiles there (**Acts 11:20**). These believers were instrumental in the formation of the church in Antioch, where, for the first time, “the disciples were called Christians” (**Acts 11:26**).

Simon of Cyrene is mentioned in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Matthew only records his name and place of origin (**27:32**) but Mark and Luke say that he was “on his way in from the country” (**Luke 23:26**). Mark provides the most information about Simon, adding he was “the father of Alexander and Rufus” (**Mark 15:21**). It is speculated that the Rufus mentioned here may be the