

LIVING FAITH

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

July 18, 2021



THE GOSPEL FOR TODAY

Mark 6:30-34

The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. He said to them, ‘Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while.’ For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a deserted place by themselves. Now many saw them going and recognized them, and they hurried there on foot from all the towns and arrived ahead of them. As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

TAKING THE GOSPEL HOME

In today’s Gospel, the disciples, sent out in last week’s Gospel story to proclaim the Good News, return, and Jesus takes them away to an isolated place in order to allow them to share their experiences, pray over them, and grow from them.

But Jesus’ plans are tossed aside when He is followed by the crowd. Instead of devoting His time to His disciples, Jesus directs His attention and love to the hungry crowd. He is moved with compassion for them, because they need Him. He recognizes that they are like sheep without a shepherd, and He begins to teach them.

Do you ever find that you “never get anything done” because of the demands people place on you? Sometimes we can get angry and upset by this. Jesus teaches us to be compassionate, and to reach out to others in love.

CONVERSATION STARTERS....

- How do you attend to the needs of the people around you?
- How do you tend to respond when something or somebody disrupts your plans?
- How can you grow in compassion?

THE CHURCH TEACHES COMPASSION: SOME THOUGHTS FROM POPE FRANCIS

Pope Francis invites us to open our hearts to compassion, urging us not to “close ourselves” in indifference.

He reflected on the Gospel reading of the day which tells of Jesus’ encounter with a widow in the city of Nain who is mourning the death of her only son as he taken to the grave. The evangelist does not say that Jesus had compassion, the Pope said, but that “the Lord was moved with compassion,” as if he had been overwhelmed with the sentiment.



The ‘lens’ of the heart

The Pope elaborated further saying it was by looking through “the lens” of compassion that Jesus sees and understands the reality of that woman. *“Compassion allows you to see reality; compassion is like the lens of the heart: it allows us to take in and understand the true dimensions. In the Gospels, Jesus is often moved by compassion. And compassion is also the language of God,”* he said.



Pope Francis noted that compassion makes its appearance in the Bible long before the arrival of Christ: it was God who said to Moses, “I have witnessed the affliction of my people,” and it is thanks to the compassion of God that He sends Moses to save the people.

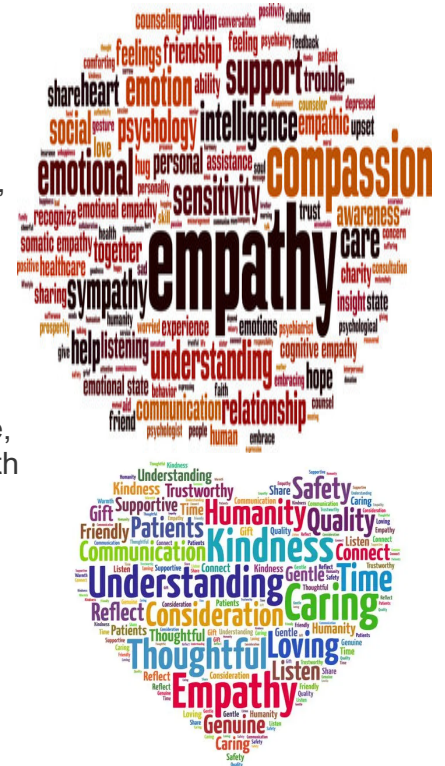
“Our God is a God of compassion, and compassion - we can say – is the weakness of God, but also His strength,” he said. Pope Francis went on to elaborate on the fact that compassion is not a feeling of pity, a sentiment he explained, one would feel for example when seeing a dog die on the road. It is when compassion takes hold he explained, “we get involved in the problems of others”.

Drawing again from the Gospel, the Pope referred to the parable of the multiplication of the loaves. He recalled when Jesus told the disciples to feed the crowd while they wanted to dismiss those present and send them off to buy themselves something to eat. “The disciples were prudent,” the Pope said, “I believe that at that moment Jesus was angry, in his heart”, and when he heard their answer he urged them “to give them food!”

“The Lord had compassion because he saw these people as sheep without a shepherd,” said the Pope, noting that the Gospel speaks, on one hand, of Jesus’ gesture of compassion, and on the other of the selfish attitude of the disciples who “seek a solution without compromise, who do not get their hands dirty, as if to leave those people to get on with it:

“If compassion is the language of God, so often human language is that of indifference,” he said.

We must ask ourselves, he said: “How many times do we look away...? By doing so we close the door to compassion,” he continued, inviting those present “to make an examination of conscience” and ask themselves whether they let the Holy Spirit take them along the road to compassion. “That it is a virtue of God,” he said.

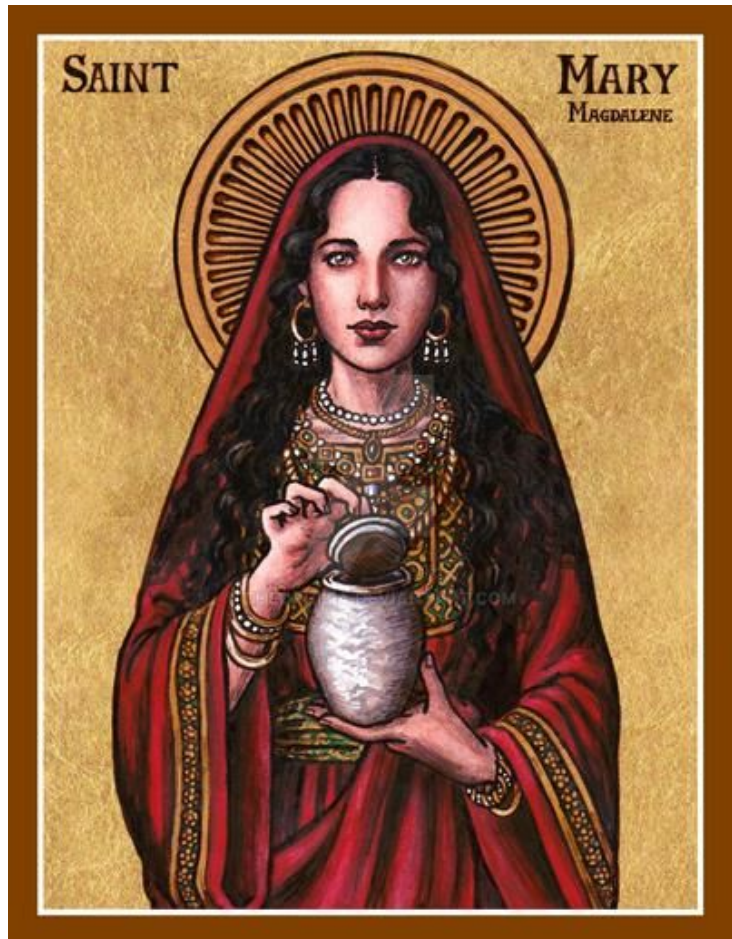


THURSDAY, JULY 22

ST. MARY MAGDALENE- MISSIONARY DISCIPLE

Mary Magdalene, sometimes called Mary of Magdala, was a Jewish woman who, according to the four canonical gospels, traveled with Jesus as one of his followers and was a witness to his crucifixion and its aftermath. She is mentioned by name twelve times in the canonical gospels, more than most of the apostles and more than any other non-family woman in the Gospels.

The Gospel of Luke 8:2–3 lists Mary Magdalene as one of the women who traveled with Jesus and helped support his ministry "out of their resources", indicating that she was probably relatively wealthy. The same passage also states that seven demons had been driven out of her, a statement which is repeated in the longer ending of Mark.



In all four canonical gospels, Mary Magdalene is a witness to the crucifixion of Jesus and, in the Synoptic Gospels, she is also present at his burial. All four gospels identify her, either alone or as a member of a larger group of women which includes Jesus's mother, as the first to witness the empty tomb, and the first to witness Jesus's resurrection.

For these reasons, Mary Magdalene is known in some Christian traditions as the apostle to the apostles. As the first to proclaim the Resurrection of Jesus, we count her as the first missionary disciple.