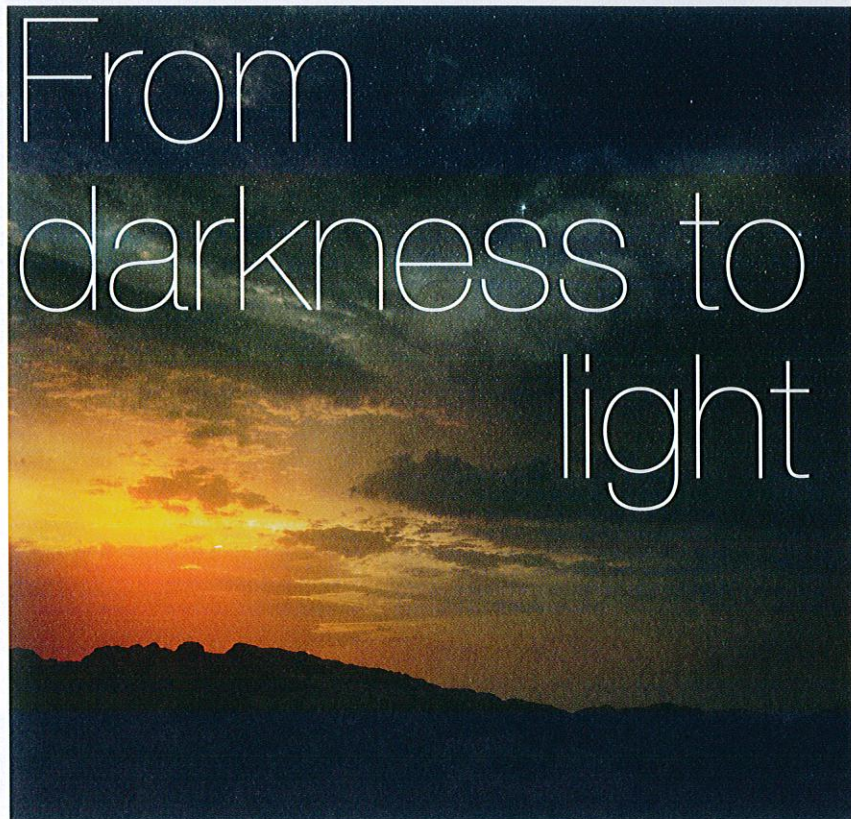


SUNDAY PLUS

Apostle to the apostles



by Sr Mary Burke
FMDM

Mary of Magdala sets out early on the first day of the week while it was "still dark". We are all aware that there is a journey to be made between the "dark" of imminent dawn to the place of faith, at the end of this Gospel, where the unnamed disciple "saw and believed". The "dark" Mary experiences is not just the absence of daylight: it also reflects Mary's innermost state, one where the shadows of fear, loss and grief cloud her heart and mind.

In her search for Jesus, Mary reaches out to those around her. She calls Peter and the other disciple to come with her to the tomb. In the "dark" of her own sorrow, she seeks comfort in being

with those she knows. Since our last Easter Sunday, many of us too have experienced sorrow, darkness and loss. In our search for Jesus, we have relied on "other disciples" to help us make this difficult journey. "Our seeing and believing" has been made real by sharing our suffering, grief and loss with one another. As with Mary and the early disciples the passion of Jesus has been given a sharper focus and some very courageous people have literally laid down their lives for others. Through them Christ has appeared in our midst, darkness has been overcome by the light of kindness and we have glimpsed the resurrection of Jesus in the emergence of a more loving and compassionate world.

Sr Mary Burke is a Franciscan Missionary of the Divine Motherhood.

Iconic woman

by Moire O'Sullivan

None of us is perfect. We have all done things we regret.

Mary Magdalene wasn't perfect either. She was very aware of the many mistakes she had made in her life.

Even though Jesus forgave all of her transgressions, Mary could have continued to feel ashamed. She could have told herself that she wasn't good enough to be friends with such a formidable man as Jesus.

How many times have you told yourself that you're not good enough for something or someone?

Mary could have let her regrets affect her self-esteem. She could have convinced herself that she wasn't fit to mourn the death of a sinless man.

What Mary shows us today is

that we need to rise above the criticism and believe we are good enough. We need to block out the disapproval from others when we have already made amends. And we need to silence the negativity that we so often inflict on ourselves.

Moire O'Sullivan is a mountain instructor and author based in Northern Ireland. She derives her inspiration from her time as a Mill Hill lay missionary in Kenya and an NGO worker throughout Africa and Asia. Her latest book, *A Quarter Glass of Milk* will be published in spring 2021.

Risen Jesus, Mary recognised your voice when you spoke her name. It was something so simple, so personal, so loving. Thank you for the many ways in which you speak to me through others. ☩ Amen.

Leading where others follow

by Linda Jones

What does it mean to be a leader? It doesn't always mean that you're the one who is standing up at the front telling people what to do. It can be about being known for your strength and courage. Or for your listening skills, or your integrity. Not many of Mary of Magdala's words are recorded in the Gospels and yet everyone knows who she is. She is brave and stands at the foot of the cross. She clearly has a deep love for Jesus. And she is well-respected by the disciples. They listen to her. Other women were clearly present alongside Jesus during his lifetime, like Martha and Mary.

Who are the women you know today who play important roles in your parish? What makes them

strong leaders? Everyone in the parish has something to offer the community. What are your strengths? Are you a leader?

Linda Jones is Head of the CAFOD Theology Programme and a regular contributor to Redemptorist Publications' *Living Word* and *Weekday Living Word*.

"It is as she is stooping near the tomb, her eyes filled with tears, that God surprises her in the most unexpected way... How nice it is to think that the first apparition of the Risen One, according to the Gospels, took place in such a personal way!"

Pope Francis

Today:
Acts 10:34-37-43
Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8
John 20:1-9

Monday:
Acts 2:14-22-33
Matthew 28:8-15

Tuesday:
Acts 2:36-41
John 20:11-18

Wednesday:
Acts 3:1-10
Luke 24:13-35

Thursday:
Acts 3:11-26
Luke 24:35-48

Friday:
Acts 4:1-12
John 21:1-14

Saturday:
Acts 4:13-21
Mark 16:9-15

Next Sunday:
Acts 4:32-35
1 John 5:1-6
John 20:19-31