

FROM THE FATHERS

The beginning of a letter to the Magnesians by St Ignatius of Antioch (+108)

We should be Christians in deed, as well as in name

Ignatius, also called Theophorus, to the church at Magnesia, a church blessed with the grace of God the Father in Christ Jesus, our Saviour, in whom I salute you. I send you every good wish in God the Father and in Jesus Christ.

I have had the honour of seeing you in the person of Damas your bishop, a man of God... Now it hardly becomes you to presume on your bishop's youth, but rather, having regard to the power of God the Father, to show [your bishop] every mark of respect. This, I understand, is what your holy presbyters do, not taking advantage of his youthful condition but deferring to him with the prudence which comes from God, or rather not to him but to the Father of Jesus Christ, to the bishop of all. So then, for the honour of him who loves us, it is proper to obey without hypocrisy; for a man does not so much deceive the bishop he can see as try to deceive the bishop he cannot see. In such a case he has to reckon not with a man, but with God who knows the secrets of the heart.

We should then really live as Christians and not merely have the name; for many invoke the bishop's name but do everything apart from him. Such men, I think, do not have a good conscience, for they do not assemble lawfully as commanded.

Saints and Heroes

St Mary Magdalene: 22nd July

It has been common in the West to identify Mary of Magdala with 'the woman who was a sinner' (i.e. a prostitute). Other traditions identify her as the sister of Martha and Lazarus. However, it is altogether more profitable to focus on what the Gospels actually tell us about her: Mary Magdalene was healed of seven demons, and she ministered to the Lord in Galilee; she was present at his crucifixion, and it was Mary of Magdala who was in the group of women who were the first to discover the empty tomb. Who can fail to be deeply moved by the wonderful intimacy and personal intensity of the encounter – as St John records it – between St Mary Magdalene and the Risen Saviour in the Garden of the Resurrection. It is supremely for this that Mary is honoured in the Church, for her faithfulness, her passionate heart, her joy, her haste, and her proclamation 'I have seen the Lord!' By the power of her holy intercession, may our zeal for the Lord and for the announcement of his resurrection be like hers. St Mary Magdalene, pray for us!

Collect for St Mary Magdalene

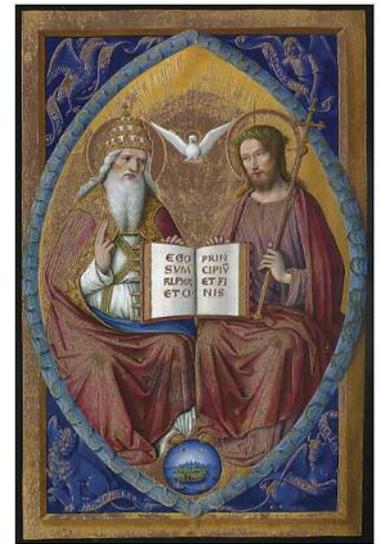
O God, whose Only-Begotten Son entrusted Mary Magdalene before all others with announcing the great joy of the Resurrection; grant, we pray, that through her intercession and example we may proclaim the living Christ and come to see him reigning in your glory. Who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

18th July
2021

Seventh Sunday
after Trinity/
Sixteenth Sunday
in Ordinary Time

Come apart and rest

Mark's Gospel carries us along at a breathless pace. Each episode begins and ends with the word 'immediately'. Today we see Jesus and his disciples seeking rest and refreshment, but not finding it. We do know though that Jesus did have long periods of prayer, usually alone, often at night. In his life the essential need for peace and quiet and the opportunity to pray and ponder, was always



a priority. Although we see him here forgoing his retreat to minister to the sick that sought him out his retreat was postponed and not forgotten. Jesus is showing us that difficult as it might be to find a time and place and the quiet to pray that is not an excuse not to keep seeking until we find it. To have this quiet time alone with God is a matter of spiritual life and death. If we make it the priority in our life; if we live within our desperate need of it we will find a way. To be more accurate, God will help us find a way, for all the time we are seeking to be with Him He has been seeking ways to be with us. Work with Him to find it and everything else in life will find its proper place.