

MONDAY
8 AUGUST

Ezekiel 1:2-5. 24-end
Psalm 148:1-4. 12-13
Matthew 17:22-end

TUESDAY
9 AUGUST

Ezekiel 2:8 – 3:4
Psalm 119:65-72
Matthew 18:1-5. 10.
12-14

WEDNESDAY
10 AUGUST

Ezekiel 9:1-7;
10:18-22
Psalm 113
Matthew 18:15-20

THURSDAY
11 AUGUST

Ezekiel 12:1-12
Psalm 78:58-64
Matthew 18:21 – 19:1

FRIDAY
12 AUGUST

Ezekiel 16:1-15.
60-end
Psalm 118:14-18 or
*Canticle: Song of
Deliverance*
Matthew 19:3-12

SATURDAY
13 AUGUST

Ezekiel 18:1-11a.
13b. 30. 32
Psalm 51:1-3. 15-17
Matthew 19:13-15

REFLECTION

This week we hear Jesus telling his disciples, and us, that we must become like children to enter the kingdom of heaven. But we're also given teaching on some difficult and complicated issues which we'd expect to be beyond a child's understanding. We're given guidance on how to manage a dispute among church members and the consequence of that dispute not being settled. We are told that we must forgive others over and over again and, what's more, forgive them from our heart. The parable of the slave in debt gives us a picture of the consequences of not forgiving others. And then there's the teaching about the laws relating to divorce which evolved as a consequence of human failure to live in accordance with God's will.

Maybe all these complicated issues have arisen because we have forgotten how to be like children. They are the consequences of us leaving the Garden of Innocence.

The good news is that God will search for every lost child of his because each of us is precious in God's sight and God will find us.

PRAYER

Lord of heaven and earth,
as Jesus taught his disciples to be persistent in prayer,
give us patience and courage never to lose hope,
but always to bring our prayers before you;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.



Stained glass mural showing Jesus with children, Key West/USA, Google G / Shutterstock.com

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THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

PART IV – MARY MAGDALENE

Theologian and writer Jane Williams concludes her series about evil.

Names go through cycles of being fashionable. It is often possible to tell approximately when people were born by what their parents decided to call them. Mary was one of the commonest names in Jesus' day, so it is hardly surprising that we find so many Marys in the Gospels. But there has been a bit of a tendency on the part of readers and preachers to lump all the Marys together, rather than trying to find out what we can about each individual woman.

Mary the mother of Jesus is probably the simplest to identify, and the one least often confused with others. Look out for her appearance in the early chapters of Acts, as present in the Upper Room, even when the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples.

Mary Magdalene is the next most famous Mary in the Gospels. Luke 8:2 and Mark 16:9 both tell us that Jesus cured her by casting out "seven demons" from her. We do not really know what that means, but we do know that after that she became one of Jesus' most faithful followers. The Gospels name her as a witness to the crucifixion and the resurrection. Indeed, on the basis of John 20:18, Mary Magdalene is sometimes called "the apostle to the apostles", since she was sent to tell the others the good news of Jesus' resurrection. She certainly meets most of the criteria laid out in Acts 1:21-22 for an apostolic witness. It is sad that commentators throughout the ages have labelled Mary, for no very obvious reason, as a "sinful" woman, and that myth-makers have imagined some kind of a sexual relationship between her and Jesus. But what we see in the Gospels is a relationship of deep friendship and trust between Mary and Jesus. And perhaps that is one of the most striking things that this apostle to the apostles still has to teach us – that Jesus entrusts the news of new life as much to women as to men.



Detail from Deposition of the Cross, by P. Verkadé, Carmelite Monastery, Oßling, Vienna, Renata Sedmekova / Shutterstock.com

LIVE
the WORD

SUSTAINING YOU
THROUGH THE WEEK

Edited by
Caroline Hodgson
and
Heather Smith

Eighth week after Trinity

Monday 8 August to
Saturday 13 August
2022

WEEK