

St Mary Magdalene

Today is Wednesday the 22 July, the feast of St Mary Magdalen, in the 16th week of Ordinary Time.

The monks of the Abbey of Keur Moussa sing the Canticle from Philippians: "Christ Jesus, though His state was divine, did not cling to his equality with God, but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave, and became as human beings are."

Today's reading is from the Second letter to the Corinthians.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17

For the love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them. From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

"The love of Christ urges us on." What does this love of Christ look like? Warm and compassionate, yes. But is there more to Christ's love? When I remember Jesus' suffering and death, I know it's a self-giving, or a 'self-less' love. When have we seen acts of selfless love in the past few months, in our hospitals and in our care homes, for example? Stay with that thought for a while.

How might this compassionate, selfless love of Christ urge me on? To "no longer live for myself" as the writer puts it? And a "new creation"? How does the thought of being a new creation make me feel? We can all think of a wish-list, for example for better eyesight, or a flatter tummy, or rippling muscles. But "a new creation" has surely a different ring to it. In what way might I want to be a new creation? To see the old gone, and the arrival of something new?

As I listen to the passage again, in the presence of this selfless God who loves me, let me tussle with these terms. Is there a situation where God might be challenging me?

In these final moments speak to God openly about what is on your heart.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.