

Reading for the Feast of St Mary Magdalene

22nd July 2026

First reading

Song of Solomon 3:1-4a

‘I have found him whom my soul loves.’

The bride speaks of her beloved:

On my bed by night I sought him whom my soul loves;

I sought him, but found him not.

I will rise now and go about the city, in the streets and in the squares;

I will seek him whom my soul loves.

I sought him, but found him not.

The watchmen found me as they went about in the city.

‘Have you seen him whom my soul loves?’

Scarcely had I passed them when I found him whom my soul loves.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 63(62):2. 3-4. 5-6. 8-9. R2b

For you my soul is thirsting, O Lord, my God.

O God, you are my God; at dawn I seek you;

for you my soul is thirsting.

For you my flesh is pining, like a dry, weary land without water.

I have come before you in the sanctuary, to behold your strength and your glory.

Your loving mercy is better than life; my lips will speak your praise.

I will bless you all my life; in your name I will lift up my hands.

My soul shall be filled as with a banquet; with joyful lips, my mouth shall praise you.

For you have been my strength; in the shadow of your wings I rejoice.

My soul clings fast to you; your right hand upholds me.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia.

Tell us, Mary: say what you did see upon the way.

The tomb the Living did enclose; I saw Christ’s glory as he rose!

Alleluia.

Gospel

John 20:1-2, 11-18

‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’

On the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, ‘They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him.’

Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, and as she wept she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping?’ She said to them, ‘They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.’ Having said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?’ Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, ‘Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me

where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned and said to him in Aramaic, 'Rabboni!' (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, 'Do not cling to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." ' Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord' — and that he had said these things to her.

Short reflection on the reading for today

In the long tradition of the church, including its artistic tradition, Mary Magdalene has generally been portrayed as the repentant sinner. This is largely due to her being mistakenly identified with the sinful woman who washed the feet of Jesus with her tears and dried them with her hair. There is no evidence to suggest in the gospels that she was any more a sinner than the other disciples of Jesus. The gospel reading for her feast which we have just read portrays her as a woman whose devotion to Jesus brought her to the tomb early on that first Sunday morning. Her heartfelt devotion to Jesus also left her outside the tomb weeping tears of loss when she discovered the body of Jesus was not there. She sought the Lord but could not find him. However, the Lord came seeking her and found her when he called her by her name, "Mary."

Like Mary Magdalene, we too seek the Lord, and, like her, we are also the object of the Lord's search. Indeed, the Lord's search for us is prior to our search for him. Even if we struggle to make our way to the Lord, like Mary, the Lord always makes his way to us and calls us by our name. He is the Good Shepherd who, having laid down his life for us, now calls us by name. In calling us to himself by name, the Lord also sends us out, as he sent out Mary Magdalene, to bring the good news of his Easter presence to those we meet. The Lord who calls us by name also asks us to be his messengers to others.