

Thoughts on the Daily Word

16th Week of Year. Wednesday 22nd July. Readings: St. Mary Magdalene. Readings; Jeremiah 1:1,4-10; Psalm: 71; John 20:1-2,11-18.

Today is a mixture, the beginning of the prophet Jeremiah and the feast of Mary Magdalene, whose famous role in the resurrection story is our Gospel today. I have kept the reading from the beginning of Jeremiah because it is the powerful story of the call of the prophet. Not just one prophet but a beautiful description of the call of all prophets. Jeremiah, like Moses and many of the prophets, feels young and inadequate to confront a dangerous world. And yet, like all the great prophets he relies on the grace of God to carry him through. It is a wonderful story of the most human of prophets who lived through the most disastrous period of Jewish history, the destruction of the Temple and the exile in Babylon. His humanity, with all its frailty, comes out so strongly. In this it is good to have him alongside Mary Magdalene. The tradition that she was the sinful woman in Luke is just that, a tradition, it is not borne out by any actual evidence or mention in Scripture. Nevertheless, that long tradition, despite being distorted by novelists and sensation seekers, does bear witness to the personalities of both Mary and Jesus. The common line of humanity in both readings shows the faithfulness of both characters, Jeremiah, and Mary. For Jeremiah it is a long lifetime, for Mary Magdalene it is short love story carried by faithfulness to the cross and resurrection. Both reflect the faithfulness of the God of the Covenant who never abandons his People.