

Sunday 22nd July 2018 (Mary Magdalene)

St Faith, Havant

8.00am – Mass & 9.30am – Parish Mass

Song of Solomon 3.1-4; 2 Corinthians 5.14-17; St John 20.1-2,11-18

Today, here in this garden, the Lord calls your name. He is calling you right now by name, and he is waiting for you to recognise him.

No woman on earth loved Our Lord as Mary Magdalene did. Probably no person on earth loved him as she did. Not, as suggested by recent popular fiction, as his wife – there is no evidence that Jesus ever married. But whether she knew it or not, Jesus was the one whom her soul loved and sought. And when she found him he healed her, exorcised her of her demons. She went about and sought him, and found him, and when she found the one whom she suddenly knew her soul truly loved, she would not let him go. Mary followed Jesus throughout his ministry. She, more faithful than his chosen twelve, was there at the cross. She, more devoted than his other companions, was there at the tomb. She alone still seeking, even in his death still asking, "Have you seen him whom my soul loves? They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him."

Do you know whom your soul loves? For who, or for what, do you search? Who, or what can satisfy your deepest desire?

The Lord has made us, each and every one of us, for himself, and our hearts will always be restless until we find our rest in him. Whether you know it yet or not, your soul searches for the Lord. There will be no true rest, no abiding satisfaction, from anyone or anything else. Whether you know it or not, whether you like it or not, it is God whom your soul truly loves. It is Christ for whom you are really seeking.

And today, here in this garden, the Lord calls your name.

In those first few moments, no person on earth knew greater joy than Mary Magdalene. She had sought the one whom her soul loved, the one whom she had followed through life and death, and she had found him. The lord of her life was the Lord of all life, Our Lord whom not even death could hold. And in those first precious minutes in the garden, Mary Magdalene was the only other person who knew this. She had found him, the one whom she knew she loved beyond all others, the only one in whom her heart could know rest. She had found him, and she would not let him go again.

Has your soul's love died? Do you feel like you have loved the Lord but lost him? Have you slipped away from him little by little, not really knowing at the time, but now realising that you are not always with him as you know you should be? Perhaps you

feel that you were snatched away from him in one cataclysmic, earth-shattering moment that darkened the skies of your life.

God is not dead, even when we fear he is. He is not dead to us, and we are not dead to him. Christ is the conqueror of all death, of all sin. He waits for you, yearns for you to find him again. To find him, to hold him, to never let him go.

And today, here in this garden, the Lord calls your name.

No person on earth had greater news than Mary Magdalene. Nobody had something more important to say. It was she who was the first. She who gave the good news to the disciples. She who was the first to go to those who had not seen, to those who had not believed, those who had not understood. She who would first speak those wonderful and terrible words to those who were scared, those who had deserted, those who dreaded that they had for ever lost their own soul's love: "I have seen the Lord."

She could not hold Our Lord in person. He had to ascend to his place at the right hand of the Father, and she had to go. She had to go and be the first to tell the news that she had seen the Lord, that love was alive and would never die. The first, but not the last. Few besides Mary would see the Lord in flesh arisen, but many after her would pass the news across the world and down the ages – he is alive. And many after her would find their rest in him, would discover that he was the one, the only one,

whom their soul truly loved; and they would hold him for themselves for ever, even as they let him go and gave the message to the world: "I have seen the Lord."

Have you kept your soul's love to yourself? Have you crammed him into one small chamber, never to touch anything outside it? Do you try to hold on to him, keep him small and domesticated, keep him from all the glory and majesty, all the power and authority that are his by his own divine right?

God is bigger than you. God is bigger than you or I or all of us together can possibly ever imagine. He cannot be confined, he will not be confined, and he will not stand to be confined. Those words are words of joy and gladness, but they are also terrible, fearful words: I have seen the Lord. If your whole life is not changed by that, then perhaps you have not truly seen him, and perhaps your soul still seeks the one, the only one it can truly love.

Hold on to Our Lord, not in our limits but in his fullness. In his fullness that overflowed the life of the Magdalene as she became the apostle to the apostles, in his fullness that should overflow your life and my life and the lives of all who truly know him and truly love him, all who cling to him even as they allow him to ascend to his true glory; and go and tell the world that you have found the only one whom their souls love even if they do not know it, the only one in whom they will find rest if only

they would seek it, that you have the news that will make some rejoice and others tremble in fear to the very depths of their being, the great and terrible news that "***I have seen the Lord***".

For the Lord is calling every single person, everyone who lives, everyone who ever has lived and ever will live, the Lord is calling each and every one by name, and he is waiting for all to recognise him. He will not wait for ever.

Today, here in this garden, the Lord calls your name.

Are you listening?