

Cover Image of the resurrection, encaustic tile from Great Malvern Priory, c1450, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

SAINT Barnabas CLARKSFIELD

April 2023

barnabas-oldham.co.uk



Services at St Barnabas' Church

Sunday 9:30 am Parish Worship

Thursday 10:00 am Holy Communion (said)

The first Wednesday of each month: Holy Communion at the Alexandra Nursing Home in Glodwick, at 11:00 am.

Baptisms and marriages by arrangement with the Vicar.

Please submit items for the May magazine by 15 April. Please e-mail files to paulmonk111@gmail.com

People at St Barnabas' Church

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(0161) 624 7708

Letter from the Vicar

The Bible starts with a glorious poem, an extended metaphor describing the creation of the world. A second, different legend—the Fall—follows, and is framed in terms of snakes and apples. It tries to explain how it all went wrong, and why we feel separated from God. The cause of that estrangement, however we describe it, is self: we tend to place self before God. Sin is the cause and evil is its fruit.

The problem of evil, sin, and suffering is so awful that much of the church's message revolves around God's way of reversing this great problem: we celebrate Jesus and the Cross because it reconnects earth to heaven. And these celebrations reach their climax at Easter.

The work of the cross can sound either mystical or technical but in fact it's amazingly simple. Jesus' life, death, and resurrection satisfy the love of God: His life was sinless and he obeyed God even as far as death. The result of His resurrection points toward what our life with God can be like—full of miraculous, Godly power.

Our response to Jesus and the Cross must be to aim at imitating him. That 'imitation' is best framed in terms of our love of God and neighbour, discipleship, and sacrifice. As an ancient disciple expressed it, 'We give our lives to God so that he can live in us.' The result is a profound decrease in the desire to sin and a reversal of the Fall.

As we grow in love and service, so God's presence in us increases. He lives in us and empowers the necessary response to sin and self. Nothing but God is strong enough for work of this kind. No wonder we celebrate the annual anniversary of the Cross and its healing work.

Alleluia, Christ is risen! He is risen indeed: Alleluia!

Wishing everyone the love of God this Easter:

PAUL

Dates for your diary

Sunday 2 April	9:30 am	Palm Sunday	
Monday 3 April	7:00 pm	Holy Monday	Compline
Tuesday 4 April	7:00 pm	Holy Tuesday	Compline
Wednesday 5 April	7:00 pm	Holy Wednesday	Compline
Thursday 6 April	7:00 pm	Maundy Thursday	
	9:00 pm	Vigil	in Waterhead Church until midnight (see p. 15)
Friday 7 April	9:30 am	Good Friday	
	12:00	Meditations at the Cross	(St Barnabas, see p. 15)
Sunday 9 April	9:30 am	Easter Day	
Sunday 8 October	9:30 am	Harvest Festival	
Sunday 29 October	4:00 pm	Commemoration of the faithful departed	
Sunday 12 Nov	9:30 am	Remembrance	
Sunday 17 Dec	6:00 pm	Carol Service	includes Tame Valley Brass
Sunday 24 Dec	4:00 pm	Christingles	at Waterhead Church
Sunday 24 Dec	11:30 pm	Midnight Mass	at Waterhead Church
Monday 25 Dec	9:30 am	Christmas Day	at St Barnabas

Christ is our paschal lamb.

1 Corinthians 5:7



Bible readings for April

Sunday 2 April

Palm Sunday

First: Isaiah 50:4–9a

Epistle: Philippians 2:5–11

Gospel: Matthew 27:11–54

Sunday 9 April

Easter Day

First: Acts 10:34–43

Epistle: Colossians 3:1–4

Gospel: John 20:1–18

Sunday 16 April

Second Sunday of Easter

First: Acts 2:14a, 22–32

Epistle: 1 Peter 1:3–8

Gospel: John 20:19–end

Sunday 23 April

Third Sunday of Easter

First: Acts 2:14a, 36–41

Epistle: 1 Peter 1:17–23

Gospel: Luke 24:13–35

Sunday 30 April

Fourth Sunday of Easter

First: Acts 2:42–end

Epistle: 1 Peter 2:19–end

Gospel: John 10:1–10

From the Parish Registers

Christian baptism

Sunday 26 March

Charlie Joshua Banham, at Waterhead Church.

Christian funeral

Friday 10 March

Kathleen Roye, at St Barnabas Church.

Tuesday 21 March

(Alice) Fiona Buchan, at St Barnabas Church.

Friday 24 March

William Knightly, at St John the Baptist Church.

**Praise be to the God and Father of
our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great
mercy he has given us
new birth into a living
hope through the
resurrection of
Jesus Christ
from the
dead.
1 Peter 1:3**

Image: <https://opinion.inquire.net/96101/the-story-behind-the-viral-photo>

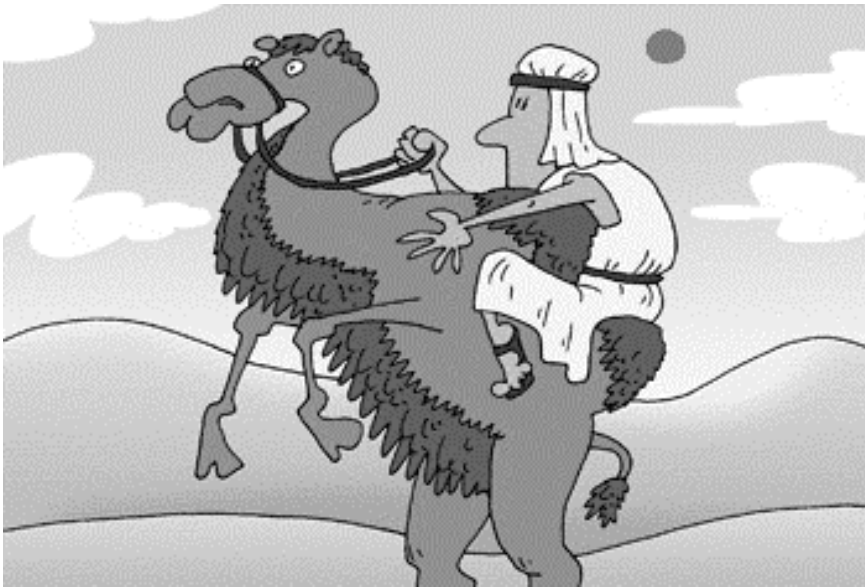
The word 'pietà' literally means 'pity'. It inspires a form of art that shows Jesus' mother, Mary, weeping over her son's dead body. The artwork can be sculptured, like Michelangelo's well known marble in the Vatican. But the image can be represented using any medium.

The pietà image usually invites us to look at the Crucifixion from Mary's point of view. It's her personal tragedy. She has nursed Jesus from birth till now, and has just witnessed the full horror of her son being tortured to death. His killing was a politically motivated and choreographed execution. She has seen all of it, knew its purpose, and foresaw its end. And she was wholly powerless to stop it.

Our modern era likes to medicalise stress. We talk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The pietà image seeks to explore the effect of that PTSD on Mary and her soul.

Some depictions prefer a highly representative image, to help us see the effect on Mary. Sometimes the image is more abstract to give us a bit of leeway as we explore the effect and, maybe, move some of the emotional cost from Mary on to ourselves. It also helps us pray for all who, like the mother in the picture below, suffer the pain of losing a loved one in a violent and terrible way.

Jesus and his family understand our deepest suffering because they have experienced the same things themselves.



Another camel driver switches to two-leg drive
in order to save on the rising price of water.



SAINT
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Maundy Thursday

Thursday 6 April at 7:00 pm

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Good Friday

Friday 7 April

Service for all the family, at 9:30 am

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Good Friday

Friday 7 April

12:00 noon – 3:00 pm

Meditations at the Cross

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Easter Sunday

A joy-filled service for Easter

Sunday 9 April at 9:30 am

barnabas-oldham.co.uk

D	C	O	S	R	S	P	G	I	F	A	I	T	H
I	R	E	O	E	Y	A	O	S	L	O	S	C	L
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Easter story: wordsearch

Find these words in the grid above:

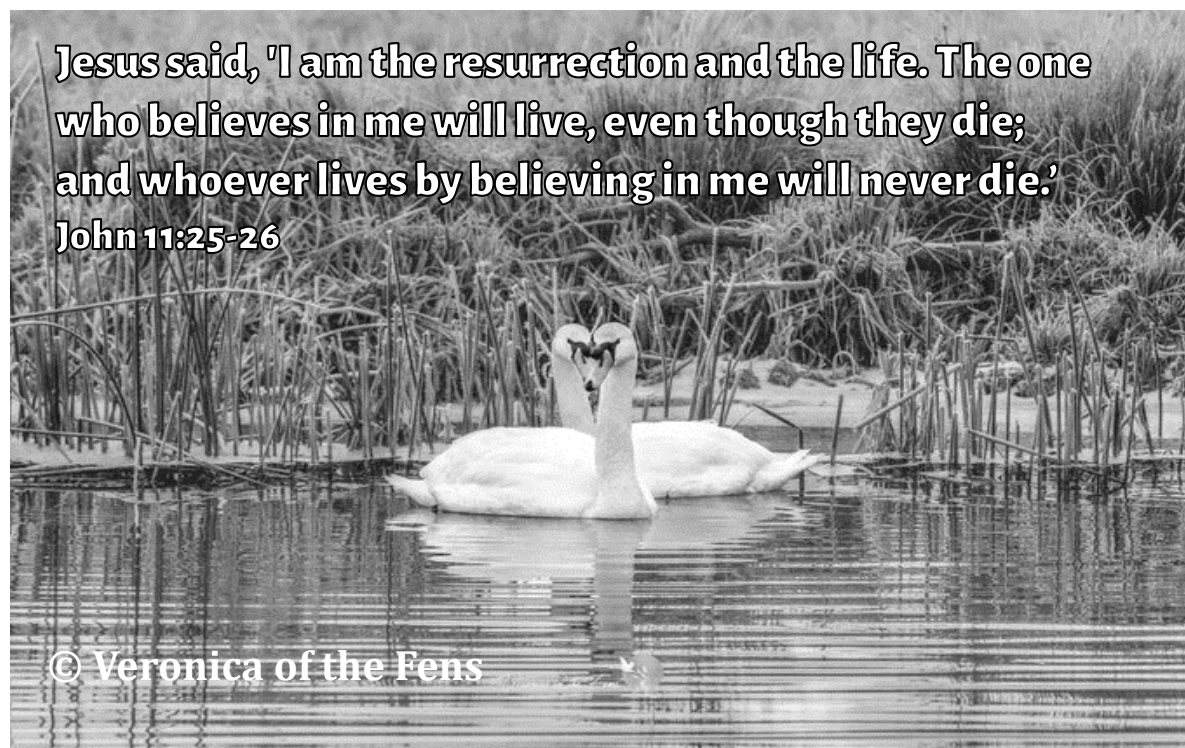
Betrayal, Bread, Cross, Crown of thorns, Crucifixion, Disciples, Faith, Good Friday, Jesus, Judas, Mary, Passover, Prayer, Redemption, Rejoice, Resurrection, Risen, Saviour, Son, Tomb, Wine,



Colour this page

Jesus said, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die.'

John 11:25-26



© Veronica of the Fens

Who is God?

Who are you God?
What are you really like?
I am life and love I am the ground of all being.
I am all around you and within you
I am your life.
I am in everyone and everything
I hold it all in being and I love all.
No one is beyond my love everyone is included
All of creation.
I created all out of love and all will return to my love.

Jacqueline Robson

Did you know?

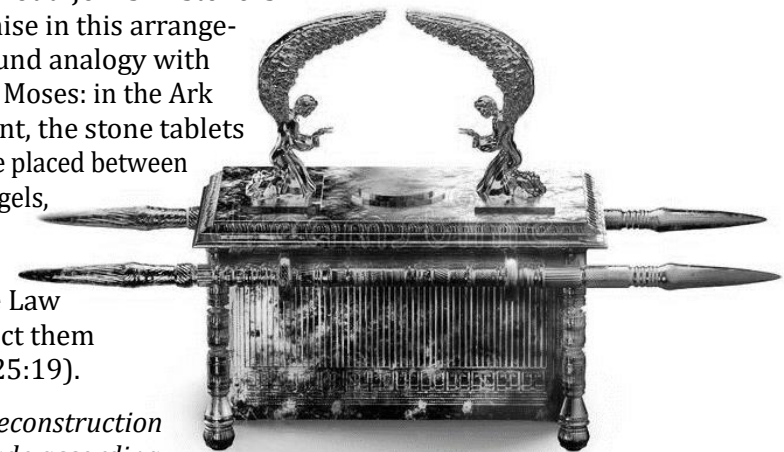
Mary Magdalene stood crying outside Jesus' tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, 'Woman, why are you crying?' she replied, 'They have taken my Lord away and I don't know where they have put him.' At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus. *John 20 11-14*

John's Gospel describes Mary Magdalene. She had risen at the crack of dawn because the Jewish sabbath rules meant she could not travel that far until the sabbath ended. She did not know at that point that Jesus had risen from the dead, so was expecting the tomb to be sealed with a huge stone. She was therefore going to pray there.

The sight of the tomb without its protective blocking stone would have suggested grave robbers. She would therefore have instinctively looked inside at the part of the tomb where she had seen Jesus' body deposited only a few days earlier.

If typical, the tomb would have included a deep 'shelf' cut into the rock on which the embalmed body lay. The Gospels describe discarded grave clothes strewn across this shelf but no body.

As Mary entered the tomb, she saw angels—we assume two, with one at the foot and one at the head of the stone shelf on which His body had been laid out. Jewish listeners would recognise in this arrangement a profound analogy with the old law of Moses: in the Ark of the covenant, the stone tablets of the law were placed between two golden angels, their wings covering the Tablets of the Law so as to protect them (see Exodus 25:19).



Craftsman's reconstruction of the Ark, made according to the description in Exodus 25.

Christians today use the word 'Alleluia' to express an overflow of thanksgiving, joy, praise, and triumph. The word is interchangeable with 'Hallelujah' (both translate the Hebrew phrase, 'praise the Lord').

Alleluia is generally used in its original form (preserved and not translated) and has been since the very earliest times. For example, the Liturgy of St Mark, which is the most ancient of all the preserved of the world's liturgies, instructs the person preaching to 'Follow the "Let us pray" with "the Prologue of the Alleluia"'. Here, the 'Prologue of the Alleluia' is a prayer or verse sung by the choir to introduce readings from the Gospel.

We say 'Alleluia' as we read the Gospel because it tells us about Jesus and his mighty deeds of grace and forgiveness. Indeed, the word 'Gospel' means literally 'Good news'.

And we say 'Alleluia' and 'Hallelujah' every day of Easter. For example, on the Sundays of Easter, we repeatedly say, 'Alleluia, Christ is Risen!' By this, we are not merely offering a simple word of praise. We are offering God praise and worship.

So when you say Alleluia with our lips, we're telling our souls to say 'Yippee!'

Alleluia!

**Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!
Sons of men and angels say. Alleluia!
Raise your joys and triumphs high.
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply:
Alleluia!**

Charles Wesley

Personal news

Our Vicar Paul has been asked to take on the role of Vicar of Glodwick, to be held in plurality with the existing parishes of St Barnabas, Clarksfield and Holy Trinity, Waterhead.

Glodwick parish no longer has a church; it seems likely that St Mark's will be sold or demolished shortly. But the role of Vicar does include oversight of nursing homes and the occasional offices.

Christian vigils

The word 'vigil' means a period of staying awake during a time usually spent sleeping. The time is usually employed to keep watch, explaining the link to the related word 'vigilant'.

The Church often holds a vigil on the eve of a major festival or holy day, as a preparation and religious observance.

The Anglican Church practises two principal vigils:

1. The night before Christmas Day, which we celebrate with a Eucharist, often calling it by its medieval name of 'Midnight Mass'. The service is exuberant and joyful, and displays a profound grandeur which is meant to help us ponder the immensity of the incarnation: God came to earth as a human child.
2. The night before Good Friday. Jesus spent the time between the Last Supper and his arrest and trial in the Garden of Gethsemane praying in agony of spirit. We similarly pray, seeking to identify with him as we ponder the sheer cost of the atonement he achieved through the cross.

In practice, during the Easter vigil, some people prefer to pray, others want to read and, in some church traditions, people adore the blessed sacrament. It's a personal choice.

We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

Romans 6:9

The desert fathers were Christians who give themselves up to a life of poverty, prayer and solitude in the 4th century AD. Their decision to do so was largely a reaction to the incorporation of the early Christian church into the Roman Empire as its official religion. The Emperor Constantine the Great had converted to Christianity around 312, and in 325 he called together the First Council of Nicea, which produced an early draft of the Nicene Creed, the creed used in most Christian churches. However, it was Emperor Theodosius I who first declared Christianity the state religion in 380. The fact that until this period the early Christians had generally been regarded by the rest of the Empire as a community of outsiders made retreat from worldly concerns away from urban life all the more naturally appealing to some of their number. Moreover, it was the exhortations of the scriptures such as Matthew 19:21 ('go and sell that you possess, and give to the poor') and 1 Thessalonians 5:17 ('Pray without ceasing') that ultimately prompted these people to seek an alternative way of life in the wilderness.

Despite their name, the desert fathers comprised both men and women, though they did live in the deserts—of Palestine, Syria and, chiefly, Egypt. However, the majority of them preferred to live alone as hermits, either in makeshift habitats usually made of stone or in caves, the forerunners of monks in their cells, at times forming a small group (known as 'sketes' after Scetis, the valley in Egypt where many of them lived), while allowing newcomers to live close by so as to learn from the more experienced among them. They might also come together to confer with each other;† partake in a common meal or share in the Eucharist. By and large, though, their aim was to lead a solitary life devoted to God and detached from all selfish concerns. They could even earn a small living without any distraction by engaging in, say, mat making or basket weaving on their own.

Obviously, devoted to solitude, they also regarded celibacy as part of their calling and, in actual fact, a good number of the women were repentant prostitutes who sought a more chaste life. One such woman, though not strictly a member of the group, was Taisia who, having inherited substantial funds from her deceased parents, which then enabled her to look after the hermits when they came into town to sell

their wares, finally fell into poverty herself and from there into prostitution. When the hermits learned of this, so the story goes, she was rescued by the renowned cave-dwelling desert father John the Short (also known as John the Dwarf) with a view to bringing her back to live among them, but she died on the way.*

The desert fathers came from a variety of backgrounds, both rich and poor, aristocratic and peasant, educated and uneducated, and the names by which they were known then sound quite exotic or extreme to us today: Macarius the Great, Mary the Harlot, Moses the Black, Poemen the Shepherd, to name but a few.

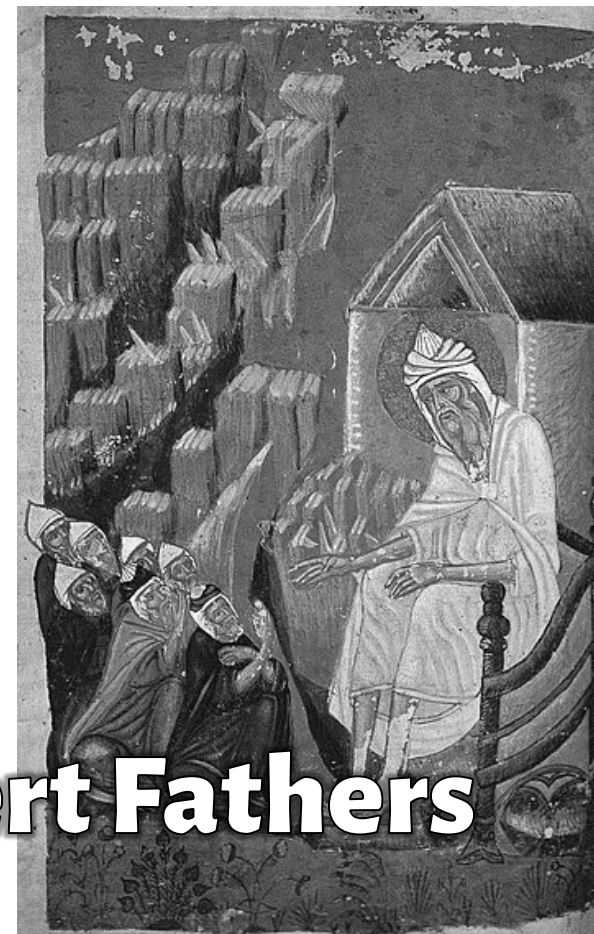
Perhaps surprisingly, one Christian virtue that these desert dwellers did not focus on was charity as we understand it today, that is, in the form of tending to the sick and needy. Giving themselves over to a life of world-renouncing detachment, their sights were solely set on personal improvement in their relationship with God, though compassion towards other hermits and non-judgemental behaviour was still common.

Historically, the desert fathers were important not only for giving rise to monasticism, which grew out of their informal community structure, but also for the example they set of a more humble way to move closer to God. Their lives and teaching were collected in the *Apophthegmata Patrum* ('Sayings of the Desert Fathers').

A small selection of these sayings appear overleaf.

John Booth

Armenian manuscript by the monk Tadeos of Abba Moses seated in his skete.



Footnotes:

† Hence the bizarre collective noun 'a conference of hermits'!

* <https://www.goarch.org/-/the-ancient-fathers-of-the-desert-section-4>

The Desert Fathers

On prayer

- 'Hyperichius said, "The watchful monk works day and night to pray continually: but if his heart is broken and lets tears flow, that calls God down from heaven to have mercy.'"
- One of the hermits said, "No one can see his face reflected in muddy water; so the soul cannot pray to God with contemplation unless it is first cleansed of harmful thoughts.'"

On poverty

'Someone brought a hermit who was a leper some money and said, "Take this to spend, for you are old and ill." He replied, "Are you going to take me away from Him who has fed me for sixty years? I have been ill all that time, and have needed nothing because God has fed me and given me what I need." He would not accept it.'

On seclusion

- 'In Scetis a brother went to Moses to ask for advice. He said to him, "Go sit in your cell, and your cell will teach you everything.'"
- "They said of Helladius that he lived twenty years in his cell and did not once raise his eyes to look at the roof.'

On desire

- Evagarius said, "Cut the desire for many things out of your heart and so prevent your mind being dispersed and your stillness lost.'"
- "They said of Sarah that for thirteen years she was fiercely attacked by the demon of lust. She never prayed that the battle should leave her, but she used to say only, "Lord, give me strength.'"

Only a broken flask,
But through her love
A fragrance stole upon the evening air,
And Christ was honoured there.

Only a broken loaf,
But from his hands,
A food sufficient for the souls of men
Was offered to them then.

Only a broken life,
But from that cross
A love to save the world went forth in power,
Born of his darkest hour.

A flask, a loaf, a life with love infused—
Are all things broken that are greatly used? *Lorna Inman*



Sayings of the Desert Fathers

Only a broken flask

Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday is the Sunday before Easter. It's usually called a 'moveable feast' because Easter itself moves. Palm Sunday's name commemorates Jesus's triumphal entry into Jerusalem, which is described in each of the four Gospels.

Palm Sunday marks the first day of Holy Week, the last week of Lent. In most liturgical churches, Palm Sunday is celebrated by the blessing and distribution of crosses made of palm leaves, which are taken to represent the palm branches that the crowd scattered in front of Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem.

Many churches these palm crosses are collected before the next year's Lent, and are then ritually burned on Shrove Tuesday to produce the ashes used on the following day, Ash Wednesday, which is the first day of Lent.

Maundy Thursday

The English word *Maundy* comes from the Latin word *mandatum* (from which we get the related English word 'mandate').

At the Last Supper Jesus washed his disciples' feet and gave them his New Commandment in response to their alarm and horror at his doing such a menial task. In Latin, he said, '*Mandatum novum do vobis* ... (A new commandment I give you ...)', see John 13:34. So 'Maundy' derives from the first word of the New Commandment and one of the themes of Maundy Thursday is the commandment to love.

Good Friday

There is no evidence to confirm the common idea that the name comes from a combination of 'God' and 'Friday', rather, the name describes the good that comes through Jesus' Crucifixion: the offer of heaven as a result of the atonement and our wonderful forgiveness.

Around the world, Good Friday is also known as 'Holy Friday', 'Great Friday', 'Great and Holy Friday', and 'Black Friday'.

Easter

The name Easter is relatively obscure, but is probably a female name of English origin that means something between 'goddess of fertility' (which also explains why the principal female hormone is called *oestrogen*) and 'goddess of spring'. The name comes from the Old English *Eastre* which itself comes from the German word *Ostern*.

Compline

The name of this ancient service comes from a Latin word meaning 'completion' (*completorium*). We pronounce it as 'com-plinn' rather than 'com-plyne'

The service of compline is quiet and reflective, and occurs at the end of the day. It is most effective when the ending is indeed an ending, without additions, conversation or noise. If there is an address, or business to be done, it should come first. If said at home, participants go quietly to bed.

Dictionary

of Holy Week and Easter

Mary Magdalene came from the Galilean district of Magdala near Tiberias, on the west shores of the Sea of Galilee.

Unfortunately, there is much confusion about her life. At one extreme, some scholars believe that the lives of three distinct people have become combined to form the single person, St Mary Magdalene. At the other extreme is the idea that all three instances *are* the same person.

The first of these three Marys in the Gospels followed Jesus and his disciples around Galilee. She witnessed first-hand Jesus' crucifixion and burial, and later went to his tomb to anoint his dead body on Easter morning. She was the first person to see the risen Lord and announced his glorious resurrection to the apostles. Accordingly, many early Christian writings call her 'the apostle to the apostles.'

The second of these Marys is 'Mary of Bethany,' the sister of Martha and Lazarus Luke 10:38–42 and John 11,

And the third Mary is an unnamed penitent who anointed Jesus' feet (Luke 7:36–48). This example of extravagant love, together with the ambiguous statement that Jesus had previously cast out seven demons from her (Luke 8:2), supported the later tradition that she had been a prostitute before meeting Jesus.

The incident of a woman washing Jesus' feet belongs to the Galilean phase of Jesus' ministry: it precedes the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand and the third Passover. Immediately afterwards, St Luke describes a missionary circuit in Galilee, and describes the women who ministered to Christ. This list includes 'Mary who is called Magdalen, out of whom seven devils were gone forth' (Luke 8:2).

But Luke does not explicitly identify her with the 'sinner' of the previous chapter.

Later, St Luke describes Jesus visiting his friends Martha and Mary 'in a certain town' (Luke 10:38–42). Jesus had recently left Galilee, so many scholars think this 'town' was Bethany. The idea seems to be confirmed by the preceding parable of the good Samaritan, which must almost certainly have been spoken on the road between Jericho and Jerusalem—which is close to Bethany.

Unfortunately, here again we find no identification between these three people (the 'sinner', Mary Magdalene, and Mary of Bethany). Indeed,

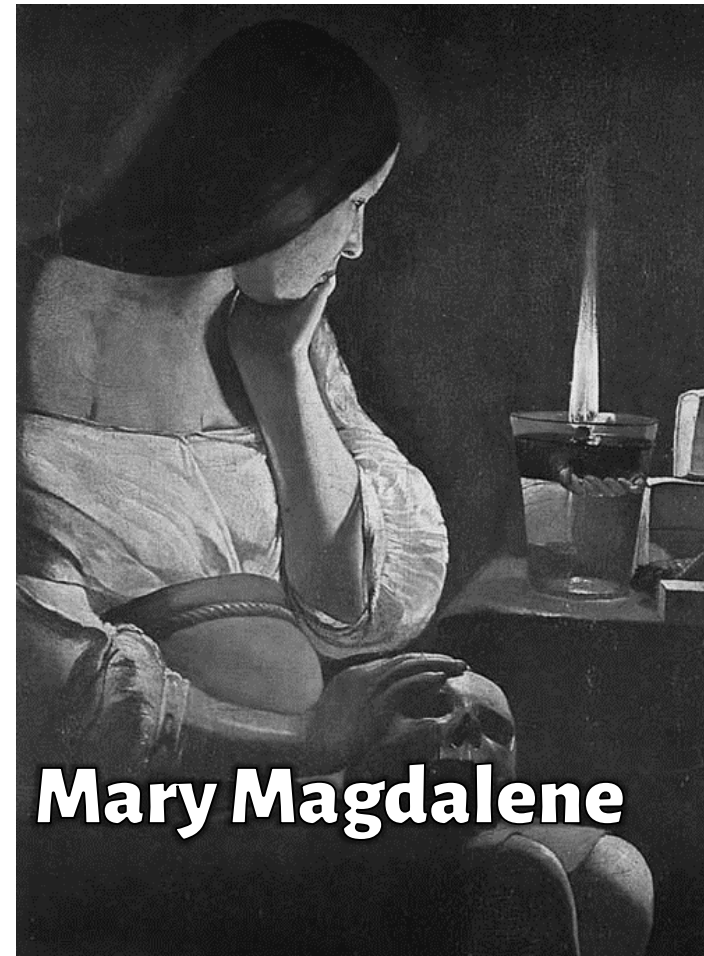
if we only had St Luke's account, we should certainly have no grounds for so identifying them.

St John clearly identifies Mary of Bethany with the woman who anointed Jesus' feet (John 12; cf. Matthew 26 and Mark 14). It is important to note how St John speaks of Mary as 'she that anointed the Lord's feet' in 11:2—before he actually mentions the actual incident. It is commonly said that he refers to the subsequent anointing which he himself describes in 12:3–8; but some scholars question whether he would have used this exact phrase if another woman (and she a 'sinner') in the city, had done the same. It is conceivable that St John, just because he is writing so long after the event and at a time when Mary was dead, wishes to point out to us that she was really the same person as the 'sinner.' Similarly, St Luke may have veiled her identity precisely because he did not wish to defame one who was yet living; he certainly does something similar when he conceals the identity of St Matthew by calling him Levi 'a publican' (5:7).

It was inevitable that a woman about whom almost nothing was known would later attract many stories. The Greek Orthodox Church thinks Mary Magdalene went to Ephesus with the Virgin Mary and died there. Her relics were transferred to Constantinople in 886 ad and are preserved there. According to a very different (early French) tradition, Mary, Lazarus, and other companions went to Marseilles and converted the whole of Provence.

Legend also says that Mary's family's castle was called Magdalon. If true, then her family were descended from King David.

The Magdalene
by George de la Tour



Mary Magdalene

Characters from the Bible



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