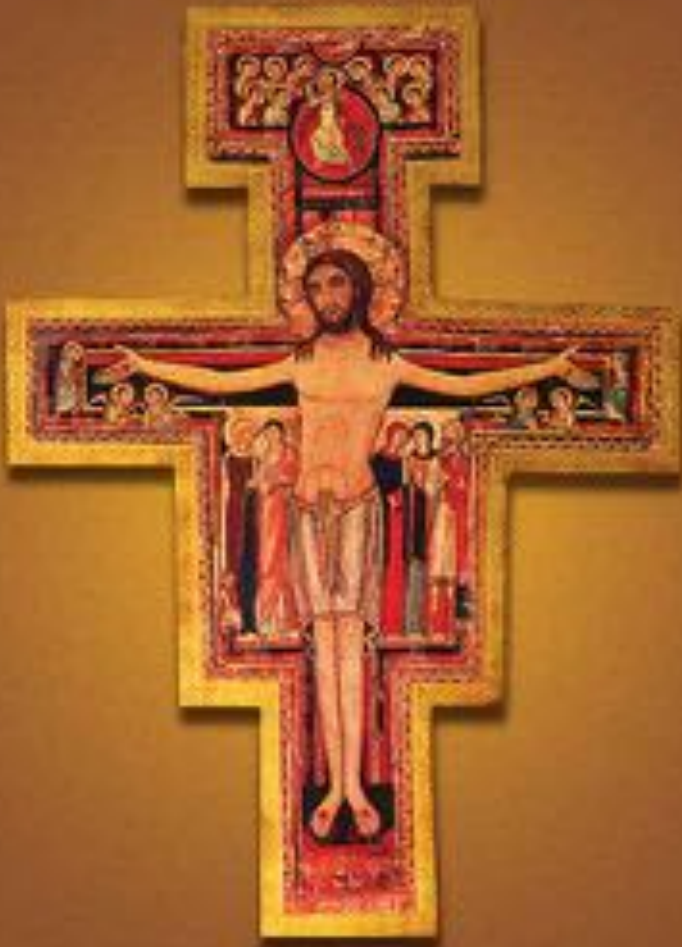


Troubadour

Volume 64, No. 3

Winter 2021





In the 12th century Christ spoke to St Francis of Assisi from this cross:

“Francis, go and rebuild my Church which you see is falling down.”

Don't complain about the Church in the 21st century.

Hear Our Lord's call and do something about it!

*The Friars Minor have followed St Francis'
example for the last 800 years.*

Why not be one of them?

Contact Br Donal Walsh OFM, Franciscan Friary,
160 The Grove, Stratford, London E15 1NS
Tel: 020 8534 1964. Email: vocations@friar.org

Troubadour

A MISSIONARY MAGAZINE

at the service of

- The Franciscan Missionaries working throughout the world but especially in disaster areas.
- The Franciscan Missionary Union.



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COVER PHOTOGRAPHS:

Front cover:

Young mother with child, as Christmas approaches.

Back cover:

The long, daily trek to the well to fetch clean water.

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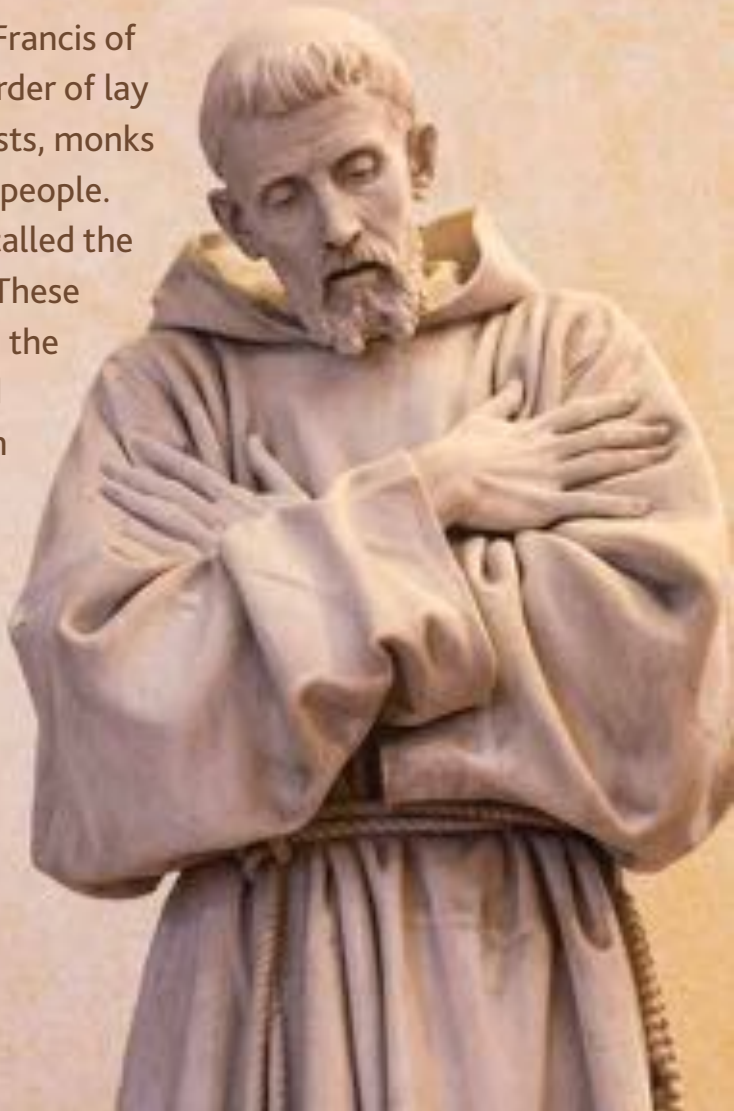
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The spirit of **ST FRANCIS** 800 years and still game

by G. Ferguson

In the year 1221 St Francis of Assisi founded an order of lay people, not for priests, monks or nuns, but for lay people. Initially they were called the Penitents of Assisi. These Penitents could live the Gospel life, married or single, working in their own chosen way of life.



Pope calls Secular Franciscans to closeness, compassion, tenderness ...



Pope Francis addresses the Secular Franciscan Order in Rome for their General Chapter, expressing his hope that they might fight for justice, work for an integral ecology, collaborate in missionary projects, and become artisans of peace and witnesses of the Beatitudes.

Today they are called Ordo Franciscanus Saecularis(OFS) or Secular Franciscans. They are alive and active in many parts of the world. We follow a Rule that has its roots with the

Penitents of Assisi, a rule which was updated and approved by Pope St Paul VI in 1978. Although its roots go back 800 years it still has relevance today.





Saint Francis of Assisi (detail)

*by Cimabue, Italian painter and designer
of mosaics from Florence.*

To be a Secular Franciscan in today's world is a tremendous challenge, just as it was St Francis' day, with wars, corruption, desecration and the absence of the knowledge of God which pervaded his time as well as ours.

Secular Franciscans, following in the footsteps of St Francis, are called to observe the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ especially through the careful reading of the Gospel, and going from Gospel to Life and from Life to the Gospel. We are called, as lay people, to be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of our human lives. As St Francis said, "Go forth and preach the Gospel, only use words if necessary."

Franciscan Spirituality is woven through the life of the Secular Franciscan even in today's world. St Francis is the Patron Saint of Ecology and with the dangers of Climate Change his words and spirituality are needed even more today.

It was the little saint of Assisi who wrote the Canticle of Creatures in which he speaks of Creation being family to us – Brother Sun, Sister Moon and

Stars, Brother wind, Sister Water Brother fire, etc. Exploiting these family members has often led to abuse of Creation.

In the middle of August this year the UN warned that the current environmental crisis was produced by the human race. Exploitation of the earth's resources has led to its abuse, due to our demands for instant gratification in energy in particular. November saw a very important meeting regarding the world's climate and the change to it that has come about through humankind's interaction with the Earth and its resources. In this year in which the OFS celebrates its 800th birthday, the local secular Franciscan community is determined to have the Franciscan voice heard on this important occasion. Like a "voice that cries in the wilderness", though small in number Franciscans are determined to be heard.

If we take a look at part of the Rule of the OFS we can see why. Chapter 18 states "They should respect all creatures, animate and inanimate, which 'bear the imprint of the Most High', and they should strive to

move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of Universal Kinship."

This Universal Kinship means that when our Sister, Mother Earth, is wounded it affects us as well. When Sister Water is abused/polluted we are hurt as well. It might seem a bit extreme to put it like this, but when you think of it this is what is happening today in terms of climate change.

Even in our own lush green land we are affected by climate change, extreme heat in the summer, flooding in other parts of the year. Eventually the arable land of our Scottish western coast, especially in the Hebrides, will be lost due to the melting of the Arctic ice cap.

Secular Franciscans participate





in the Divine Office praying Morning, Evening and Night Prayer. They also recite the Franciscan Crown Rosary of the seven joys of Our Lady. Monthly Fraternity meetings are so important for the building up of Fraternity and Friendship. The fraternity meeting is not a prayer group, we meet to share what has been going on in our lives since we last met, building up one

another with the sharing. There is also ongoing formation, expanding the knowledge of what being a Secular Franciscan means and on Franciscan Spirituality. We always begin and end our meetings in prayer.

George Ferguson is in formation at Blessed John Duns Scotus Fraternity in Glasgow. For more information go to www.ofsgb.org



Chicken and Garden Project

by Sr Charity Dlamini

Sr Charity, Dlamini OP, of the Newcastle Dominican Sisters, Newcastle, KwaZulu Natal, writes to thank you for your help in setting up a gardening and chicken project to assist the poor in the township of Blauwbosch in Kwa Zulu Natal. She and her helpers, thanks to the R30.000 they received earlier in 2021, and more recently

in November R25.000, have been able to convert two old storerooms into a secure chicken coop for their layer chickens and *Zulu* chickens. Electricity has been installed to warm and light the one coop, a spacious chicken cage has also been bought as well as 29 layer chicks. Now they are receiving 19 eggs a day from the layers and 10 chicks are at stage two. That makes a total of 29 layers. They also have 10 backyard chickens (*iziMpangele* = *spotted*) in the other storeroom. A young man from the community is employed and is in training for poultry and gardening. The Community of Sisters (Dominicans) and the families around benefit from the projects too.

The iziMpangele, or Helmeted Guinea-fowl, is a healthy and welcome addition to any poultry project.



The pictures show some of the project. I must admit that I would prefer to see the chickens “free-range” but this project is in the middle of a Township and space is very limited while at the same time there is a lot of theft, hence the need for the secure fences and security for the chickens. But the project is one which will enable others in the community to learn from and imitate; bringing valuable eggs and vegetables to the poor of the area. Sr Charity thanks the FMU for all your help and encouragement.



The Parish Council, grateful for the huge difference your kindness affords them.

Sr Leo, from the same Convent cares for the Rosary Pre School which has also benefited from your help. This has helped to maintain the sewage system of the whole convent and school and also for the purchase of a photo-copier /printer for the Creche. She too gives thanks to the FMU for their help.



The chicken coops with fresh eggs.



The curious backyard chicks are not camera shy.

A Bundle Of Beauty

by a Dominican Sister

A bundle of beauty
came to Mass this morning.
Her smile, her giggles, her splutters,
lit up my soul.

This bundle was a baby,
held by an adoring grandmother.
She was an Advent gift,
a tiny reflection of God's joy and
wondrous life,
a portrait of God's face,
a peep into the heart of God,
always wide open,
welcoming,
embracing.

Baby gazed at nanny and wriggled
in delight,
And nanny gazed at baby
as she cradled her in awe.
And God gazes in delight
as He holds us in being,
as He shelters within us.
Do we gaze back?

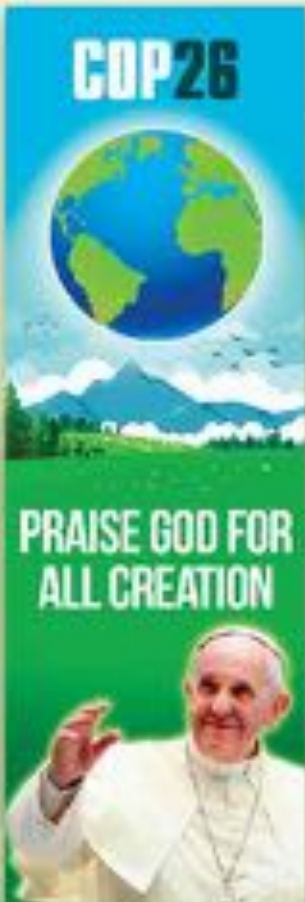


COP26

Glasgow was the host for COP26 and a number of Franciscans participated in various ways. Our Parish in Glasgow displayed these Banners on the outside of our Church so that passers by might see the part played by St Francis, the Patron of Ecology and also Pope Francis in his great concern for Ecology also, as expressed in his encyclical "*Laudato si*", the opening words of the great Canticle of Creatures by St Francis. Pope Francis in this

encyclical issued an urgent appeal: "for a new dialogue about how we are shaping our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenges we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affects us all."

I suppose we must wait and see the results of the many meetings and discussions that took place at COP26 but we hope and pray for a greater awareness of climate change.



Who are the different Marys in the Gospels?

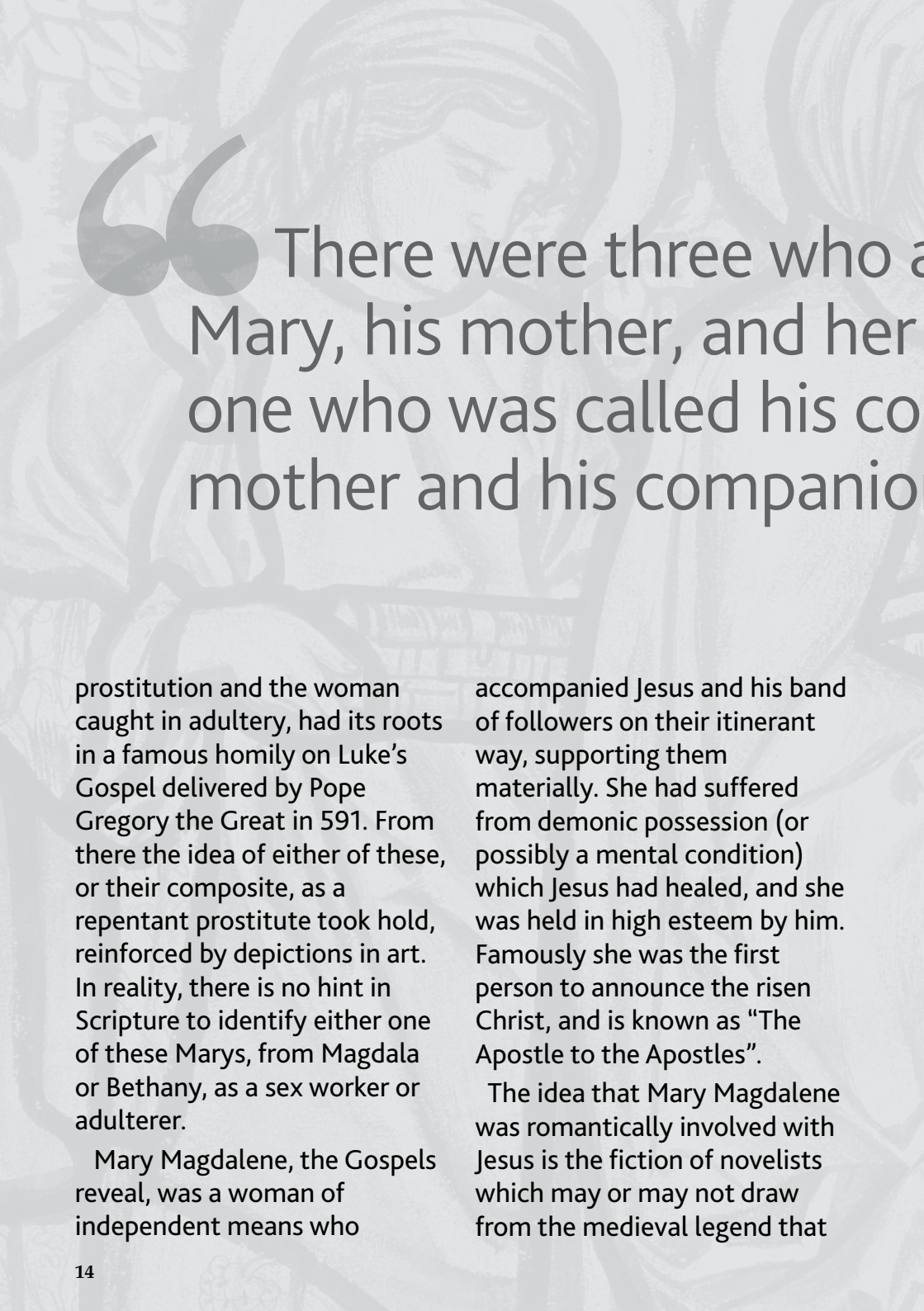
by

Günther Simmermacher

The name Mary — or Maryam in Syro-Aramaic, the language of Jesus — does indeed appear often in the Gospels: 54 times. The most famous of them is, of course, the Blessed Virgin Mary. Catholics require no introduction to the mother of Our Lord.

The second-most famous one is Mary Magdalene, and she may require a reintroduction to Catholics. This follower of Jesus is often conflated with another Mary: the sister of Lazarus and Martha from Bethany in Judea. The conflation of the two Marys, with the added twist of





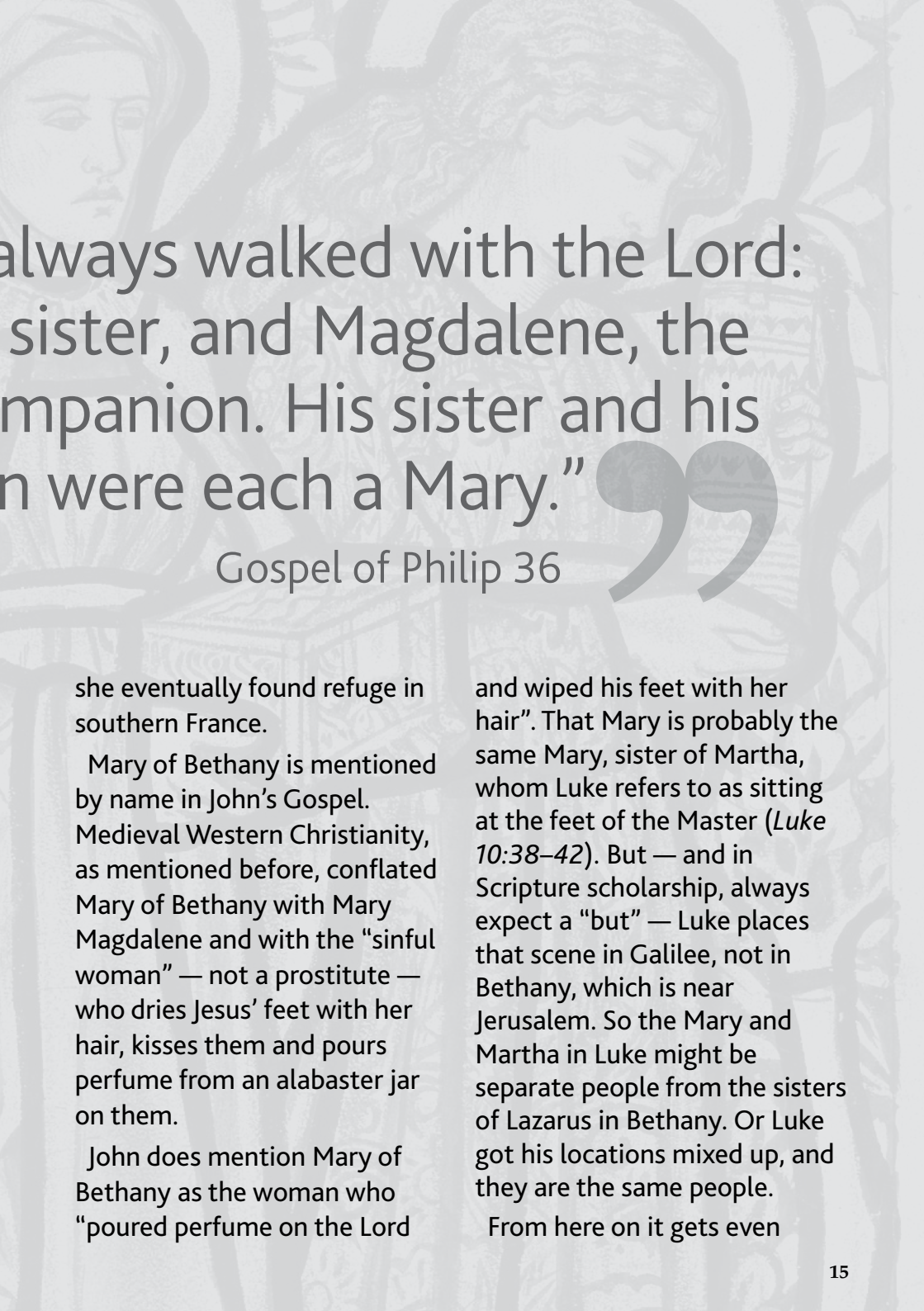
“ There were three who accompanied Jesus: Mary, his mother, and her sister, and one who was called his companion, his mother and his companion.”

prostitution and the woman caught in adultery, had its roots in a famous homily on Luke's Gospel delivered by Pope Gregory the Great in 591. From there the idea of either of these, or their composite, as a repentant prostitute took hold, reinforced by depictions in art. In reality, there is no hint in Scripture to identify either one of these Marys, from Magdala or Bethany, as a sex worker or adulteress.

Mary Magdalene, the Gospels reveal, was a woman of independent means who

accompanied Jesus and his band of followers on their itinerant way, supporting them materially. She had suffered from demonic possession (or possibly a mental condition) which Jesus had healed, and she was held in high esteem by him. Famously she was the first person to announce the risen Christ, and is known as “The Apostle to the Apostles”.

The idea that Mary Magdalene was romantically involved with Jesus is the fiction of novelists which may or may not draw from the medieval legend that



always walked with the Lord:
sister, and Magdalene, the
companion. His sister and his
n were each a Mary.”

Gospel of Philip 36

she eventually found refuge in southern France.

Mary of Bethany is mentioned by name in John's Gospel. Medieval Western Christianity, as mentioned before, conflated Mary of Bethany with Mary Magdalene and with the “sinful woman” — not a prostitute — who dries Jesus' feet with her hair, kisses them and pours perfume from an alabaster jar on them.

John does mention Mary of Bethany as the woman who “poured perfume on the Lord

and wiped his feet with her hair”. That Mary is probably the same Mary, sister of Martha, whom Luke refers to as sitting at the feet of the Master (*Luke 10:38–42*). But — and in Scripture scholarship, always expect a “but” — Luke places that scene in Galilee, not in Bethany, which is near Jerusalem. So the Mary and Martha in Luke might be separate people from the sisters of Lazarus in Bethany. Or Luke got his locations mixed up, and they are the same people.

From here on it gets even

murkier with the Marys, but Catholic scholarship and tradition help us make sense of the various women named in the Gospels.

Mary, the wife of Clopas, gets a name-check in *John 19:25* as one of the women standing at the cross during Christ's crucifixion. The Evangelists can't agree who exactly was at the cross. But the Catholic Church identifies her as "the other Mary" mentioned twice in Matthew. She was also the mother of James the Younger, whom Mark and Luke locate at the empty tomb.

Some conflate her with "Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee" in *Matthew 27:55-56*. But Catholic scholarship tends to identify Mrs Zebedee as Mary Salome. Catholic tradition also identifies her as the mother of John Mark, who joined Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journeys (*Acts 12:12*).

There is one more Mary in the New Testament: In his letter to the Romans, Paul asks the recipients to "greet Mary, who has worked hard for you"

(*Romans 16:6*). Nothing more is known about her.

So, how many Marys were at the cross? It depends firstly on the Evangelist you trust most, and then on separating or conflating the various Marys. Catholic tradition settles on four: the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mary Magdalene, Mary of Clopas, and Mary Salome. Mark's Gospel locates the latter three at the empty tomb on Easter morning.



This article was published in the October 2021 issue of The Southern Cross magazine.



Children of St Anthony's 'Fun Day' Album



Thank you!

St Anthony's Child and Youth Care Centre
23 Jooste Road
Newcastle,
Kwa Zulu, Natal,
South Africa



Dear Fr Eddie,
It was so good talking to you recently. Following our conversation,
I hereby would like to request, if you and our patrons would be
so kind, the following items for our 87 children in the care of
St Anthony's :-

1. Fire proof Mattresses @ R3,500 each X 87 = R304,500. Due to the high amount I think it best to ask for only half this amount.
The reason for these expensive mattresses is the need for fire safety compliance and that it helps if there is a fire that the mattresses do not catch fire easily.
2. School uniform @ 50 Children = R23,000.
3. Annual Insurance @ R103 000 and we request R50,000.
4. Band saw @ R6,000.
5. Fence for vegetable gardens and chicken fence @ R20,000.

You have always been so generous and the difference you make in our children's lives is remarkable.
Thank you in anticipation.

The above requests have been met, and these pictures show some of the children who will benefit from them. These were taken during a recent 'fun day' which included Educational /Developmental and Therapeutic/Recreational programs. These activities are essential for the mental wellbeing of not only the youths, but also the hard working staff and volunteers.





'Access to safe drinkable water is a basic and universal human right'. Pope Francis