

Prayer and reflection resource

Week 5 | “The Wilderness of Grief”

Our focus in our final week is on the wilderness of loss and grief experienced by Jesus’ followers after the crucifixion. We think in particular about Mary Magdalene’s story, as told in John 20: 11-16 and about the travelers to Emmaus in Luke 24: 13 – 31.

This image (right) is of [the painting *Mary Magdalene*](#) by Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo.

Mary is depicted peering out at us, her face shadowed by the folds of a sumptuous white silk cloak which envelops her. Her right hand, wrapped in the cloak is lifted towards her chin, with her left arm she seems to hug herself tightly.

Behind her and to the left we see dawn breaking, while to the right is an archway in deep shadow – perhaps the entrance to the tomb.

At which point in the story do you think the artist has portrayed her? How does she speak to you? What would you like to say to her?



In our second image (left), the sun beats down on a parched landscape through which winds a dusty track.

It is not the Emmaus Road, but perhaps gives a sense of the bleakness felt by the travellers leaving Jerusalem after Jesus’ death.

Almost disguised by its burden of straw, the same colour as the scrub around it, there is a donkey coming towards us. Have you ever felt as though you were trudging along a road like this? What helped you on your way?

Reflections

As Lent draws to a close, you might like to look out for situations and feelings that could be described as 'wilderness', either in yourself or in others.

How might they be transformed by the Easter proclamation of resurrection?

What would such transformation look like, and feel like, for you?