

Prayers for 18th July 2021 from Jan Teale

Mr G F Merriman, Head teacher of Whiston J and I school for many years, was a 'stickler'. A stickler for good behaviour, good manners and hard work and a stickler for general knowledge. He used to terrify me, which was silly really as I was never in trouble. One of his real interests, which he tried to help his pupils with, was flags and their countries, together with saints and who they stood for. There were often quizzes about these things – a good way to teach us.

It is because of the patron saint of our church – Mary Magdalene – that I am reminded of Mr Merriman now. This Sunday we celebrate our patronal festival – the festival of St Mary Magdalene. He would often talk to us about her.

In the past we have had special priests come along to preach and preside on the day, followed by a little party in the Rectory garden. Revd Neil Bowler was especially good at organising that! I know that Covid prevents such gatherings now but, once we are 'free', wouldn't it be good to start that again. There is much about Mary Magdalene to celebrate.

She accompanied Jesus during his ministry and, together with other faithful women, stayed beside the cross during his crucifixion. She was the first to witness the appearance of the risen Lord on Easter Morning and was sent by Jesus to take the good news of it to the others. This earned her the title of 'Apostle to the Apostles'. We are very blessed to have her as our patron saint.

Let us pray: Lord, we thank you for Mary Magdalene. Please make us more like her in our own lives and witness to you. Help us in our own way to witness to your resurrection and to serve you just as she did. Let us be able to hold the power of Jesus's risen life within us. You forgave Mary her sins and healed her through your grace – please let that happen to us too. May we be true apostles for you, just as she was. Amen

And we remember and pray for the recently departed and for all who are ill, whether at home or in hospital, or who may be sad and lonely, especially those who have lost family and friends recently and for whom life will never be the same again. We pray also for those whose anniversaries are commemorated in our memorial book this week: Thomas Edward Cutts, Nellie Helen Hazlehurst, Geoffrey Vernon Cotton, Nellie Round, Stephen Richard Tindall, Elsie May Messenger, H Stuart Hollingworth and Robert Cox. Amen