



*When he had finished eating, he said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch".*  
Luke 5: 4

## LAUNCH OUT LETTERS (LOL) August 2022

Archdiocese of Wellington, New Zealand  
Journal and Newsletter for Lay Leaders and Ministers

Welcome to the August issue of LOL.

Let me begin by thanking our readers for your support. The Launch Out Candidates use LOL as a platform to hone their theological reflection. Since its inception, it has evolved into a journal where other lay leaders express their thoughts on lay leadership and ministry issues.

**Bonita Tasele's** reflection for the first Sunday Gospel of August is on the 'coming of Christ'. The notion of the 'coming of Christ' often connotes the end of the world. The climate crisis we see nowadays, such as the heatwave in Europe and our episodes of flooding, certainly conjures up the imminence of the end.

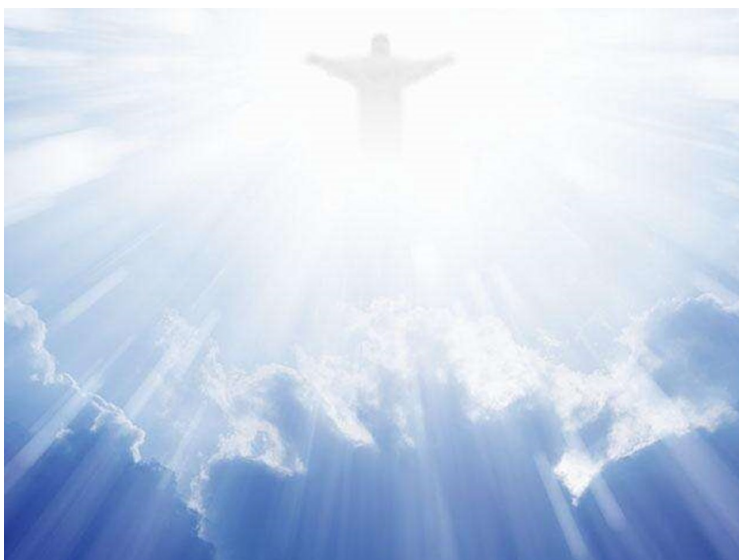
For this issue, we are still reflecting on the Synod. A prominent topic during the Synod is the disappointment of many of the laity about the clergy. **Bridget Taumoepeau** wishes to expand that conversation by looking at this issue through the lens of Collaborative Ministry, because although the concerns raised are valid, we need to find a way forward and we have to do so together. After all as the Synod exhorts, we have to walk together. Similarly, across the ditch, the Australian Plenary Council proposed the ordination of women deacons. Lay Pastoral Leaders were created in the Synod of 1998 from the insistence of the people that the ADW would not accept deacons unless the Church would also include women in that role. If women deacons are now a possibility, should ADW follow suit? I tapped the wisdom of **Joe Green** and Joe impressively delivered. Could it be that an LPL model may be a step ahead of a gender-equal diaconate? Finally, in my piece on Mary Magdalene, I gave a short historical view of the conflation of her image by the Church for over a millennium. The history of the distortion of Mary Magdalene's image and the truth of her place in the life of Jesus, pulls together our reflections on preparing for the coming of Jesus, the Synod, and the evolving nature of the Church.

We don't know when the end of times will happen. As people of the resurrection, we are called to do our best to build the Kingdom of God in the here and now. Hopefully, by doing so prepares us for whatever is there to come.

—Maya Bernardo, Launch Out Formator and Manager

### Preparing for the Lord's coming (Luke 12: 32-48) 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

By Bonita Tasele  
Launch Out Candidate



*The Lord's coming will happen when we least expect it.  
O God, You are my God; it is You I seek!  
For my body yearns, and my soul thirsts! (Psalm 63:2)*

We all know this world is unpredictable. So, how do we stay alert for any incoming danger? We might think that we have all the bases covered since things are looking good on the outside. Still, we could be leaving a door wide open for problems due to unresolved issues in our lives. The gospel of Luke reminds us, 'Be vigilant at all times and pray that we have the strength to escape the imminent tribulations and to stand before the Son of Man'. The Lord's coming will happen when we least expect it, like a thief breaking into our house at night.

<https://www1.cbn.com/teaching/when-is-jesus-christ-coming-again>

Continues on Page 2

We do not know when 'the hour will come'. These words are often attributed to the time of our death. So what does it mean to be ready? I propose three ways: first, it is not to be attached to the concerns of this earthly life, even if we are immersed in its midst. This alludes to reflecting on the way we live our lives. The verses of this gospel also resonates with that of Matthew 24 on the destruction of the temple. Warning us of behaving as if our wrong doings can go on forever without consequence.

Are we living a life of service? Is God the centre of our lives? Answering 'yes' to these questions can be challenging in a world where we are tempted to ensure that we are seen and heard. As Christians, we must remember that our actions speak louder than our words. It doesn't matter who sees or do not see us. Our hearts know the truth, and more importantly, God knows. Our hearts must yearn for God to bring light and healing to our souls so we can serve others with all our hearts, souls and minds.

The second is to consider every hour and every moment as the time of Jesus. We are encouraged to recognise Him in the different people and events that make up the moments of our lives. Luke paints a clear picture of Jesus as a model of how to live fully 'Love' is the key note of Luke's gospel; by underpinning the service especially for the sick, the helpless, the poor, women, children, and the outcast.

Finally, let the kingdom of heaven come to us and enter our lives. Let the Lord put things in order. Stay close to him and be ready for anything. When the Lord knocks at our door, we must be prepared to welcome Him. And to open our hearts to accept His love and share that love with our families, friends, community and the world.

## Prayer

*Heavenly Father, life's challenges are not easy for us in this troubled world. We feel pressure from all four corners of the earth. Help us remain ready and keep us steady for your coming.*

*Show us where we need to change, let us be vigilant and may your Holy Spirit guide us. May you complete us, let nothing stand between us and keep us ready and awake to face the coming dawn.*

*We also thank you, Father, that since the restrictions have eased from this pandemic. You have been protecting us and keeping every member of my family, my mother Telesia Tia Faresa, all my children and grandchildren, my siblings and their families, and all my friends, great and well.*

*Please help us remain vigilant and to guard us against complacency, so we can do all that we can to keep people safe. Remind us that we are essential in keeping everyone safe and the keeping them safe is part of our service to You.*

*We come to Your blessed hands to lead us, teach us, help us and love everyone.*

*We ask this in Your name through Jesus Christ, our Lord, Mother Mary, and the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.*

*Amen*



<https://www.pinterest.nz/pin/on-finding-time-for-god-for-yourself-and-for-others-during-great-lent--405464772700373753/>



For most of us the active phase of the Synodal process is completed, although we now have to consider how this will affect our ongoing relationship with God and with each other, and the fact that the church may be forever different from now on. Not surprisingly the issue of the laity was prominent under several headings. These included leadership, formation and even ordination.

Conversely there was overt and covert criticism of the clergy and the institutions of the church. It was clear that for some clergy this was very hurtful and was not tempered by much empathy for the difficult position in which they have been placed. While the abuse scandal did not seem to be prominent in the

discernment, clericalism certainly was, often in the presence of priests who are very pastoral and could not be accused of such behaviour. In addition, most participants did not acknowledge the role that laity have played in perpetuating clericalism by their passivity, lack of involvement with the running of their parishes or their blind deference to their parish priest, expecting him to make all the decisions and take all the responsibility.

Little was mentioned of the fact that priests may be lonely, living in unsuitable presbyteries, bogged down with administrative duties, on 24-hour call and concerned about the fact that they may be called on to take on another parish or extra sacramental duties. Coupled with that, they may be concerned about the adaptation and integration of foreign priests coming to New Zealand, as well as constantly being aware of the dwindling congregations and the lack of young parishioners.

There seemed to be a difficulty in separating criticisms of the institutional, hierarchical and clerical church from our personal experience with priests. Maybe this has been a downside of the synodal process, where we have been given the chance and indeed encouraged to contribute, yet have not followed a true discernment process, choosing rather to get carried away with the opportunity to air our grievances.

Most attendees at the synod meetings would already be very involved in various ministries or administrative tasks in their parishes. That has been my own experience and one that has given me great opportunities to practice my faith and to use some of my skills. Sometimes forgotten is the aspect of leadership, and the difficulties it entails. It is easy to make use of one's natural qualities, but also easy to criticise – both our fellow parishioners that we feel are not contributing, or our priests, whose style we may not like.

We may have forgotten the power of positive feedback; the importance of thanking those who care for us; the chance to ask how we can help; the objective assessment of the difficulties that our parish may present for the parish priest; their personal circumstances that may impinge on their ability to serve. In short, are we following the commandment to love our neighbour as ourselves, to show empathy and care? Particularly in relation to our priests.

It is important to reflect on this as we prepare to have increased roles within the church. If we, too, are to become leaders we can learn from those who have gone before us. We can see what was successful and where the difficulties lay. We can understand the adaptations that have had to be made as the church seeks to be relevant in the modern world.

The rise of the laity, often accompanied by increased theological education, and the desire to be more involved in the running of the Church, brings with it the concept of both rights and responsibilities. The rights aspect takes us back to Vatican II and the recognition of the people of God, who are all the baptised. This council was the first to promote the laity and to look to a greater role for them in the Church. As for responsibilities, we will have to learn about leadership, specifically collaborative ministry, and how we will conduct ourselves. In particular, we may need to appreciate the importance of service to others.

My own background in mental health has offered me a good model. For over forty years I have worked in multidisciplinary teams. In the health setting that meant that all team members contributed their particular skills and training, all the while keeping the patient at the centre and being aware that they must work as a team for the benefit of that person. Tasks were shared out; each aware of the others' personal strengths and roles and keeping all the treatment plans under review. Team members had the opportunity to extend their skills, and recognition was given to those who had a particular training, that could be utilised for the good of the patient. Often, we had to think outside the square and utilise other services that seemed more appropriate. There was no place for 'going it alone' or disrespecting the opinions of others. On occasions someone would have to take responsibility for difficult decisions, but these would be discussed in the group and hopefully understood and supported by all.

Would we be able to say that most parishes are run like this? Not surprisingly the answer is probably 'no'. This should not be seen as a criticism, but as an indication that we will have to look ahead, acknowledging that things will be run in a different way in the future. We need to draw on some of the principles of Ignation Spirituality - looking for the good in others; being flexible; acknowledging that for some the process will be difficult and that we, and they, will have to adapt; always considering our choices through the lens of discernment and remembering the risks of a desire for pride, honour, or recognition.

We have a model of servant leadership in Pope Francis, who is an expert on the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, and well aware of the risks that leadership can pose. He has been the one who has brought clericalism to our attention but would also recommend that we look ahead with hope.

Change is often difficult, but without it, institutions may die. The Church is interesting in this respect – we often concentrate on the continuity of tradition and the links with the past. We sometimes talk of the unbroken chain, through the Church, from Peter to the present. We use symbols that have survived centuries. On the other hand, we are told that the Church is '*ecclesia semper reformanda*' – 'the church must always be reformed'.



*Continues on Page 5*



The theologian, Hans Küng, influenced by the Second Vatican Council, used this term extensively, drawing particularly on *Lumen Gentium* (The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), which reminds us that the Church must always follow the way of penance and renewal. And in March of this year there was a conference in Slovakia entitled 'Pope Francis, Synodality and Ecclesia semper reformanda'. It referred to the Pope's belief that synodality is central to the church's renewal.

Many people remarked that the opportunity to participate in the synodal process was exciting, a chance to take an active part in the future mission of the church -to be part of semper reformanda. Hopefully most, if not all, the gathered ideas were positive and future oriented. Now the challenge is to work on how we can implement these ideas, learning from the past, being grateful for those who have led the way, learning new skills and above all being caring in our collaborative approach.

## ONLINE RESOURCES



Copied from <http://beamcountypriamaryschool.org/online-subjects>

- **Food for Faith** <https://foodforfaith.org.nz/>
- **MBTI personality types**. As we near the day we gather to attend the Enneagram workshop on 20 August, we can also look at other personality tools that could help us understand ourselves and the people we minister for and with. The MBTI is one of these tools. This is a simple article that explains it <https://www.atlassian.com/blog/leadership/every-myers-briggs-personality-type>
- **The 2022 Hélder Câmara Lecture: 'The Outsider Pope: Where is Francis leading our Church?'** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFRvB3fCpd4&ab\\_channel=DioceseofParramatta](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fFRvB3fCpd4&ab_channel=DioceseofParramatta). Recommended by Bridget Taumoepeau.
- **What is about women and the church?** <https://international.la-croix.com/news/religion/what-is-it-about-women-and-the-church/16420> Recommended by Bridget Taumoepeau
- **Boston College online course on St. Mary of Magdala** 03-30 August. USD 30. Register at <https://www.bc.edu/content/bc-web/schools/stm/sites/crossroads.html>
- **National Synod synthesis** <https://nzcatholic.org.nz/2022/07/04/nz-dioceses-publish-synod-synthesis-documents/>

## UPDATES



- **Launch Out in the National Synod, 01 July 2022** Margaret Bearsley and Tony Lenton (LO Graduate as participants) ; Lisa Beech (scribe), Bridget Taumoepeau Mary Kay Jackson and Lucienne Hensel (facilitators)
- **Reminder: Enneagram Workshop 20 August 2022**, 8:30am to 4:30pm at Sts Peter and Paul School, Lower Hutt.
- **Gathering of Leaders of Ethnic Communities and Presentation of the findings of the Ethnic Review**. The Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, Church Mission, the Ecology Justice and Peace Desk would be attending. Details: 06 August 2022, 11:30am–4:00p.m. at Te Awakairangi Parish. Thank you to the following Candidates who helped: Bernadette (data analysis and interviewee); Bonita Tasele and Telesia Alaimoana (interviewees)

## To ordain, or not to ordain? The future of the diaconate in the Archdiocese of Wellington

By Joe Green  
Lay Pastoral Leader (Director of  
Parish Mission); Launch Out Graduate

At its recent Plenary meeting the Catholic Church in Australia voted to put forward to the Synod 2023 the ordination of women to the diaconate. Should the Church at Wellington follow suit?

Participants at the 1998 Wellington Archdiocesan Synod voted in favour of a lay pastoral leadership model, rather than introduce the permanent diaconate, the major motivator reportedly that both women and men might then participate in parish leadership.

Whilst the preparatory sessions for the Synod 2023 are calling for opportunity for increased participation in leadership in the Church for women there are conflicting views on the diaconate, probably best summarised by two opposing views of participants on the commission studying the question of women in the diaconate in the Catholic Church. On the one hand, Phyllis Zagano (*Women: Icons of Christ*) demonstrates almost conclusively that historically, certainly for much of the first millennium, both men and women were ordained to the diaconate by the same Bishop, at the same liturgy, using the same words and ritual. On the other hand, Deacon Cerrato (*In the person of Christ the Servant – a theology of the diaconate based on the personalist thought of Pope John Paul II*) takes the purely Thomist approach that there is a unicity in Orders that sees the Bishop, Priest and Deacon share in the Alter Christos, each in their own way, and therefore if women are admitted to the diaconate (which he argues they can't), then equally they might be admitted to the priesthood and the episcopacy.

Both views are fraught: one needs to be mindful that one cannot read current practice or understandings into historical practice and understanding. "Ordination" has a different meaning now than it did during that first millennium. The current Thomist view of "ordination" developed early in the second millennium and is based on the Aristotelian thinking of the schoolmen.



<https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/07/06/australian-plenary-council-women-243309>

In considering whether to move toward the ordination of women to the diaconate the Church, and indeed individual women, will need to consider if they wish to perpetuate a clericalist system originating from the "political needs of the church as a public body within the Roman Empire" (Thomas O'Loughlin, *Discipleship and Society in the Early Churches*) and which perpetuates that model: hierarchical, patriarchal and, arguably misogynist.

Pope Francis has an oft expressed dislike for such clericalism. He is looking to grow a distinctly lay ministry in which both men and women can participate. As Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he instructed his priests: "if you can, rent a garage and find some willing lay (person) let them go there, do a little catechesis, and even give communion" (cited in Vallely, 2013, *Pope Francis, Untying the Knots*. Kindle loc. 2237). He is appointing women to senior positions within the Vatican.

*Continues on Page 7*

In Pope Francis's view laity have historically and still '*proclaim God's word, teach, organize communities, celebrate certain sacraments, seek different ways to express popular devotion and develop the multitude of gifts that the Spirit pour out in their midst*' (*Querida Amazonia*, QA #89).

Francis expounds his vision for lay ministry and leadership '*In some cases a ministry has its origin in a specific sacrament, the Sacred Order: it pertains to the "ordained" ministries, of the bishop, the priest, the deacon. In other cases, the ministry is entrusted, with the liturgical act of the bishop, to a person who has received Baptism and Confirmation and in whom specific charisms are recognized, after an appropriate journey of preparation: we then speak of "instituted" ministries.*' (Explanatory letter to *Spiritus Domini*).

In that same letter, Francis goes to some length to explain that the development of lay ministries in no way detracts from the ordained ministry, but rather enhances it.

O'Loughlin posits what might be seen as an alternative approach: "where two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus, he is with them (Matt 18:20), and so their actions together – such as celebrating a meal – take place in the presence of the Father, because Christ, present among them, is always their High Priest. This theological vision has important implications for individual Christians who find themselves performing specific acts, ministries, within the church." (from "*Discipleship and Society in the Early Churches*"). He continues, "There is no suggestion in the first-century documents that leadership at the two key community events, baptism and eucharist, was restricted in any way or the preserve of those who were community leaders" and following on from this, O'Loughlin argues that "any subsequent distinctions such that particular ministries are not potentially open to every baptised person are tantamount to a defective theology of baptism by which all ministry is brought into being." (from "*Discipleship and Society in the Early Churches*" by Thomas O'Loughlin).

And so, perhaps rather than enter into the existing framework (which Zagano suggests requires the changing of only one word in Canon Law), the Church might consider changing the framework such that lay women (and men), having completed a programme of formation, such as Launch Out, might be authorised to do the very things that ordination to the diaconate authorises as a norm (rather than as an extraordinary mandate): the authority to baptise, witness marriage, preside at funerals, proclaim the gospel, and give homilies during the Mass, and offer a ministry of service.



Former Launch Out Candidates learning liturgy from Patrick Bridgman. The Candidates in this picture are now actively serving in the diocese: Joe Green (LPL), Debbie Matheson (LPL), Merrick Mitchell (LPL), Sharon Penny (LPL), Mika Teofilo (LPL), Lucienne Hensel (Church Mission), Mary-Ann Greaney (former Director of Parish Leadership Ministry); and Kevin Crighton (Home of Compassion).



One has to wonder at the motivations for seeking ordination to the diaconate, other than the control and power the current system seems to gift the ordained, purportedly the reason that Francis of Assisi resisted ordination. If the roles of the deacon can be done by a duly authorized lay person, and the mechanisms exist for that authorization, why buy into it!

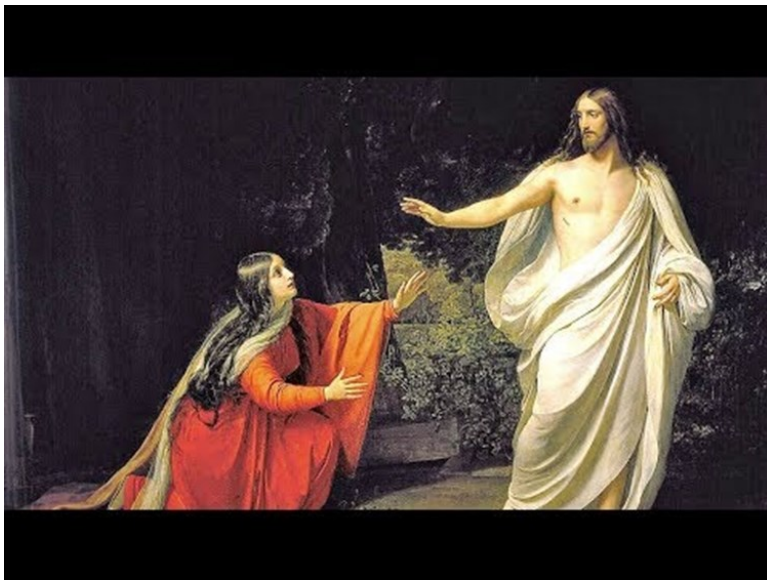
One can see the wisdom of the vision espoused by the 1998 Wellington Archdiocesan Synod, a vision that Cardinal Tom Williams accepted as being of the Holy Spirit when he established Lay Pastoral Leadership in the Archdiocese of Wellington.

In the long term, the only viable forward-looking approach, affirmed at the 1998 synod and seemingly supported by Pope Francis, is the development of a well-trained, well-formed, and well-supported lay leadership.

---

## Re-discovering Mary Magdalene, the Apostle to the Apostles

By Maya Bernardo  
Launch Out Formator & Manager



[https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint\\_id=83](https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=83)

On 22 July 2016, Pope Francis elevated the memory of Mary of Magdalene to a Feast Day to underpin her significance in our faith history. I reckon it is more than that, he also intends to amplify the rectification of the two millennia of distortion of her image and life. And by doing so, lead us to reflect on the role of women in the Church. I remember as a young girl, studying in an all-girls Catholic school, listening to a nun admonishing us, as if our very life depended on it, that we should NOT be like Mary of Magdalene-- 'a prostitute', a woman of loose values', she grimly proclaimed. That stayed with me until 2016 when Pope Francis gave her a feast day. That was

a long jump from 'loose woman' to the "Apostle to the Apostles". Thus, in April of 2021 I grabbed the chance to enrol on an online course on her in Boston College.

Tracing the history of how the Roman Catholic Church got it wrong with Mary Magdalene, in contemporary terms, we could say that she has been a victim of "fake news" for the past two millennia.

The Eastern Orthodox churches got her right from the start and have always held her in high esteem. The western Church's blunder on Mary became official when Pope Gregory the Great, in the sixth century, gave a sermon where he conflated three different women in the Gospels, as Mary of Magdala—the sinner in Luke, who wiped Jesus' feet with perfume and her hair; Mary of Bethany in John who anointed Jesus and Mary Magdalene, the one Jesus freed from seven demons in Mark and Luke. This led to Mary Magdalene also being identified with the adulterous woman, whom Jesus saved from stoning.



This conflation enshrined an image of Mary of Magdalene that Boucher (2009) describes as a complex combination of the demonic, erotic and penitent. Many western arts depicted her naked to the waist, or despondent in rags as the *Penitent Magdalene* by the famous painter Donatello. It didn't help that Hollywood cashed in on the conflation with films such as the *Last Temptation of Christ* and *The Passion of the Christ*.

So, who is Mary of Magdalene? There is a growing literature on her recently. Mary lives in the town of Magdala, on the Sea of Galilee. Magdala comes from the Hebrew word *migdal* or high tower. Mary's Hebrew name is Miriam, but later the world came to know her by her anglicised name—Mary Magdalene. She is not identified by her relationship to a man, a husband, or a son. Historians posit that she was an independent and single woman, which was rare in Jewish society. We encounter her in Luke 8: 1-3 as the woman from whom Jesus' cast out seven demons, and Mark 16:7, repeats this description and calls her by name. The so-called demonic possession could refer to epilepsy. Biblical scholars also suggest that Mary held a high status among women disciples. Mary was among those women who followed Jesus' passion until his death. She is mentioned by name in Matthew, Mark and John as being present at the crucifixion. Her most significant role is highlighted in John where she is identified as the first witness of the resurrection. She returned to the disciples to tell them of what she had seen, thus earning her the title of 'Apostle to the Apostles'.



<https://donatelloduff.weebly.com/penitent-magdalene.html>

There is a growing literature on feminist theology that uses Mary Magdalene as someone who represents the marginalisation of women and the neglected (or forgotten?) feminine side of the Church. What price have we paid for distorting Mary Magdalene? What would have the Church looked like if from the start we acknowledged that a woman was among the Apostles and had a special friendship with Jesus that is unlike that of Peter, James and John, the ones we are all familiar with? How would I have considered myself as a woman in the Church had I known Mary of Magdala as she truly was?

I believe that the awakening of the Church to the true identity of Mary Magdalene and her place in the Gospel is part of the bigger and evolving journey to fulfil the vision of Vatican II. Her story is integral to the revelation of the part of the role of women, and of the laity and about priesthood (or even how priesthood is best lived out). The presence of Mary Magdalene in the life of Jesus, as well as the other women in the Gospel reveals that Jesus didn't lead an "old boys club". In fact, Jesus gathered a community of disciples, composed of women and men from different walks of life who committed their lives to support and follow Him.

Mary's most significant part in the Gospel is when Jesus chose to reveal His resurrected self to her. The depth of their friendship was unravelled in those verses in John 20: 11-19. There is an intimacy there that beckons to be explored. Honouring Mary Magdalene as the Apostle to the Apostles is an invitation to know Jesus better. The Jesus who shared deep bonds of friendship with women and men and who relied on their love to do His mission.

#### References:

Boucher, M. (2009), "Mary of Magdala" [https://www.bc.edu/content/bc\\_web/schools/stm/sites/encore/main/2009/mary-magdala.html](https://www.bc.edu/content/bc_web/schools/stm/sites/encore/main/2009/mary-magdala.html)  
<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/saints/07/22/st--mary-magdalene--disciple-of-the-lord-.html>