



MORE WISDOM AND COMPASSION FROM POPE FRANCIS

I) Pope Francis, after praying the 'Regina Coeli' ('Queen of Heaven') at midday in St Peter's Square on Sunday 14 May, asked for prayers for the Yazidis – the focus of our December 'Pants Appeal'.

'Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I entrust to Mary, Queen of Peace, the fate of populations afflicted by wars and conflicts, in particular in the Middle East. So many innocent people are harshly tried, whether Christian or Muslim, or belonging to a minority, such as the Yazidi who endure tragic violence and discrimination. I accompany my solidarity with my remembrance in prayer, while I thank all those committed to take care of their humanitarian needs. I encourage the various communities to follow the way of dialogue and of social friendship to build a future of respect, security and peace, far from every sort of war....'

II)and during Eastertide, he talked about St Mary Magdalen at a papal audience in St Peter's Square, describing her as 'the apostle of Christian hope'.

'Dear Brothers and Sisters:

In our catechesis on Christian hope, we now reflect on Mary Magdalen as an apostle of the hope brought by the Gospel. Saint John tells us on Easter morning Mary had gone to the tomb of Jesus; she saw that it was empty, and returned to tell this news to Peter and the other disciples. Returning to the tomb, yet still not understanding what had happened, Mary encounters the Risen Lord, but does not recognize him until he calls her by name.

This first appearance of Jesus after rising from the dead is thus something intensely personal. We know that just as he did with Mary Magdalen, so too Jesus calls each of us by name and fills us with joy at his presence. Our encounter with him brings freedom and opens up new vistas of life; it transforms our world and brings undying hope. The risen Lord tells Mary not to cling to him, but to go and tell the good news of his resurrection to the others. Mary Magdalen thus becomes the apostle of Christian hope. By her prayers, may we encounter anew the risen Lord, who calls us by name, turns our sorrow into joy, and sends us forth to proclaim by our lives that he is truly risen.'