

SAID ED July 23, 2017

Mary Magdalene

Pope Francis proclaimed St. Mary Magdalene *Apostle to the Apostles* because, according to the Gospel of John, Jesus sent her to bring good news to the apostles. She told them, “I have seen the Lord!” The greatest news of all times was first proclaimed by Mary Magdalene. St. Jerome (5th century) wrote, “Mary Magdalene received the epithet, ‘fortified with towers’ because of her earnestness and strength of faith, and was privileged to see the rising of Christ first, even before the apostles.”

“The Apostle to the Apostles” is a far cry from the woman of ill repute whom many of us thought was a repentant Mary Magdalene. Nothing in scripture describes her as sinful. Instead, scripture shows her faithfulness and loyalty; Mary Magdalene cared for Jesus out of her means, accompanied him to Jerusalem, was with him at the crucifixion and at the tomb. The risen Jesus appeared to her first.

Pope Gregory (6th century) thought Mary Magdalene was the woman caught in adultery and the woman drying Jesus’ feet with her hair but neither are named in the Bible. In Luke’s Gospel Jesus rids her of seven demons. Biblical scholars examine the word usage of the time when each Gospel was written and find “demons” were most likely illnesses; they could have been depression, anxiety, seizures, heart palpitations, anything!

Gregory of Antioch (also sixth century), in one of his homilies, has Jesus say to the women at the tomb, “Proclaim to my disciples the mysteries which you have seen. Become the first teacher of the teachers. Peter, who has denied me, must learn that I can also choose women as apostles.”



Many of us have seen Mary of Magdala with her fist clutched to her breast and her hair askew painted by artist after artist, century after century; even in contemporary films she is portrayed as nothing like scripture shows her. There were no digital cameras to capture her REAL image.

No “live from the scene” reporting. So we took what creative artists imagined and thought THAT was Mary Magdalene—until we read Sacred Scripture, i.e. **John 20:1-18** and others.

Devotion to St. Mary Magdalene in Southern France and elsewhere is legendary. A legend in the Eastern tradition has her traveling to Rome and appearing before the court of Emperor Tiberius. When she told Tiberius about Jesus’ death and Resurrection, he challenged her story, saying no one could rise from the dead any more than an egg in a dish on the table could turn red. With that, according to the legend, Mary picked up an egg and it turned bright red in her hand. To this day, icons of Mary Magdalene often depict her holding an egg, and Eastern Christians still color their Easter eggs a bright red.

Let’s gather in the living room at 7:00 pm, this Wednesday, July 26 to honor the real St. Mary Magdalene, a loyal and faithful supporter of Jesus.

Blessings, Deni Mack, D Min
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