

**She has always spoken to my heart:**

**Mary Magdalene**

A homily,

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Judith 9:1, 11-14

2 Corinthians 5: 14-18

John 20: 11-18

Psalm 42: 1-7

**In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit.**

So many have said of Mary Magdalene, of her story with Jesus and her transformation through faith: *“She has always spoken to my heart.”*

So frequently, the merit and worth of Mary Magdalene has been her controversy in the Church. That is the popular conception. After all, how widely spread is the belief she was married to Jesus. An unlikely reality, by most Biblical and Gospel measure: One sermon writer says:

*“Books have appeared which suggest Jesus and Mary were lovers or even married. This is easily disproved: if Jesus and Mary had been married, then St Luke would have mentioned the fact...”*

A note on Jesus' celibacy: I doubt he was interested in marrying and raising children. Though Jesus did have sexual feelings, he was celibate. The love between the two was of the kind that brings a woman, who is friend of Jesus Christ, to wait with his mother Mary at the foot of the Cross. This is the love of a woman. This is a deep, abiding love for the person and divine person of Jesus Christ. This is Holy love.

**My sense of Mary is based on her courage**, her independence, her willingness to love passionately. One result I admire and believe of this sainted woman, disciple of Christ, is how transformation and redemption, reconciliation and renewal came to this woman of the Bible.

The Apostle to the Apostles is Mary in spirit as was Mary Magdalene in life. She took a journey, went the Way of Jesus.

This is miraculous and telling of the Way of Jesus, her experience and faith: The fact that *seven devils* had been cast out of her gives us all hope. Hers is one of transformation and freedom in relationship to faith and Jesus Christ.

For I, too, have experienced transformation in my life. I, too, have been released in a freedom of spirit through Jesus. Her life is a fascination and inspiration regarding the power of the Christian faith, the illuminating power of the Gospel, and simply that of a life of miscast values or even that of a lost person reformed. Re-formed meaning one has been formed in a spiritual and psychic sense through faith-- through Faith that is a healing balm.

**History really tells us little of Mary Magdalene.** The Gospel of John in its first chapter says: "*The Word (God's living self-utterance and self-bestowal) became flesh, and dwelt among us.*"

This is a woman of courage, for she went to his tomb alone.

**There she received a call, a vocation** as disciple to bring the word of Jesus' resurrection to mankind, to follow in the Way. It is liberation of the heart. It is liberation in history of man and woman kind. May I say liberation of the world and cosmos? The Christ event.

The passage where Mary is commissioned reads:

*Jesus said to her, "Woman why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away? Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, "I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."*

Following this commissioning, Mary Magdalene rushed to the disciples, saying, "*I have seen the Lord*", and she told them that he had said these things to her.

**I present the Psalm portion** of our reading this Feast Day of Saint Mary Magdalene. This part of Psalm 42 speaks of her passion, and need for Jesus. This part of Psalm 42 speaks of her holiness. Mostly, it speaks to all of us of the human yearning for God. Is it not part of the light and spirit of the Lord that graces humankind with this capacity?

In a moment, I'll quote it. I am sure it will resonate with you. Mary, a reputedly wealthy woman of business and travel somehow met Jesus on her trips. It was something that stirred her. Call this the mystical call.

From the Psalm:

*As a deer longs for the flowing streams, /so my soul longs for you, O God,  
/for the living God. /When shall I come and behold /the face of God? /My  
tears have been my food and drink /day and night...*

**Her passion shows again in tears and love** when she washes Jesus' feet with her hair. This same powerful force within her led her to the tomb. There Mary was "graced with a visitation and ignited with a vocation. The visitation occurred at the bleakest period of her life. Bereaved of her Lord and grief-soaked as well, she had planned only to care for a corpse -- when it happened: a visitation from the One who called her *by name* and then commissioned her to a service—service from which she would never shrink and of which she would never be ashamed." That's how one writer puts it. How eloquent and elegant Mary Magdalene is and are these words I've borrowed from Victor Shepherd, noted preacher.

**Why Mary**, a wealthy woman of worldly sophistication to receive this vocation?

**Mary was a poor woman in spirit.** She had need of Jesus, and Jesus cares for such and calls them. Our reading in the Apocrypha tells us:

*"For your strength does not depend on numbers, nor your might on the powerful. But you are the God of the lowly, helper of the oppressed, upholder of the weak, protector of the forsaken, savior of those without hope."*

That says it.

And this, too, says it... as Jesus said of Mary Magdalene:

*She hath washed my feet with tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head...this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet...*

**Do we not love Mary Magdalene?** She is so alive and real. It is Gospel, so alive and real:

*The love of Christ urges us on, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died. And he died for all, so that those who live might live no longer for themselves, but for him who died and was raised for them.*

Mary Magdalene became "the righteousness of God."

As today's Collect for this major Feast Day reads in part of this personal and community Christ event for Mary Magdalene, we pray:

*Almighty God, whose blessed son restored Mary Magdalene to health of body and of mind, and called her to be a witness of his resurrection: Mercifully grant that by your grace we may be healed from all our infirmities and know you in the power of his unending life...*

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.**

*Amen.*