

Liturgical Living: Saint Mary Madgalene



The feast day of Saint Mary Magdalene is celebrated on July 22. She is the patron Saint of penitent sinners and contemplative life.

St. Mary Magdalene has been called the second-most important woman in the Gospels, after Jesus' mother, Mary. In the Gospels, Mary Magdalene is mentioned a total of 12 times, and nearly all of these passages are connected to Jesus' Passion, death, and resurrection.

In 2016, Pope Francis bumped this "Memorial" into a full feast day of the Catholic church, making St. Mary Magdalene the only woman other than Mary, the Mother of Jesus, to have an actual feast day above Memorial level.

Mary Magdalene's name comes from her origin in Magdala, a region in northern Galilee. The Gospels of Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene. After that, she traveled with Jesus and His followers, and played a prominent role in witnessing Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. She remained at the foot of the cross when most of Jesus' followers left Him, and she is remembered for her courage in faithfully standing with Jesus even as He faced death.

Mary Magdalene is the only person noted by all four Gospels as testifying to Jesus' resurrection. John and Mark portray her as the first witness of the resurrection, and St. Thomas Aquinas honored her with the title "the Apostle to the Apostles" because she was the first to share the news of the resurrection.

Mary Magdalene was a pillar of the early Christian community, a faithful follower of Jesus who was healed by Him, and one of the first people to witness and share the good news. She has always been an example of great love and great forgiveness, one of those close to Jesus who grasped the truth of God's love for human beings and spent her life bearing witness to that love.

St Mary Magdalene, pray for us!