

FUTURECHURCH 2020

CELEBRATION OF MARY OF MAGDALA

INTRODUCTORY RITES

General Welcome

Opening Song *A Hymn for the Feast of St. Mary of Magdala* Old One Hundredth

Sign of the Cross

Leader: We gather in the name of God, our Creator,
 Christ, our Savior,
 And the Holy Spirit,
ALL: **AMEN**

Introductory Remarks

"I have seen the Lord!"

Mary Magdalene, whom we celebrate today, was chosen to be the most important witness in history and commissioned to tell this Good News of Christ's Resurrection because of her love and her faithfulness, her courage and her perseverance.

In February of this year, I was blessed to fulfill a longing to go to Magdala, Israel to deepen my understanding of Mary Magdalene and Jesus' other women disciples.

During my 3 weeks there on the Sea of Galilee, I met Mary of Magdala, the first-century Jewish woman from a thriving, wealthy fishing town – just a day's walk from Nazareth. The woman who kept her own name – not to be identified with a male, as was the custom. The woman who is named 12 times in the Gospels.

I stood with Mary the Magdalene (which means tower or stronghold) -- introduced to us in Luke 8. Who was healed by Jesus and who – along with Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others – went on mission with the Twelve and Jesus “and provided for him out of [her] resources.”

I learned and prayed with Mary and the other women who were present for all of Jesus' teaching, who heard the words of the Parable of the Sower and were told “knowledge of the reign of God has been granted to you.”

And today, I mourn with Mary Magdalene, who remained weeping at Christ's tomb. I mourn that her true identity and honor as Apostle and evangelist, as a woman of power and strength, was buried by popes, artists, and theologians. I mourn that women's right to ordained ministry and leadership in the Church as successors of the Apostle to the Apostles has been denied.

I grieve the lives lost to Coronavirus – and particularly those lives needlessly taken from their families and communities because social and economic inequities condemned them to death.

I weep at the stinging scourge of racism and systemic injustice which have scarred our black sisters and brothers for centuries. And I weep for those whom we have unjustly crucified alongside Christ.

But I take heart in the community gathered here tonight in union with our foremothers. The Sower's seeds indeed took root so deeply, nurtured by love and faithfulness, courage and perseverance in the hearts and minds of Mary Magdalene and the other women that they had the stamina and the faith to remain, present to Jesus as he died on the cross, to seek out the tomb to anoint his body that first Easter morning, and to believe, when sent forth to proclaim Christ Risen. Then those seeds finally burst forth, yielding a harvest a hundredfold in the revelation that gave birth to our faith.

Today, we celebrate Mary Magdalene as a model of faith in action, who responded faithfully when Jesus called her by name; whose brave, assertive proclamation stirred hope in the covering disciples.

So inspired, may the seeds sown in our own hearts may be nurtured by our faithfulness and love, our courage and perseverance and bear fruit in our words, our preaching, our lives and our witness thus proclaiming the Good News and catalyzing the restoration our broken Church and world.

And so we pray....

Opening Prayer

Loving God, you are ever-present and ever-faithful even on the bleakest of mornings.

Give us the strength to stay, to confront the bleak emptiness of the many tombs we will encounter. Help us as we stay, weeping, seeking, listening, until we hear You call us by name.

On Easter morning, You revealed to Mary Magdalene Christ's Risen presence in the depths and riches of the divine kinship running from You our Creator, through Christ, to all of us - Your beloved children.

Help us recognize and honor Christ's Risen presence among us in the face of every living creature.

Open our hearts and minds, that like Mary Magdalene, we may be transformed into a more perfect faith.

And send us forth with joyful, brave, and willing bodies and spirits to proclaim Christ's risen and resurrecting presence here and now; to tend to the connections of love, justice, and equality that strengthen and build communities; to create and recreate a place for your presence here in our midst.

In the end this is all we have and all we need. This is the saving revelation you gave to Mary Magdalene and through her to us.

We make this prayer in the name of Christ Jesus, who calls us by name,
who with You, is present to our troubled world alongside and through us,
In the unity Holy Spirit,
God forever and ever. **AMEN.**

LITURGY OF THE WORD

1st Reading: [SGS 3:1-4B](#)

Lector: A reading from Song of Songs

Oh, the nights are long in my empty bed;
All night in my dreams I look for you, my lover, my heart;
But when I wake, there is no one there.
I can't sleep with this fire;
I'll get up and go walking,
Out through the streets to the square,
Looking for the one I adore.

Ah, but I went looking, and found no one.
The sentries on their rounds
Found me though.

I wanted to ask them,
“Have you seen the one I love?”
But no sooner did I pass by them
that I found, at last, the one that I hungered for,
the one whom my heart loves.

The Word of God

Psalm: Psalm 63: *My Soul is Thirsting* Michael Joncas
Gospel Acclamation: *Celtic Alleluia* C. Walker
Gospel: John 20: 1-18

A reading from the Gospel according to John:

On the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala came to the tomb early in the morning, while it was still dark, and saw the stone removed from the tomb.

So she ran and went to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and told them, “They have taken the Rabbi from the tomb, and we don’t know where they put him.”

So Peter and the other disciple went out toward to the tomb. They both ran, but the other disciple ran faster than Peter and arrived at the tomb first; bent down and saw the burial cloths there, but did not go in.

When Simon Peter arrived after, he went into the tomb and saw the burial cloths there, and the cloth that had covered Jesus' head, not with the burial cloths but rolled up in a separate place.

Then the other disciple also went in, the one who had arrived at the tomb first, and saw and believed. For they did not yet understand the scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned home.

But Mary stayed outside the tomb weeping. And as she wept, she bent over into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting there, one at the head and one at the feet where the body of Jesus had been.

And they said to her, "Why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken my Rabbi, and I don't know where they laid him."

When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus there, but did not know it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, “Why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?”

She thought it was the gardener and said, "Please, if you carried Jesus away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him."

Jesus said to her, “Mary!”

She turned and said in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!,” which means my Teacher.

Jesus said to her, “Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to God. But go to the sisters and brothers and tell them, ‘I am going to my Abba God and your Abba God.’”

Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Teacher,” and what the savior told her.

The Good News of Our Salvation

ALL: Praise to you, O Christ.

Preaching: Dr. Kim Harris, Ph.D.

Prayers of the Faithful

Loving God, like Mary of Magdala, we - a people with troubled hearts and minds - seek you tonight. And so, we offer these prayers in faith, trusting that you will once more make your resurrecting power known:

Please respond, “God of new life, hear our prayer”

We pray for our church – that our leaders will hear and respond to calls for justice and inclusion of all God’s beloved children and particularly the calls of women yearning to serve, like Mary Magdalene, as ministers of the faith, we pray: ***God of new life, hear our prayer.***

We pray for the nations of the world and those who lead – that they may commit to working for the good of all with integrity and compassion, we pray: ***God of new life, hear our prayer.***

We pray for all of us gathered tonight, and for the faith communities we represent, that we will become places and space of welcome and celebration for all who are marginalized by traditions and perceptions. May we take the time to see and treasure the Risen Christ in each other, we pray: ***God of new life, hear our prayer.***

We pray for the victims of Covid -19 and for all of the Healthcare workers who so bravely care for and support them and us, we pray: ***God of new life, hear our prayer.***

We pray for the victims of war, famine, racism, lynching, femicide, and immigrant detention and all forms of violence: that we speak out and work for lasting justice and peace for all, we pray: ***God of new life, hear our prayer.***

We make these prayers, and all the prayers we carry with us, in Jesus’ name. AMEN

Song: *Easter Sequence* asc. to Wipo of Burgundy, d. 1048

BREAD BREAKING SERVICE

Presentation of the Bread and Wine

Leader: *(lifting the bread)* Blessed are you, God of all Creation.
Through your goodness we have this bread to offer.
With it we place before you the creative actions of all people: their dreams, their
labors of love, their accomplishments, and their joys.
May we who eat this bread, which earth has given and human hands have made, be
bread for others.

ALL: **Blessed be God forever.**

Leader: *(lifting the cup)* Blessed are you, God of all Creation.
Through your goodness we have this wine to offer.
With it we bring forward the pain and suffering of our world at this time.
May we who drink this cup, fruit of the vine and work of human hands, pour out our
love.

ALL: **Blessed be God forever.**

“Apostle to the Apostles” Preface

It is right and just,
our joy and our salvation,
to glorify you in all things, O God,
through Christ our Savior.

He appeared in the garden
and revealed himself to Mary Magdalene,
who had loved him in life,
witnessed him dying on the Cross,
sought him as he lay in the tomb,
and was the first to adore him, newly risen from the dead.

He honored her with the office of being the apostle to the apostles,
so that the good news of new life
might reach the ends of the earth.

And so, with all holy people, with all the angels and saints,
we give you thanks and praise:

Litany of Praise

sung response

*We praise you, O God. For all your works are wonderful.
We praise you, O God. Forever is your love.*

We give you thanks, God of Wonder,
for your goodness and love in all creation,
by which you continually sustain and nourish us.
To you, we sing: ***sung response***

We give you thanks, God of Eternity,
for revealing yourself throughout history,
and inviting us into relationship with you.
To you, we sing: ***sung response***

We give you thanks, God of Justice,
For speaking words of life through the prophets,
and all wise and holy people across times, cultures, races, and creeds.
To you, we sing: ***sung response***

We give you thanks, God of Liberation,
For Christ, who freed us from sin
And anointed us as your beloved children.
To you, we sing: ***sung response***

We give you thanks, God of Hope,
For the Spirit of Life who empowers us to proclaim the good news
and who accompanies and unites us on our journey to fulfillment.
To you, we sing: ***sung response***

Prayer of Remembering

Leader: (*taking up the bread*) On the night before suffering, Jesus gathered the beloved community at table, took bread, gave thanks and praise, broke the bread and gave it to them, saying, ***“This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.”***

(*taking up the cup*) In the same way, after the supper, Jesus took the cup and shared it, saying, ***“This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.”***

Together, we proclaim the mystery of our faith:
ALL: When we eat this bread, and drink this cup, we proclaim your death, O Christ.
Until you come again.

Bread-Breaking Prayer

Leader: The bread we break and the cup that we take are a sharing in the life of Christ.

May our acceptance of it today be a sign of our faith

- In the goodness of God who journeys with us
- In the power of love to break down that which divides us

- In the mystery of the call we have received to make bread and life and beauty available to everyone.

We pray then, good and gracious God,
That we might recognize you in this breaking of bread today.

It is the bread of heaven, the bread of the poor, the bread of our lives.

May we recognize you every time we join someone on a journey,
Every time we share a meal, every time we take bread into our hands.

And may this recognition create in us such a joy in us that we might never lose sight of your goodness.

May it inspire such love in us that our hearts might continue to burn within us, keeping alive your memory and your promise.

And may it provoke such a longing for truth in us that we will never be satisfied until the whole earth experiences your justice and your peace.

(from *More than Words: Prayer and Ritual for Inclusive Communities* by Janet Schaffran and Pat Kozak, pg. 50-51.)

We make this prayer in the name of our nurturing and sustaining God, through, with and in whom we offer these gifts, sources of life, love and goodness, forever and forever.

ALL: **Amen.**

The Prayer of Jesus

Jocelyn: Together, we pray as Jesus taught us:

ALL: *Holy God, who brings us life and dwells among us,
Holy is your name.
May your love be enacted in the world
May your will be done throughout creation.
Give us today all that we need
And forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Strengthen us to resist temptation
And deliver us from evil.
For all we do in your love, all that your love brings about, and the fullness of
your love to come are yours, now and forever. Amen.*

Sharing the Bread and Wine

Leader: Let us share this bread and wine as has been handed onto us, knowing that our lives are forever changed by this and every breaking of bread.

Table Song: *A Place at the Table* L. True

CLOSING RITES

Blessing:

Nourished by God's Word, strengthened by our sharing in this community, and inspired by the witness of Saint Mary of Magdala, we ask for God's abundant blessing upon us as we go forth:

Making a blessing over our eyes, we ask for God's grace, that like Mary of Magdala, we may recognize and rejoice in the risen Christ in our very midst.

Making a blessing over our ears, we ask for God's grace, that like Mary of Magdala, we will respond faithfully to Christ who calls us by name.

Making a blessing of our hearts, we ask for God's grace, that like Mary of Magdala, we may open ourselves to Christ's healing, transforming love.

Making a blessing over our lips, we ask for God's grace, that like Mary of Magdala, we may boldly proclaim the Good News of Resurrection and new life in our midst.

Making a blessing over our hands, we ask for God's grace, that like Mary of Magdala, we may reach out to and support one another in this time of struggle and uncertainty.

Blessing over our feet, we ask for courage, that like Mary of Magdala, we may follow Christ, placing ourselves in solidarity with those who suffer, and go where God sends us.

In blessing each other, in our wholeness, we ask for the grace to know ourselves and each person as child of God -- good, holy, and worthy of love.

And may the God of hope fill us with every comfort and joy in believing.
May the peace of Christ abound in our hearts and minds.
and may the Holy Spirit gift and guide us
(making Sign of the Cross) now and forever, **AMEN.**

Closing Song: *You Shall Be My Witnesses* M.T. Winter