

Saint Mary Magdalene (Madeleine, Magdalen, Mary of Magdalene)

First Century, Feast Day 22 July

Tradition has always identified Mary Magdalene as the penitent who stalked Jesus at the house of the Pharisee and insisted on washing his feet with her tears. She dried them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with oil from an alabaster jar. The Pharisee was appalled, but Christ said that she had shown the greatest love and told her: *"Your sins are forgiven, your faith has saved you: go in peace."* She is believed to be the same Mary of Magdala who was possessed by seven demons until Jesus freed her. There is no evidence in Scripture for Mary Magdalene's reputation as a prostitute, but the label endures.

Whatever the truth about her life before the Crucifixion, Mary Magdalene was among the mourners at Calvary, and she became the first witness to the Resurrection. She arrived at Christ's tomb that morning, shortly before dawn. Discovering that the stone had been moved, Mary Magdalene ran to the apostles Simon, Peter and John and brought them back to see. They refused to stay because they did not yet understand the Resurrection, and it was left to Mary Magdalene to remain there and weep. Two angels in white asked her why she was weeping. She answered: *"They have taken my Lord, and I don't know where they laid him."* She did not recognize Jesus standing there until he said, *"Mary!"* She answered, *"Rabbouni"* (Teacher). Jesus told her to take a message to the disciples: *"I am going to my Father and you Father, to my God and your God."*

It is impossible to write about Mary Magdalene today without acknowledging *The Da Vinci Code*, which suggests that Mary Magdalene was a "holy vessel" that "bore the royal bloodline of Jesus Christ." Serious scholars find no reliable historical evidence that Jesus was married to her or anyone else.

The Genius of Mary Magdalene:

Philosophers from Thomas Aquinas to John Paul II have saluted Mary Magdalene as the Apostle to the Apostles as she was the first to see the resurrected Christ, and she was charged with bringing others the news.

Reflection:

"Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Lord,' and what he told her."

John 20.18

Source:

Gallick, Sarah [The Big Book of Women Saints](#) p. 219