

JULY 22, 2021  
Feast of St. Mary Magdalene, Disciple of the Lord  
John 20: 1, 11-18

“BE PROCLAIMERS OF THE RESURRECTION”

We experienced restrictions, isolations, and quarantine during this time of pandemic started last January the month first detected the virus here in Canada and sickness, death, mourning, and sadness surged on March last year. A lot of people were deeply saddened by their loved one passing. They suffered separation because of death, missed seeing their relatives and friends or even embracing and praying for them in their death bed, a difficult situation we need to endure.

Mary Magdalene was a loyal disciple of Christ, a woman set freed by Jesus from the slavery of sin. She deeply loved Jesus and was wounded and saddened by His suffering and death. The gospel relates that she together with her friends, visited the tomb while it was still dark – not only indicates that it was before sunrise but also expresses Mary’s heart of mourning and sadness. That’s why, weeping was mentioned in the gospel three times indicating the depth of her pain and sorrow. Mary Magdalene’s grief was a picture of our own grief too when our loved ones passed away because of our love, attachment and respect for them.

Because of her tears and sorrow, she did not recognise the people around her, even Jesus Himself. “Just then, she turns round and sees Jesus there, except that she does not recognise him – a common feature of all the resurrection stories. ‘Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?’ he asks her. She thinks he must be the gardener. This was not surprising, as we had been told in John 19:41 that Jesus’ tomb was in a garden. There is some Johannine irony here. At the very beginning, death had come to the human race in a garden, the Garden of Eden, where Adam and his wife disobeyed Yahweh. Now, life is coming back in another garden. And, of course, Jesus is

indeed the Gardener. It is then that Jesus addresses her: “Mary!” In speaking of himself as the Good Shepherd, Jesus had said, ‘He calls his own sheep by name... The sheep follow him because they recognise his voice.’ So here, Mary immediately recognises the voice of her Master; she knows that it is Jesus who is calling her. And she turns. But, just now, she had already turned to face him. This is a different turning – it is an interior turning to her Lord.”<sup>1</sup> Mary Magdalene recognised Jesus’ voice because all her life was with Him. His voice was the one who freed her from her sinful life. His voice was the one who made her come back to the right path. She listened to His voice and followed Him. Even if she was a sinner, she was accepted by the Lord because in her He saw an open heart, willingness to change and love emanating from her simpleness and humility to accept her faults and sins. Mary Magdalene was seen by others as a woman of sinful past but Jesus saw her as faithful disciple of the future.

My sisters and brothers, we can identify ourselves to Mary Magdalene, an image of hope, sinners who listened to Jesus, inspired by His words to have a change of heart, followed and trusted Him all our lives. But there is one more thing that we need to imitate Mary Magdalene, that is, be the proclaimers of the Resurrection, that the Lord is Risen, that those who are faithful to Jesus will be rewarded eternal life in His kingdom, that in our everyday life, the words of Jesus must be our guide and example for people to recognize God’s goodness in us. As she recognised the voice of Jesus, may we also recognise His voice always. Like Mary Magdalene, let us proclaim ‘I have seen the Lord’ through our personal relationship with Him in prayer and frequent reception of the sacraments and apply that through our loving, compassionate, and dedicated service to our brothers and sisters everyday. So, we pray and ask her intercession: St. Mary Magdalene, pray for us. Amen.

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<sup>1</sup> [livingspace.sacredspace.ie](http://livingspace.sacredspace.ie)