July 22nd: Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene

Gospel text (*Jn* 20:1-2.11-18): On the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene 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 Lord from the tomb, and we don't know where they put him."

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, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken my Lord, 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, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" She thought it was the gardener and said to him, "Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you laid him, and I will take him." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni," which means Teacher. Jesus said to her, "Stop holding on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and then reported what he told her.

"Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"."

Fr. Antoni CAROL i Hostench
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Today, we celebrate with joy Saint Mary Magdalene. With joy and benefit for our faith!, because her trail could very well be ours. Magdalene came from afar (cf. Luke 7: 36-50) and she did go very far... Indeed, at the dawn of the Resurrection, Mary looked for Jesus, found the risen Jesus and met Jesus' Father, "Our Father". That morning, Jesus Christ revealed to her the most important fact of our faith: that she was also God's daughter.

In Mary Magdalene's itinerary, we discover some important aspects of our faith. In the first place, we admire her courage. Though being a gift from God, faith requires courage from the believer. Generally, we tend towards what we can see, what can be seized with our hand. God being essentially invisible, faith "represents the risky enterprise of accepting what plainly cannot be seen as the truly real and fundamental. It involves a leap out of the tangible world" (Benedict XVI). Mary, by seeing the risen Christ can also "see" the Father, the Lord.

On the other hand, the "leap to faith" "is attained through what the Bible calls conversion or repentance: only he who changes receives it" (Benedict XVI). Was not this Mary's first step? Should not this also be a reiterated step in our lives?

In the conversion of Magdalene, there was much love: she did not spare any perfumes for her Love. Love! here is another "vehicle" of faith, because we neither hear, nor see or believe whom we do not love. In John's Gospel it clearly appears "believing is to listen and, at the same time, to see (...)" In that dawn, Mary Magdalene takes risks for her Love, she listens to her Love (to hear Him saying "Mary" is enough for her to recognize Him) and she meets the Father. "Easter morning (...), Mary Magdalene is asked to contemplate him as he ascends to the Father, and finally to her full confession before the disciples: "I have seen the Lord!" (Jn 20:18)" (Pope Francis).

Thoughts on Today's Gospel

- “What must be considered in these events is the intensity of the love that burned in the heart of that woman, who did not depart from the tomb, even though the disciples had left there.” (Saint Gregory the Great)

- “How beautiful it is to think that the first appearance of the Risen One —according to the Gospels— happened in such a personal way! That there is someone who knows us, who sees our suffering and disappointment, who is moved by us, and calls us by name.” (Francis)

- “The veiled character of the glory of the Risen One during this time is intimated in his mysterious words to Mary Magdalene: ‘I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ (Jn 20:17) This indicates a difference in manifestation between the glory of the risen Christ and that of the Christ exalted to the Father's right hand, a transition marked by the historical and transcendent event of the Ascension.” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, No. 660)

Other comments

“Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen the Lord’”

Fr. Albert SOLS i Lúcia
(Barcelona, Spain)

Today, we celebrate the festivity of St. Mary Magdalene. Youngsters usually get crazy over a movie to the point of identifying themselves with some of the characters there. We, Christians, should always be young at heart before the life of Jesus of Nazareth, and identify ourselves with this great woman, Mary of Magdala, whom the Gospel speaks to us about. She followed Jesus' path, she listened to his Word, and Christ reciprocated her by granting her the historic privilege of being the person to whom Christ's feat of resurrection was first communicated.

The evangelist says that, initially, she did not recognize him. And she took him for the gardener. But when the Lord calls her by her name: «Mary», maybe because of the special way to say it, this saint woman did not doubt anymore: «She turned and said to him, ‘Rabboni’ —which means, “Master”—» (Jn 20:16). After this first meeting with Jesus, she was the first one to run out to announce it to the other disciples: «So Mary of Magdala went and announced to the disciples, ‘I have seen

the Lord, and this is what he said to me’» (Jn 20:18).

Christians that, in their daily life programs, care about their relationship with Christ in the Eucharist by devoting a few instants to contemplative praying and cultivating the assiduous reading of Jesus' Gospels, will also have the privilege of hearing that personal call from the Lord. It is the same Christ who personally calls us by our name and encourages us to follow the steady path to saintliness.

«Prayer is conversation and dialogue with God: contemplation for absent-minded, certainty of what we are expecting, equal basis of honor with angels, progress and increase of goods, remission of sins, remedy for all ills, fruit of current goods and, guarantee for future goods» (St. Gregory of Nyssa).

Let us tell the Lord: —Jesus, make my friendship with you so strong and profound that, as Mary of Magdala, I know how to recognize you in my life.