

St. Mary Magdalene: Apostle to the Apostles

Continued

The First Witness of the Risen Lord

And on the morning of the first day of the week, Mary returns to the tomb, finds the stone rolled away, and runs to warn Peter and John. They in turn hurry to the empty tomb and discover that the body of the Lord is missing.

The two disciples return home but Mary Magdalene remains at the tomb in tears.

It was then that Mary encountered the Risen Lord, mistaking him at first for the gardener until the Lord called her by her name "Mary". Jesus then tells her: "Do not cling to me because I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go and find the brothers and tell them I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God." So, Mary goes to the disciples and tells them she has seen the Lord and that He said these things to her. (John 20).

Mary Magdalene is the first among the disciples following Jesus to proclaim Him as having overcome death. But she also proved she was among those who loved Him most when she stood at the foot of the cross on Mount Calvary together with Mary, his mother, and the disciple, John. She did not deny him or run away in fear as the other disciples did. She was there every moment of the way: faithful, faithful, faithful.

V. The Lord is glorious in his saints.

R. O come, let us adore him.

Almighty God, whose blessed Son restored Mary Magdalene to health of body and of mind, and called her to be a witness of his resurrection: Mercifully grant that by your grace we may be healed from all our infirmities and know you in the power of his unending life; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Mary Magdalene and the Myrrh-bearing Women

Mary Magdalene in the Orthodox Tradition



In the East, the Orthodox churches not only honor Mary Magdalene with a feast, but they celebrate her in the company of seven other women of the New Testament on ‘The Sunday of Myrrh-Bearing Women’ that falls on the second Sunday following Orthodox Easter. The myrrh-bearing women had brought funeral spices and ointments to complete the committal of Christ’s body to the grave. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are also commemorated on this special day.

Who are the eight women identified as the myrrh-bearers? Each of the four Gospels gives a different aspect of the roles of these eight women at the cross or at the tomb. Can you name them? They are: Mary Magdalene, Mary, the Theotokos (the Virgin Mary), Joanna, Salome, Mary the wife of Cleopas (or Alphaeus), Susanna, Mary of Bethany and Martha of Bethany.

By Thy grace Thou healest the infirm and makest weak vessels strong, O Christ our King. For the myrrh-bearing women stood by Thy Cross and announced the grace of the Cross to all without fear; and the choirs of wise women, hastening to emulate the choirs of the angels, ever vigilantly cry out to the Holy Trinity: Alleluia! An Orthodox prayer.