

FEAST OF ST. MARY MAGDALENE - THE TALE OF GRACE AND LOVE IN A SOUL, FRIDAY, 22ND JULY, 2022, WEEK 16, YEAR II.

SONG OF SONGS 3:1-4; PSALM 63; JOHN 20:1-2, 11-18.

Today, we celebrate the feast of St. Mary Magdalene.

This day was initially celebrated as a memorial but the Holy Father, Pope Francis raised this celebration to the status of a feast.

Pope Francis has taken this decision in order to highlight the relevance of this woman who showed great love for Christ and was much loved by Him.

A decree formalizing the decision was published on June 10, 2016, by the Congregation for Divine Worship, along with an article explaining its significance.

Both the decree and the article were titled "Apostolorum Apostola" ("Apostle of the Apostles"). In the article for the Vatican newspaper, Archbishop Arthur Roche, secretary of the Congregation, wrote that in celebrating "an evangelist who proclaims the central joyous message of Easter," St. Mary Magdalene's feast day is a call for all Christians to "reflect more deeply on the dignity of women, the new evangelization and the greatness of the mystery of divine mercy."

When we look at the life of Mary Magdalene, who she was before Christ and who she became in Christ, two things come to our mind - the power of grace and the power of love.

Grace found her, and a woman in whom seven demons resided, became a woman in whom the Spirit of God resided (Luke 8:2).

I appreciated more what God did for Mary Magdalene after I watched the series "The Chosen." Mary Magdalene was an embarrassment in the Jewish society. The demons humiliated her and the Jewish exorcists were unable to exorcise her. When she met Jesus, her life changed, her story changed, and she became an enigma, a statement of God's power and love. Her life became a witness to the power of Jesus.

I pray for someone reading/hearing this message, that your life will be a living testimony of the power of Jesus.

Having been forgiven, Mary became an Apostle, literally following the other Apostles. Her life revolved around Jesus. She loved Jesus with all her heart.

She was chosen to be the first witness of the Resurrection. St. Thomas Aquinas was the first to call her Apostolorum Apostola (Apostle of the Apostles).

The Gospel of today demonstrates her great love. She was at the tomb very early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark. She ran to call the Apostles to tell them of the empty tomb, and when everyone left, she remained weeping. She was ready to go alone and move Jesus back to the tomb, if only she was told where they had moved His body to. Upon recognising Jesus, she clung to Him - can you picture her "holding unto Jesus and weeping profusely."

This is a woman whose heart was aflame with divine love. Like the lover in today's First Reading, she was a woman who sought and found love. She loved because she was loved first. Sadly, this kind of genuine and ardent love of God is lacking in the heart of many believers. Many of us are lukewarm, and lacking in passion. Our love for God is not firm and cannot withstand trials.

Today, let us pray and ask the Lord to set our hearts ablaze with the fire of His divine love. Let us pray that the Lord may cause in us, unquenchable love for Him and may He enlarge our capacity to love Him.

Let us also pray for people whose lives are disfigured by sin, addictions and bondage, that grace will find them, and that they may be set free like Mary Magdalene, to experience life anew, to love afresh and to flourish freely.