

Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene

SONG OF SONGS 3:1-4B

The Bride says:

*On my bed at night I sought him
whom my heart loves—
I sought him but I did not find him.
I will rise then and go about the city;
in the streets and crossings I will seek
Him whom my heart loves.
I sought him but I did not find him.
The watchmen came upon me,
as they made their rounds of the city:
Have you seen him whom my heart loves?
I had hardly left them
when I found him whom my heart loves.*

PSALM 63:2, 3-4,5-6,8-9

R. (2) My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

*O God, you are my God whom I seek;
for you my flesh pines and my soul thirsts
like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.*

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

*Thus have I gazed toward you in the sanctuary
to see your power and your glory,
For your kindness is a greater good than life;
my lips shall glorify you.*

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

*Thus will I bless you while I live;
lifting up my hands, I will call upon your name.
As with the riches of a banquet shall my soul be
satisfied,
and with exultant lips my mouth shall praise you.*

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

*You are my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I shout for joy.
My soul clings fast to you;
your right hand upholds me.*

R. My soul is thirsting for you, O Lord my God.

JOHN 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.*



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× **Ardent Love**

*“I sought him whom my heart loves.
I will seek him whom my heart loves.
I found him whom my heart loves.”*

*“My soul is thirsting for you.
...for you my flesh pines.
...my soul thirsts like the earth, parched, lifeless and without water.
My soul clings fast to you.”*

Our first reading and Psalm help us understand Mary Magdalene’s heart as she went to Jesus’ tomb on that morning after the Sabbath, the day we call Easter Sunday.

We can’t even say “Easter” without a sense of joy, celebration and family. But, for Mary Magdalene, it was still dark. Her mood was as dark.

Western tradition connects our Mary to the sinful woman at the Pharisee’s home:

“She stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment.” (Lk 7:38)

Imagine her devotion for her Lord. She had been forgiven; delivered from a life of shame; and given a life of love. Imagine her heartbreak, as well as that of the rest of the disciples, at the death and loss of Jesus. It is only by comprehending the depth of this love, that we can appreciate the depths of despair that morning on the first day of the week.

Her grief is so raw, her reality so upturned, that even though she is desperately looking for her Lord's body, she does not recognize him whom she seeks. And yet, when Jesus calls her by name, "Mary", she is flooded with the recognition of the one she sought. She recognizes him as the one who healed her of the seven demons (Lk 8:2); of the one whom she followed as he preached and healed through out the countryside; at whose feet she sat listening (Lk 10: 39); and the one crucified before her as she stood with His mother at the foot of the cross.

Why would her heart not cry out, *"My soul clings fast to you"*? And yet Jesus replied, *"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.'"*

You see, Jesus is not the same as he was before. He is not recovered; He is resurrected! Mary is seeking to recover what was lost. Through Jesus' resurrection, his glorification, his fulfillment of his mission, all earth is created anew.ⁱ *"So whoever is in Christ is a new creation. "(2 Cor 5: 17)*

Up to now, Mary has heard proclaimed that Jesus is the "Son of God". Through Jesus' resurrection, His Father is Mary's Father (and our Father); His God is Mary's God (and our God).

Who would voluntarily choose the roller-coaster life like that of Mary of Magdala? And yet, we are all subject to shame, passion, injury, and love, only to be brought low again to experience the same cycle of throes in this chaotic and dangerous life.

And yet, can we not aspire to the fervency of love and devotion that Mary has for her Lord? Can you pray to recognize your Lord when he calls your name? Can I hear him call me now?

Through his resurrection, we become the sons and daughters of the living God.

Jesus told Mary to go to his brothers to tell them. Mary is called the apostle to the apostles.

Who are you going to tell?

St. Mary of Magdala, pray for us. ✕

ⁱ The Gospel of John, Francis J. Moloney, S.D.B., Sacra Pagina, The Liturgical Press, p.526