

# A prayer service for the feast of St. Mary of Magdala: Apostle to the Apostles

*This prayer service could be used at sunrise or for vespers on July 22. Alternatively, the reflection and/or prayers of the faithful could be incorporated into the Eucharistic liturgy for July 22.*

**Gathering Song:** *Gather Us In* (Stand) Song by Marty Haugen C 1982, G.I.A. Publications. Found in *Today's Missal Music* 2002, Oregon Catholic Press.

PRESIDER: In the name of God, Source of All Being, Eternal Word, and Holy Spirit.

ALL: Amen

PRESIDER: May the grace and peace of Jesus, our Risen Christ, be with all of you.

ALL: And also with you.

PRESIDER: Let us greet one another in the peace of the Risen Christ (exchange a sign of peace).

## Opening prayer

PRESIDER: Why have we gathered here?

ALL: We come, in the company of one another, looking for renewal and energy, to recommit to living into a new and evolving Church.

PRESIDER: What do we hope to do here?

ALL: Open ourselves to the unimaginable, as St. Mary of Magdala did, and recognize God in our midst.

PRESIDER: With what mission will we be sent from this place?

ALL: We are called to bear the Word, bringing God's love more fully into the world, taking our place in salvation history and heeding Christ's call to action.

PRESIDER: God, source of all wisdom and inspiration, just as you called St. Mary of Magdala, you call us to open ourselves to the unimaginable. Ground us in Jesus, the Risen Christ. Fill us with your Spirit. So that we too can be your disciples, building your Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. We ask this through Jesus the Risen One.

ALL: Amen.

## Liturgy of the Word: (sit)

Antiphon It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you.

Psalm 116:1-14

I: I am filled with love, for God hears me; Who bends to my voice whenever I call.

II: Death had me in its grip, the grave's trap was set, grief held me fast. I cried out for God, "O Holy One, please rescue me!"

I: Kind and faithful is our God, like a Mother, gentle and full of blessing. Who shelters the poor and raises me from the dust. Rest once more my heart, for you know God's abiding love.

II: The Saving One rescued me from death, wiping my tears and steadying my feet. I walk with God in this land of the living. I believe, even as I say, "I am afflicted." I believe, even though I scream, "Everyone lies!"

I: What gift can ever repay God's gift to me? I raise the cup of freedom as I call on God's name! I fulfill my vows to you, Beloved One, standing before your assembly.

ALL: Glory to you, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit, As it was in the beginning is now, and will be forever. Amen.

Antiphon: It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you.

**Gospel:** John 20:1-18

**Reflection:** *(This would be a good time for a woman or lay ecclesial minister to preach. Participants may also share a reflection with the person next to them. For example, they could be asked to reflect about an experience of God's presence (or absence!) in a time of sorrow. Or, what preconceptions interfere with seeing God's transforming love at work among us?)*

**Prayers of the Faithful** (please respond, "Saving One, hear our prayer")

Healed by you, Christ, Mary devoted her life and resources to your mission. May we put all that we have at your service, we pray ...

Mary stood at the foot of your cross -- a faithful companion and disciple. Give us the courage to stand with you when love is crucified through oppression, abuse and other forms of injustice, we pray ...

You called Mary by name. Call us by name when we are blinded by our expectations and cannot recognize you, we pray....

Because of her witness and fidelity, St. Mary of Magdala is known as the Apostle to the Apostles. Help us, O God of joy, to accept your call and “go and tell our brothers and sisters” the Good News, we pray...

**Song:** Cantic of Mary *Holy is Your Name* Text: Luke 1:46-55, David Haas. Music: WILD MOUNTAIN THYME, Irish traditional; arr. by David Haas C 1989, G.I.A. Publications.

### Closing ritual

PRESIDER; Let us pray. (Stand) God, bringer of day, we have gathered to pray, inspired by Mary of Magdala. Help us to move from our experience of You, the One that is beyond all imagining, to a place of proclaiming your Risen Presence. May we recognize you at work in our lives. May we hear your call, unique to each of us. Send your Spirit to strengthen us and give us courage for the journey ahead. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our teacher, our guide and our source of saving grace.

ALL: Amen.

*All are invited to participate in this ritual of sending. As you come forward, receive the laying on of hands and commissioning, then turn and repeat for the person behind you, saying, “You are called by God. to proclaim Good News: death is overthrown by faith in Jesus Christ the Living One.” Then return to your seat.*

**Concluding Prayer:** Friends, we are about to go forth into the world renewed and energized, recommitting ourselves to be disciples of the Reign of God. May we follow St. Mary of Magdala’s example and open ourselves to the unimaginable. May we too recognize Christ’s risen power at work in us to overcome death and bring new life to a world so in need of the healing love of God.

### Final Blessing (Stand)

PRESIDER: It is you who accompany the lost and defeated on the journey to new, unimaginable life.

ALL: So be it.

PRESIDER: In you we hope despite anything that disappoints or defeats us.

ALL: So be it.

PRESIDER: We put our hope in You, that you will bring into being things that do not exist, and inspire us with energies for justice, earth care, and community building.

ALL: So be it.

ALL: *Wisdom, Mystery, loving, leading, freeing,  
In you we live and move and have our being.  
Amen.*

“IT IS YOU when wanting to serve” from William  
Cleary’s *Prayers to She Who Is*, p. 128 (*Crossroad*, 1997)

**Closing Song:** *We Have Been Told* Song by David Haas C 1983, G.I.A. Publications. Found in *Today’s Missal Music* 2002, Oregon Catholic Press.

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St. Mary of Magdala celebrations are an outgrowth of the **Women in Church Leadership Project** developed by **FutureChurch** ([www.futurechurch.org](http://www.futurechurch.org)) in partnership with **Call to Action** ([www.cta-usa.org](http://www.cta-usa.org))