

2011 St. Mary of Magdala Prayer Service: End the Silencing of Catholic Women

A Note from the Writers *Joan Brausch and Emily Holtel-Hoag*

This prayer service was developed with FutureChurch's focus, "End the Silencing of Catholic Women," in our hearts. As we pray and reflect it is our hope to hear the voices of women who have been silenced throughout our history- beginning with St. Mary of Magdala, through the women leaders in the early Church, to medieval times, and today. Hearing their voices empowers us to end the silencing and honor the contributions of women in our personal and institutional faith journeys.

This prayer service will be used at FutureChurch's Cleveland Celebration of St. Mary of Magdala 2011. The Cleveland program committee wanted to give women the opportunity to preach the homilies they have longed to preach at Mass if they were only permitted- without restraint and without fear of criticism. Our celebration is titled, "Unheard Homilies: End the silence of Catholic women, what women would preach at Mass." You are welcome to borrow this idea and any elements of this prayer service to suit your community.

We envision inviting three women with preaching background and experience to each give a homily. We welcome women from diverse cultural backgrounds and life experiences wherever possible. Preceding each homily, the scripture reading chosen by each woman will be proclaimed. Prior to the homily the woman will be blessed as in the African-American Catholic tradition. Prayer will be woven throughout to make this an integrated liturgical experience.

About Joan Brausch - Retired from 20 years in parish work (Liturgy and Adult Formation), Joan is the planner and coordinator for her parish's annual Magdala celebration. Joan serves on FutureChurch's Women In Church Leadership Advisory Committee and has been part of a private online women's faith community for over 10 years. Joan's areas of expertise are liturgy, scripture and Catholic social justice.

About Emily Holtel-Hoag- Emily is the Special Projects Coordinator for FutureChurch.., In this capacity she organizes local and national programs including St. Mary of Magdala celebrations, the Women and the Word project, Women in Church Leadership initiatives and the local Cleveland FutureChurch programs. Previous to her work at FutureChurch, Emily worked for 9 years as a Catholic campus minister in higher education.

Opening Song:

Suggestions: *How Can We Be Silent* (Michael Mahler, ©2003, GIA Publications, Inc.)
You Are Called to Tell the Story (Ruth Duck, ©1992, GIA Publications, Inc.)
Sing Out, Earth and Skies (Marty Haugen, ©1985, GIA Publications, Inc.)
Lift Up Your Hearts (Roc O'Connor, SJ, ©1981, 1993, and New Dawn Music)
Be Light for Our Eyes (David Haas, ©1985, GIA Publications, Inc.)
Voices that Challenge (David Haas, ©1990, GIA Publications, Inc.)

Opening Prayer:

Presider: In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. *or*

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.*)

Presider: Let us pray.
God of light and life,
You are the source of all that is good in our lives.
We give you thanks for Jesus our Savior and brother
Who sent women to tell the Gospel: St. Mary of Magdala, Martha, Mary,
the Samaritan woman and so many others.
We give you thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit,
That bold Wisdom-Spirit who impels us today
to proclaim your good news
of peace and justice in our homes, communities and our world.
We ask your blessings on our gathering here.
In Jesus' name we pray.

All: Amen.

First Reading: The Song of Hannah (1 Samuel 2: 1b-2, 5, 7-9)

My heart exults in the Lord!
My strength is exalted in my God!
My mouth derides my enemies,
Because I have rejoiced in my victory!

There is no Holy One like the Lord,
No one besides you;
There is no Rock like our God!

Those who were full have hired themselves
out for bread,
But those who were hungry are fat with spoil.
The barren has borne seven,
But she who has many children is forlorn.

The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
God brings low, but also exalts!
The Most High raises up the poor from the dust,
Lifts the needy from the ash heap,
To make them princes
And inherit a seat of honor!

For the pillars of the earth are the Lords,
And on them God has set the world.
The Most High will guard the feet of the faithful
ones,
But the wicked will be cut off in darkness;
For not by might does one prevail.

Liturgy of the Word continued:

As an addendum to this service outline, we have provided you with several Reading Sets to choose from for your prayer service. If more than one preacher is invited to preach, you may want to use the following format for each preacher:

Psalm

Brief Moment of Silent Reflection

Gospel Alleluia

Blessing of the Preacher *(This is spontaneous and done by 3-5 of the elders of the group who simply lay hands on the preacher in prayer before she proclaims the Gospel.)*

Proclamation of the Gospel

Homily *(5-8 minutes in length, preaching on the Scripture)*

Silent Reflection *(After the homily has ended and the preacher is seated, a moment of quiet reflection.)*

Brief Shared Reflection

(After that moment is ended, the presider has the option to invite the participants to do some sharing with 1 or 2 other people near them about how the Scripture or the homily touched their hearts.)

Communal Response

(One option might be to have an actual break in between each Liturgy of the Word and then a call to prayer. The Liturgy of the Word with readings, homily and reflection could take up to 20-25 minutes, so a break in between might be good, but it's up to you as planner to decide what's best. You could use the refrain from your opening song to call people back to prayer or you could choose a totally new song to sing to call folks back to prayer.)

Litany of Women Witnesses:

(You could simply recite the prayer or have a cantor chant the names like the plain chant litany of saints with the response being "Pray for us." Alternatively, you could take some phrases from Karen Flotte's Anonymous Women essay from More! Celebrating Women Witnesses available at the Magdala Market on the FutureChurch website.)

Presider: Let us join together in prayer, calling upon the many courageous women of faith in our salvation history.

Let us join our voices with the women of the Hebrew Testament. May our voices joined with theirs bring about a covenant of justice and peace. **Response:** Pray with us!

Sarah *Pray with us!*

Rebekah *Pray with us!*

Shiprah and Puah *Pray with us!*

Miriam *Pray with us!*

Huldah *Pray with us!*

Ruth and Naomi *Pray with us!*

Esther *Pray with us!*

Judith *Pray with us!*

Presider: Let us join our voices with Jesus' companions. May our voices joined with theirs bring about a church modeled on Jesus ministry of inclusiveness. **Response:** Pray with us!

Mary, the Mother of Jesus *Pray with us!*

Mary of Magdala *Pray with us!*

Joanna *Pray with us!*

Susanna *Pray with us!*

Mary, the mother of James *Pray with us!*

Salome *Pray with us!*

Presider: Let us join our voices with the women of the early church. May our voices joined with theirs bring about a church where women's leadership is valued and understood as necessary. **Response:** Pray with us!

Lydia *Pray with us!*

Mary, the mother of Mark *Pray with us!*

Lois and Eunice *Pray with us!*

Phoebe, Prisca and Junia *Pray with us!*

Tryphaena and Tryphosa *Pray with us!*

Persis and Julia *Pray with us!*

Perpetua and Felicity *Pray with us!*

Kale the presbyter *Pray with us!*

Crispina *Pray with us!*

Olympias *Pray with us!*

Presider: Let us join our voices with the women of the middle ages. May our voices joined with theirs bring about a church of compassionate understanding. **Response:** Pray with us!

Scholastica *Pray with us!*

Hildegard *Pray with us!*

Theresa of Avila *Pray with us!*

Catherine of Siena *Pray with us!*

Julian of Norwich *Pray with us!*

Clare *Pray with us!*

Presider: Let us join our voices with the women of today. May our voices joined with theirs bring about the church we long for, where all are heard and the gospel is proclaimed to the ends of the earth. *(Invite the participants to share out loud the women they think of.)* **Response:** Pray with us!

Closing Ritual/Anointing:

Presider: In early Christian art, the presence of the codex (ancient manuscript text) and capsas (a basket with a lid and a shoulder strap, containing scrolls) are signs of the important preaching and proclamation ministries. Catacomb frescos show St. Paul, the Apostles and early Christian women such as Veneranda and Petronilla with these items. After we bless the oil of anointing, we invite you to come forward to receive your own scroll from our modern day capsas. The scrolls contain New Testament words said by Jesus to women or words women said to Jesus. As you come forward, you will be anointed to take this message, and the message of the gospels with you today.

(The presider stands next to a table with a lovely bowl filled with scented oil and a basket with the scrolls; see templates. If you are expecting a lot of attendees, you may need more than one bowl and more than one person to anoint. Also, you may choose to give out nametags so the presider or those anointing can easily call each person by name.)

Presider: O God, your people have anointed men and women
From the beginning of time to mission, to be courageous prophets
Of your Word to your people. We ask you now to bless this oil
with which we will be anointed. May it strengthen and encourage us.
All: Amen.

The presider anoints by making the sign of the cross on the forehead with oil on the forehead of each participant and says:

“_____ (Name), you are a Woman of the Word, go forth and proclaim the good news.” OR “Woman of the Word, go forth and proclaim the good news.” *Or words of your choosing.*

Closing Prayer:

Presider: Let us pray:
O God, you are the source of all love and life.
we give you thanks for the women of faith
who have gone before us,
these valiant women who heard the call
to "go tell" and did so in their own unique ways.
We give you thanks for Jesus, who is the Christ,
The Anointed One,
whose bold women friends came with myrrh and ointment
and whom he sent forth with the good news
that he was risen from the dead!
Make us strong today, make us just as bold.
Grant that we too may be valiant women
In our daily endeavors.
we ask these things in Jesus' name.
All: Amen.

Dismissal:

Presider: Anointed and empowered by the Spirit,
Inspired by the valiant women of our past,
we go forth now to be witnesses to the ends of the earth.
We do not go alone...
For we go within the love of the Creator, and of the Son,
And of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen.

Presider: May the peace of Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

Presider: Let us go now to love and serve our God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Closing Song:

Suggestions: *Voices that Challenge* (David Haas, ©1990, GIA Publications, Inc.)
Bring Forth the Kingdom (Marty Haugen, ©1986, GIA Publications, Inc.)
How Can I Keep from Singing? (Robert Lowery, ©1957, 1964, Sanga Music, Inc.)

Scrolls for 2011 St. Mary of Magdala Prayer Service:
End the Silencing of Catholic Women

This packet contains templates to make scrolls for the 2011 St. Mary of Magdala prayer service. The scrolls are used in the Closing Ritual/Anointing and contain New Testament words said by Jesus to women or words women said to Jesus. This is how we suggest you prepare them:

1. Copy the template pages you would like to use on heavy tan or creamy white stock.
2. Cut using the guidelines provided.
3. Roll up and affix with small piece of tape/tab (Don't roll too tightly or use too much tape as then the participants won't be able to open them.)
5. If time permits, put a small ribbon around each one.
6. Place in a basket for the service.

"My child,
why have you done this to us?
See how worried your father
and I have been?" Jesus replied:
"Did you not know I had to be in
my Father's house?"
(Luke 3:48-50)

"Your sins are forgiven...
your faith has saved you;
go in peace."
(Luke 7:48-50)

"My mother and brothers
are those who hear the
word of God
and put
it into practice."
(Luke 8:21)

"My daughter,
your faith has restored
you to health; Go in peace."
(Luke 8:48)

"Stop crying...
She is not dead but asleep."
(Luke 8:52)

" 'Little girl, get up'....
and her spirit returned
and she got up at once.
Then he told them to give
her something to eat. "
(Luke 8:55-56)

"Martha, Martha,
you worry and fret about
so many things,
and yet few are needed,
indeed only one."
(Luke 10:41)

"It is Mary who has chosen
the better part and it
is not to be taken
from her."
(Luke 10:42)

"This woman,
a daughter of Abraham
whom Satan has held bound
these eighteen years
--was it not right to untie her
bonds on the Sabbath Day?"
(Luke 13:17)

" 'Woman,
you are rid of your infirmity'
and he laid hands on her
and at once she straightened
up and she glorified God."
(Luke 13:12-13)

"Happy the womb
that bore you and
the breasts that nursed you....."
"Still happier," said Jesus,
"are those who hear the
word of God and keep it."
(Luke 11:27-28)

"The kingdom of heaven...is like yeast a
woman took and mixed up in three
measures of flour until it was leavened
all through." (Luke 13:20-21)

" 'Rejoice with me, I have found the
coin that I lost'... In the same way [said
Jesus] there is rejoicing among the
angels of God over one repentant
sinner." (Luke 15:9-10)

"Did not our hearts burn within us as
he talkd to us on the road and
explained the Scriptures to us?"
(Luke 24:32)

"Woman, why are you weeping? Who
are you looking for?
(John 20:15)

"Blessed is she who believed that the
promise made
her by God would be fulfilled."
(Luke 1:45)

" I am the resurrection. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies, he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this? (John 11:25-26)

" I tell you truly, this poor widow has put in more than any of them; for she has put in all she possessed."
(Luke 21:3-4)

The Persistent Widow and the Judge:
" 'I want justice from your against my enemy'...Will not God see justice done to his chosen who cry out to him day and night? "(Luke 18:3,6-7)

"Go and find the brothers, and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.
(John 20:17-18)

"Why look for the Living One among the dead?...He has risen."
(Luke 24:5-6)

"Why are you upsetting the woman? She has done what was in her power to do....I tell you solemnly, wherever throughout the world the Good News is proclaimed, what she has done will be told in memory of her."
(Mark 14:6-9)

Rabboni!
(John 20:17)

"Be it done to me according to Your Word."
(Luke 1:38)

"Do not be afraid. You have won God's
favor'
(Luke 1:31)

"My soul proclaims the greatness of
God" (Luke 1:47)

"My Spirit exalts in God my Savior."
(Luke 1:47)

God has looked on the lowliness of his
handmaid...from this day forward, all
generations will call me blessed."
(Luke 1:48)

"The Almighty has done great things
for me. Holy is God's name"
(Luke 1:49)

"God has put down the mighty from
their thrones and raised up the lowly."
(Luke 1:52)

"God has come to the help of Israel,
His servant."
(Luke 1:54)

"God's mercy is from age to age for
those who love Him." (Luke 1: 50)

"Anna praised God and spoke of the child to all who waited for the deliverance of Jerusalem
(Luke 2:38)

"God fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty."
(Luke 1:53)

" 'They have no wine.....' ' Woman, why turn to me? My hour has not yet come...' 'Do whatever he tells you...'
(John 2:4-6)

"The water I shall give will turn into a spring inside, welling up to eternal life."
(John 4:14)

"Sir, give me some of that water, that I may never get thirsty again."
(John 4:15)

'Give me a drink....If you only you knew what God is offering you would have been the one to ask and He would have given you living water"
(John 4:8-10)

"Believe me, woman, the hour is coming...when true worshippers will worship God in Spirit and in truth."
(John 4:21,23)

"I know that the Messiah is coming and when he comes he will tell us everything."
(John 4:25-26)

"Come, see a man who has told me everything I ever did; I wonder if he is the Christ." (John 4:29)

"Now we no longer believe because of what you told us; we have heard from ourselves and we know that he really is the Saviour of the world."
(John 4:42)

"Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you".... "Neither do I condemn you...Go and don't sin anymore." (John 8:10-11)

"Many Samaritans of that town believed in him on the strength of the woman's testimony, when she said, "He told me all I have ever done."
(John 4:39-41)

"If you had been here, my brother would not have died...but I know that, even now whatever you ask of God, He will grant you." (John, 11:21-23)

"Yes Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who was to come into the world." (John 11:27)