

Open Letter: Tell the Whole Story About Mary Magdalene on Easter Sunday

<https://futurechurch.org/open-letter>

What Are We Asking For?

We, the undersigned, urge that John 20:1-18, the full Resurrection account – including the Risen Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene and commissioning of her to proclaim the Resurrection to the other disciples – be proclaimed on Easter Sunday. It is time to tell the story of Mary Magdalene's apostolic witness to the Resurrection every Easter so that all Catholics can be inspired her faith, courage, and ministry.

Why Is This Necessary?

Telling the true story of Mary Magdalene can not only vindicate her memory, but also help reclaim the rightful role for women in the Church.

For centuries, Mary Magdalene has been misrepresented as a contrite prostitute who, after encountering Jesus, repented and spent the rest of her life in private prayer and penance. This inaccurate portrayal damaged and diminished her true role as the "Apostle to the Apostles", the first to announce the Good News of the Resurrection.

This centuries-long slander has been harmful to women and to the Church. According to distinguished theologian, Elizabeth Johnson, CSJ, "Making her a prostitute has allowed her leadership role among the disciples to be generally forgotten." Sr. Johnson adds that even now, "for those who prefer a Church with an exclusively male hierarchy, it is easier to deal with her as a repentant sinner than as an apostolic woman who had a voice and used it."

The truth is, there is no biblical or historical evidence Mary Magdalene was a prostitute. Rather, as New Testament Scholar, Sr. Sandra Schneiders, IHM points out, she is presented in scripture as "the premiere woman disciple of Jesus." All four Gospels explicitly point out that Mary Magdalene was present at the tomb on Easter morning and in John's account she alone is the first to encounter, be commissioned by, and proclaim the Risen Christ. For the earliest Christians, it was impossible to tell the Easter story without including the witness of Mary Magdalene, prompting early church Fathers to name her "the Apostle of the Apostles."

Compare the Texts

Easter is the most sacred and important of all Sundays in the Church year. Yet, when Catholics gather for Mass on Easter Sunday, they do not hear the full story of the Resurrection. They do not hear the inspiring story of Mary Magdalene's witness of the Risen Christ or Christ's commission to Mary Magdalene to proclaim the Resurrection to the other disciples. Only John 20: 1 – 9 is proclaimed. The rest of the story, John 20: 11 - 18 is proclaimed on the Tuesday after Easter when very few Catholics will hear it. John 20:10, which is omitted on both Easter Sunday and Easter Tuesday, makes it clear that Mary Magdalene alone remained at the empty tomb.

Who will receive the signatures?

We will deliver the written request and signatures to The Dicastery for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments at the Vatican and The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Divine Worship.

Mary Magdalene Open Letter Signatures

Name of Mary Magdalene Celebration/Event: _____

Hosting Community and Location: _____

First Name	Last Name	City, State/Province, Country	Email (optional)

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