



Feast of St Mary Magdalene



Date: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 | **Season:** Ordinary Time after Easter | **Year:** C

First Reading: Song of Solomon 3:1–4b

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 63:2–6, 8–9 | **Response:** Psalm 63:2

Gospel Acclamation: Tell us, Mary, what did you see on the way? I saw the glory of the risen Christ, I saw his empty tomb.

Gospel Reading: John 20:1–2, 11–18

Preached at: the Chapel of Richartz House in the Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe.

Dear brothers in Christ,

Before dawn had broken, she was already walking. Mary Magdalene, Saint of the Church, apostle to the apostles, disciple of deep, enduring love. She walks through the hush of morning toward the tomb—not with certainty, but with devotion. Not to find resurrection, but simply to be near the one she had loved and followed. Her courage is quiet. Her love, unflinching.

We know this kind of love. The kind that does not ask for reward. The kind that keeps watch, even when the light is slow to come. After years of ministry, study, and prayer—after walking with people through their grief, doubts, joys, and questions—you too have known what it is to seek the Lord in the shadows.

Mary’s path is not dramatic. It is faithful. She comes bearing sorrow, not expectation. And she is met—first by silence, then by a question: “Woman, why are you weeping?” She answers, honestly, through her tears. And then comes the turning point—not a vision, not a miracle, but her name. “Mary.”

One word. That’s all it takes. The Good Shepherd calls his own by name. Not a title. Not a role. Her name. She turns, and everything changes.

This is the heart of the Paschal Mystery. That the one who was crucified and buried is now risen. That death does not have the final word. That love is stronger. And in the voice that calls her name, Mary glimpses not only the victory of Christ over death, but the beginning of the new creation—hidden, humble, unfolding like light at dawn.

And she is sent.

“Do not hold on to me,” Jesus says—not as a rebuke, but as a commission. The Christ she knew has gone through death and emerged changed. And now, she is called not to remain, but to go—to speak, to tell, to become the first voice of the Resurrection. The apostle to the apostles.

We remember her today not only because of what she saw, but because of how she responded. In a world that silenced women, she was given a voice. In a Church built on memory and mission, she became the first to proclaim the central truth of our faith: He is risen.

That moment in the garden has echoed through every Eucharist, every baptism, every whispered act of mercy across the centuries. And, I believe, it echoes here—among us.

Because the voice that spoke her name still speaks ours.

We who have followed him over many years, in different places, in changing times—we are not finished listening. The call is not only for the young, the strong, or the new. It is for all who remain watchful. It is for all who pray for the Church and the Society. All who, like Mary, are willing to linger in the silence long enough to hear the whisper of grace.

There are tombs we have stood before—tombs of loss, of diminishing strength, of questions that remain unanswered. And yet, in these very places, Christ meets us. Not with spectacle, but with presence. He calls our name—not just once, long ago, but again, here, now.

Perhaps we do not need new assignments or grand gestures. Perhaps what we are asked now is what Mary was asked: to turn, to listen, and to go—into each day with that same quiet, enduring love.

And so, my brothers, even in this season of life—maybe especially now—we remain witnesses. The world needs men who have heard the voice of Christ and lived long enough to know that he is faithful. Your very presence—your prayers, your memories, your stillness—are a kind of proclamation.

Let us allow ourselves, once again, to be called by name.

Let us stand beside Mary in that garden and listen.

And let us ask ourselves:

- Where, even now, is Christ calling my name—in the silence, in the Scriptures, in the faces of those who serve beside me?
- How might I carry this Gospel now—not in great works, but in deep love?
- What must I release, like Mary letting go of the Risen Lord, in order to be free to go where I am still being sent?

Amen.

Source: <https://sj.mcharlesworth.fr/homilies/2025-07jul-22-yc-ot-16/>

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