

Without scriptural proof, Pope Gregory 1 in an Easter sermon, 591, named Mary Magdalene as a prostitute, the sinful woman described in Luke 7:37-48. The label of prostitute continued despite evidence in the Gospels to the contrary. Throughout history, Mary, was depicted in art as penitent to strumpet. Images seen in this link demonstrates a variety of artistic impressions of Mary Magdalene.

<https://artuk.org/discover/stories/saint-or-sinner-how-to-spot-mary-magdalene-in-art>

Here is what the Gospels tell us about Mary Magdalene:

Luke 8: 1-2

Soon afterwards Jesus went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, ² as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out.

John 19: 25

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

Mark 15: 40

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Mathew 27: 59-61

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Luke 23: 50-56

Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, ⁵¹ had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. ⁵² This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³ Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. ⁵⁴ It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning.^[a] ⁵⁵ The women who had come with him from Galilee (some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, Luke 8:2), and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶ Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments.

Mathew 28: 1-9

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ² And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³ His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. ⁴ For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵ But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. ⁶ He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he^[a] lay. ⁷ Then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has been raised from the dead,^[b] and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him." This is my message for you.' ⁸ So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹ Suddenly Jesus met them and said, 'Greetings!' And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshipped him.

Luke 24: 1-11

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. ² They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they went in, they did not find the body.^[a] ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. ⁵ The women^[b] were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men^[c] said to them, 'Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.^[d] ⁶ Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again.' ⁸ Then they remembered his words, ⁹ and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. ¹¹ But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

John:20: 11-18

¹¹ But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look^[a] into the tomb; ¹² and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. ¹³ They said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' She said to them, 'They have taken away my Rabbi and I do not know where they have laid him.' ¹⁴ When she had said this, she turned round and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. ¹⁵ Jesus said to her, 'Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking?' Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, 'Sir, if you have carried Jesus away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away.' ¹⁶ Jesus said to her, 'Mary!' She turned and said to him in Hebrew,^[b] 'Rabbouni!' (which means Teacher). ¹⁷ Jesus said to her, 'Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and sisters and say to them, "I am ascending to my Abba God and your Abba God, to my God and your God.'" ¹⁸ Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, 'I have seen the Teacher'; and she told them what the Saviour had said to her.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. In our Holy Week Passion liturgies, Peters' denial of Jesus is told and retold yet Mary Magdalene's constant presence is scarcely noticed. What would change in our thinking and practices if the liturgy emphasized that Jesus did not die alone and rejected? What would change in our church if it was fully recognized that Mary Magdalene a woman, stood by Jesus and did not leave¹
2. Mary Magdalene is not named as one of the Apostles. WHY IS she is called the Apostle to the Apostles.

¹ Bourgeault Cynthia, *The Meaning of Mary Magdalene; Discovering the Woman at the Heart of Christianity*. (Boulder, Colorado: Shambhala) 2010. p.16.