



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No. 81 August 2015



The Life of St Mary Magdalene: *Equal to the Apostles*

On the banks of Lake Genesareth (Galilee), between the cities of Capharnum and Tiberias, was the small city of Magdala, the remains of which have survived to our day. Now only the small village of Mejhdel stands on the site. A woman whose name has entered forever into the Gospel account was born and grew up in Magdala. The Gospel tells us nothing of Mary's younger years, but Tradition informs us that Mary of Magdala was young and pretty, and led a sinful life. It says in the Gospels that the Lord expelled seven devils from Mary (Luke. 8:2). From the moment of her healing Mary led a new life, and became a true disciple of the Saviour.

The Gospel relates that Mary followed after the Lord, when He went with the Apostles through the cities and villages of Judea and Galilee preaching about the Kingdom of God. Together with the pious women Joanna, wife of Choza (steward of Herod), Susanna and others, she served Him from her own possessions (Luke 8:1-3) and undoubtedly shared with the Apostles the evangelic tasks in common with the other women. The Evangelist Luke, evidently, has her in view together with the other women, stating that at the moment of the Procession of Christ onto Golgotha, when after the Scourging He took on Himself the heavy Cross, collapsing under its weight, the women followed after Him weeping and wailing, but He consoled them. The Gospel relates that Mary Magdalene was present on Golgotha at the moment of the Lord's Crucifixion. While all the disciples of the Saviour ran away, she remained fearlessly at the Cross together with the Mother of God and the Apostle John.

The Evangelists also list among those standing at the Cross the mother of the Apostle James, and Salome, and other women followers of the Lord from Galilee, but all mention Mary Magdalene first. St John, in addition to the Mother of God, names only her and Mary Cleopas. This indicates how much she stood out from all the women who gathered around the Lord. She was faithful to Him not only in the days of His Glory, but also at the moment of His extreme humiliation and insult. As the Evangelist Matthew relates, she was present at the Burial of the Lord. Before her eyes Joseph and Nicodemus went out to the Tomb with His lifeless Body. She watched as they covered over the entrance to the cave with a large stone, entombing the Source of Life.

Faithful to the Law in which she was raised, Mary together with the other women spent the following day at rest, because it was the great day of the Sabbath, coinciding with the Feast of Passover. But all the rest of the peaceful day the women gathered spices to go to the Grave of the Lord at dawn on Sunday and anoint His Body according to the custom of the Jews. It is necessary to mention that, having agreed to go on the first day of the week to the Tomb early in the morning, the holy women had no possibility of meeting with one another on Saturday. They went separately on Friday evening to their own homes. They went out only at dawn the following day to go to the Sepulchre, not all together, but each from her own house.

The Evangelist Matthew writes that the women came to the Grave at dawn, or as the Evangelist Mark expresses, extremely early before the rising of the sun. The Evangelist John, elaborating upon these, says that Mary came to the grave so early that it was still dark. Obviously, she waited impatiently for the end of night, but it was not yet daybreak. She ran to the place where the Lord's Body lay. Mary went to the Tomb alone. Seeing the stone pushed away from the cave, she ran away in fear to tell the close Apostles of Christ, Peter and John. Hearing the strange message that the Lord was gone from the Tomb, both Apostles ran to the Tomb and, seeing the shroud and winding cloths, they were amazed. The Apostles went and said nothing to anyone, but Mary stood about the entrance to the Tomb and wept. Here in this dark tomb so recently lay her lifeless Lord. Wanting proof that the Tomb really was empty, she went down to it and saw a strange sight. She saw two angels in white garments, one sitting at the head, the other at the foot, where the Body of Jesus had been placed. They asked her, "Woman, why weepest thou?" She answered them with the words which she had said to the Apostles, "They have taken my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." At that moment, she turned around and saw the Risen Jesus standing near the Grave, but she did not recognize Him. He asked Mary, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom dost thou seek?" She answered thinking that she was seeing the gardener, "Sir, if thou hast taken him, tell where thou hast put Him, and I will take Him away." Then she recognized the Lord's voice. This was the voice she heard in those days and years, when she followed the Lord through all the cities and places where He preached. He spoke her name, and she gave a joyful shout, "Rabbi" (Teacher). Respect and love, fondness and deep veneration, a feeling of thankfulness and recognition at His Splendour as great Teacher, all came together in this single outcry. She was able to say nothing more and she threw herself down at the feet of her Teacher to wash them with tears of joy. But the Lord said to her: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and tell them: "I ascend to My Father, and your Father; to My God and to your God." She came to herself and again ran to the Apostles, to do the will of Him sending her to preach. Again she ran into the house, where the Apostles still remained in dismay, and proclaimed to them the joyous message, "I have seen the Lord!" This was the first preaching in the world about the Resurrection.

The Apostles proclaimed the Glad Tidings to the world, but she proclaimed it to the Apostles themselves. Holy Scripture does not tell us about the life of Mary Magdalene after the

Resurrection of Christ, but it is impossible to doubt, that if in the terrifying minutes of Christ's Crucifixion she was at the foot of His Cross with His All-Pure Mother and St John, she must have stayed with them during the happier time after the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ. Thus in the Acts of the Apostles, St Luke writes that all the Apostles with one mind stayed in prayer and supplication, with certain women and Mary the Mother of Jesus and His brethren.

Holy Tradition testifies that when the Apostles departed from Jerusalem to preach to all the ends of the earth, then Mary Magdalene also went with them. A daring woman, whose heart was full of reminiscence of the Resurrection, she went beyond her native borders and went to preach in pagan Rome. Everywhere she proclaimed to people about Christ and His teaching. When many did not believe that Christ is risen, she repeated to them what she had said to the Apostles on the radiant morning of the Resurrection: "I have seen the Lord!" With this message she went all over Italy. Tradition relates that in Italy, Mary Magdalene visited Emperor Tiberias (14-37 A.D.) and proclaimed to him Christ's Resurrection. According to Tradition, she brought him a red egg as a symbol of the Resurrection, a symbol of new life with the words: "Christ is Risen!" Then she told the emperor that in his Province of Judea the unjustly condemned Jesus the Galilean, a holy man, a miracle-worker, powerful before God and all mankind, had been executed at the instigation of the Jewish High Priests, and the sentence confirmed by the procurator appointed by Tiberias, Pontius Pilate. Mary repeated the words of the Apostles, that we are redeemed from the vanity of life not with perishable silver or gold, but rather by the precious Blood of Christ. Thanks to Mary Magdalene the custom to give each other paschal eggs on the day of the Radiant Resurrection of Christ spread among Christians over all the world.

Mary Magdalene continued her preaching in Italy and in the city of Rome itself. Evidently, the Apostle Paul has her in mind in his Epistle to the Romans (16: 6), where together with other ascetics of evangelic preaching he mentions Mary (Mariam) who, as he expresses, "has bestowed much labour on us." Evidently, she extensively served the Church in its means of subsistence and its difficulties, being exposed to dangers, and sharing with the Apostles the labours of preaching. According to Church Tradition, she remained in Rome until the arrival of the Apostle Paul, and for two more years following his departure from Rome after the first court judgment upon him. From Rome, St Mary Magdalene, already bent with age, moved to Ephesus where the holy Apostle John unceasingly laboured. There the saint finished her earthly life and was buried.

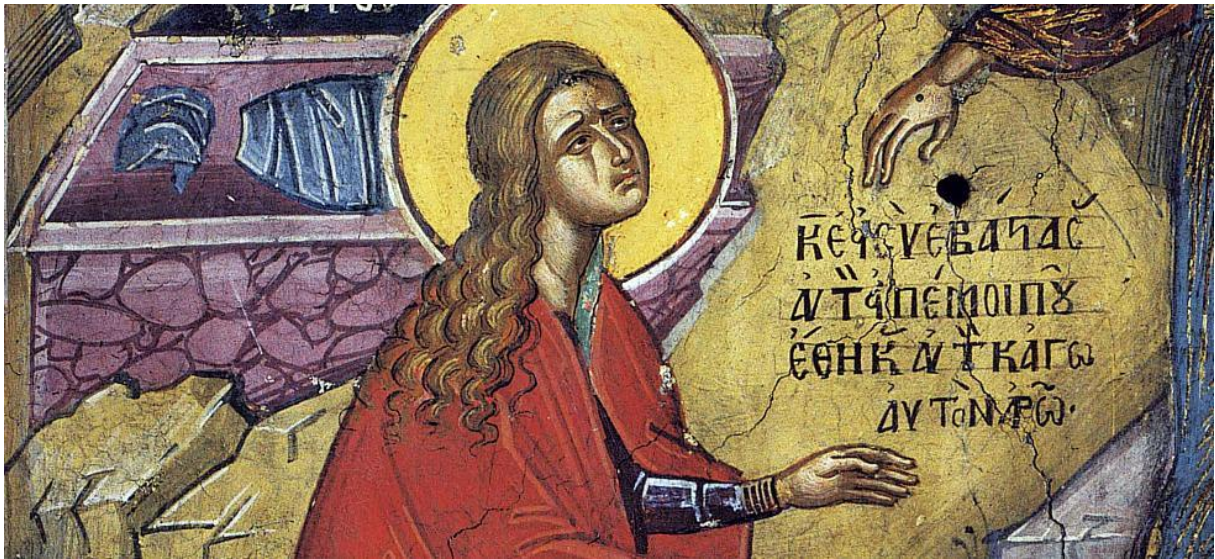
Her holy relics were transferred in the ninth century to Constantinople, and placed in the monastery Church of St Lazarus. In the era of the Crusader campaigns they were transferred to Italy and placed at Rome under the altar of the Lateran Cathedral. Part of the relics of Mary Magdalene are said to be in Provage, France near Marseilles, where over them at the foot of a steep mountain a splendid church is built in her honour.

The Orthodox Church honours the holy memory of St Mary Magdalene, the woman called by the Lord Himself from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. Formerly immersed in sin and having received healing, she sincerely and irrevocably began a new life and never wavered from that path. Mary loved the Lord Who called her to a new life. She was faithful to Him not only when He was surrounded by enthusiastic crowds and winning recognition as a miracle-worker, but also when all the disciples deserted Him in fear and He, humiliated and crucified, hung in torment upon the Cross. This is why the Lord, knowing her faithfulness, appeared to her first, and esteemed her worthy to be first to proclaim His Resurrection.

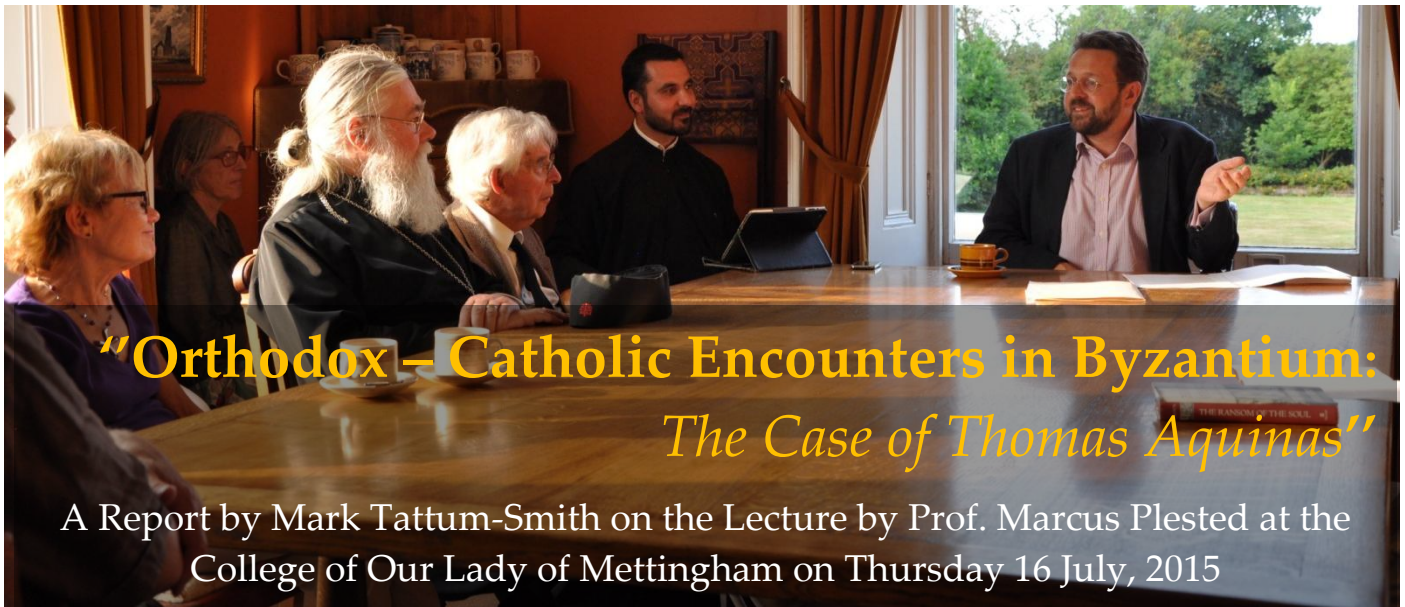
Source: <https://oca.org/saints/lives/2009/07/22/102070-myrrhbearer-and-equal-of-the-apostles-mary-magdalene>

SAINT MARY MAGDALENE:

A Poem by St Nikolai Velimirovich



MAGDALENE, in dark sorrow wrapped herself
Because of the bloody death of the Son of God.
Sorrow is to love, the most bitter sorrow.
It, in the world, has no comfort or companion.
To it, tears are comfort, and pain its only companion.
To Saint Magdalene, in darkness the world became wrapped.
The weak creation of man, asked for light.
Without hope, in the dark Mary groped.
His Tomb to her is light but, behold, the Tomb is empty!
Stolen she thought, naked and not anointed!
Bitterly she wept, to weeping never any end.
At that moment, a man's voice beside her, she heard:
Woman, why are you weeping, tell me: Whom do you seek?
Whom do I seek, you ask? To comfort me, do you wish!
But if you took Him away, where did you place Him?
Tearful and melancholy, Jesus looked at her,
And with a sweet voice called her: Mary!
In Mary's heart, a light began to shine
O familiar voice, with sweetness unsurpassable,
The voice overly generous by life and power!
With that voice, the Lord healed the sick,
With that same voice, He resurrected the dead.
Life-creating voice, a miraculous voice!
Mary recoiled and turned around.
Rabbi, she cried out. At that moment the sun came out.
A New Day dawned to Mary and to the world.



"Orthodox – Catholic Encounters in Byzantium: *The Case of Thomas Aquinas*"

A Report by Mark Tattum-Smith on the Lecture by Prof. Marcus Plested at the College of Our Lady of Mettingham on Thursday 16 July, 2015

Since the beginning of June, we have greatly enjoyed having Marcus and Mariamne Plested with their family worship with us during their long summer vacation from their home in America. Shortly before they returned to the States, we were honoured that Marcus agreed to present what was, in fact, our very first lecture at the College OLM. With only a little over a week to advertise the event, we were delighted to see many new people coming specially for the talk, intrigued to hear what our eminent speaker had to say.

Although at first glance, Marcus' talk seemed perhaps rather obscure, as became clear, at its heart was the fundamental relationship of Orthodoxy to the wider Christian confessions outside the boundaries of the Orthodox Church. For, in our ongoing attempts to articulate what is different about Orthodox Christianity, it is all too easy for such discussions to descend into polemical overstatement and polarisation, in which, to cite a common example, an Orthodox Mystical East is opposed to a non-Orthodox (hyper-)rationalistic West. As Professor Plested amply demonstrated, the reality of the situation is much more nuanced and complicated than such seductively simplistic narratives might suggest. The Case of Thomas Aquinas in Byzantium is thus an apt one, as Aquinas is so often presented as the personification of Western theology *par excellence* – and by extension the nemesis of the Eastern Orthodox Tradition. What else could any true and proper son of the Greek Orthodox Tradition say to this European Aquinas other than an emphatic and topical "ὄχι"?

Whilst many people might be aware that there were translations made of Aquinas into Greek by enthusiastic – though often suspect and/or heretical - Orthodox theologians in medieval Byzantium, what was fascinating about Marcus' talk was that this (critical) appreciation was not limited to those championing union with Rome (under the controversial terms of the council of Ferrara-Florence) but even by such conservative bulwark theologians as St Mark of Ephesus and St Nicholas Cabasilas. For those reared on a narrative where traditional Orthodox theologians burn rather than read and selectively appropriate non-Orthodox writings, or a narrative where there is no place for subtle scholastic exposition and even syllogism in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition, Marcus' talk was something of a revelation. It provided a suitably salutary opportunity to consider that in fact the Fathers are often more generous of the possibility of truthful, spiritually and theologically helpful insights, genres and styles being taken from outside the canonical boundaries of the Church than many of their purportedly faithful modern disciples and expositors. This cautious though pragmatic spirit can be seen in St Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain's careful use and adaptation of the Roman Catholic Lorenzo Scupoli's spiritual writings in his classic text, *Unseen Warfare*, as well as in St Philaret of Moscow's use of the genre of the Reformed/Catholic Catechism.

A thoughtful series of questions with equally thoughtful answers after the lecture concluded what had been a most enjoyable and stimulating evening, and an auspicious beginning to the College's educational activity.



COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF THE IKON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW
AUGUST 2015

Saturday 1 August

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 2 August

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (Prophet Elias)

Saturday 8 August

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 9 August

10.10am ~ Hours & Festal Liturgy (St Panteleimon)

Saturday 15 August

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 16 August

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (St Antony the Roman)

Tuesday 18 August

7.30pm ~ Vigil

❖ **Wednesday 19 August** ❖

10.10am ~ Hours & Festal Liturgy (Transfiguration of Our Lord)

Saturday 22 August

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 23 August

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (Archdeacon Lawrence)

Thursday 27 August

7.30pm ~ Vigil

❖ **Friday 28 August** ❖

10.10am ~ Hours & Festal Liturgy (Dormition of the Theotokos)

Saturday 29 August

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 30 August

10.10am ~ Hours & Divine Liturgy (Hieromartyr Myron)

Notes & Jottings

BARBEQUE & COURTYARD FURNITURE

Thanks to the efforts of Viktor Levine, the college has acquired two large barbeques for summer catering purposes. These were first used on Sunday 12 July. Despite the rain earlier in the morning, by midday the weather had improved significantly. It is our usual custom to all have lunch together after church on Sundays and this first barbeque was a very pleasurable occasion. We are grateful to all who donated food and helped organise this event. Also, we have bought three new garden benches for the courtyard to provide more seating for outdoor events.

BAPTISM OF FR PHILIP'S GRANDAUGHTER

On Sunday 19 July Archpriest Philip and Matushka Philippa Steer visited Mettingham. In the morning, Fr Philip concelebrated the Liturgy with Fr Antony, Fr Elias and Fr Liviu in the collegiate church. In the afternoon, Fr Philip's granddaughter Athena, the daughter of Martin and Demetra Fenwick, was baptised by Fr Liviu.

LOOKING AHEAD TO COLLEGE DAY

On College Day we commemorate the Ikon of Our Lady of Mettingham. In previous years this has been the last Saturday in August but too many people were excluded because they were either still away on holiday or travelling back on that day. Thus, we have decided to move this annual event to the first Saturday in September. This year it will be 5 September. The programme will include, at 2pm, a Moleben (short prayer service) in church during which the Akathist to Our Lady of Mettingham will be sung. The Ikon will then be brought back to the college in procession, via the grave of the Foundress, where prayers for the repose of her soul will be said. This will be followed by a celebratory meal which, weather permitting, could be a barbeque. College officials will also have the opportunity to explain something about our ideas for developing the work and activities of the college.

MORE BOOKS

We are grateful to the Revd Jonathan Olanczuk for a further donation of books for the college library

FUNDRAISING MARATHON FOR MILOSERDIE

Robert (Seraphim) Collins has been given one of two official places in the Moscow Marathon to run for the charity Miloserdie. Please [click on the link](#) to learn more about the charity and how to donate to this worthwhile cause.

NAMEDAYS

- 1 Aug – **St Seraphim of Sarov** – Seraphim Collins, Serafima Hopper, Seraphima Dembri
- 2 Aug – **Prophet Elijah the Tishbite** – Priest Elias Jones
- 4 Aug – **St Mary Magdalene** - Mary Tattum-Smith, Miriam (Maria) Dembri
- 6 Aug – **St Boris & St Gleb** – Boris Jermy, Gleb Jermy
- 7 Aug – **Repose of St Anna** – Anya Moss
- 11 Aug – **St Irene Chrysovolantou** – Irina Dembri
- 14 Aug – **St Cennydd of Langennith** – Kenneth Lock
- 21 Aug – **St Gregory of Sinai** – Priest Gregory Butler
- 24 Aug – **St Lawrence, Archdeacon & Martyr** – Laurence Davis



The Trustees of Mettingham Orthodox Trust cordially invite you to

COLLEGE DAY

SATURDAY 5th SEPTEMBER, 2015

*Commencing at 2pm with Moleben in the Church followed by
Prayers at the Grave of the Foundress & Great Procession.*

Refreshments & Lecture to follow.

R.S.V.P.

*Collegiate Church of the Ikon of the Mother of God: Joy of All Who Sorrow
The White House, Low Road, Mettingham, Suffolk, NR35 1TP*

Tel: (01986) 895176

www.mettingham.org.uk