

Opening Remarks: Let's Begin with the sign of the cross: We come together in the presence of our Creator God, and our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier.

Story of Mary of Magdala: On July 22, 2016, Pope Francis proclaimed that day a memorial of St. Mary Magdalene to a feast on the church's liturgical calendar. He referred to her as a "true and authentic evangelizer..." The Vatican announced that the day is a call for all Christians to "reflect more deeply on the dignity of women, the new evangelization and the greatness of the mystery of divine mercy."¹

Now let us pray. We gather here today to remember and honor many of the wisdom figures in our history; mothers, daughters; grandmothers, aunts, sisters, colleagues and friends. As well as our modern day SHEroes who inspire us and encourage us on our journeys. We give thanks for their example and for their witness. We can be thankful that today there are many female theologians and biblical scholars (who alongside their brothers) are helping us appreciate how much God loves us and we recognize that God works through us to reach out to our world.

We call on the holy women who went before us, channels of Your Word in testaments old and new, to intercede for us so that we might be given the grace to become what they have been for the honor and glory of God.

Theologians have debunked the false myths about St. Mary Magdalene as a sinner and reclaimed her for what she truly was, the Apostle to the Apostles. As three of the four Gospels record, she was indeed the first witness to the Resurrection, and so then, for those fateful moments... hours, immediately thereafter, there's a deep sense in which Mary Magdalene WAS the Church. Let us celebrate that God chose a woman to be the first person who knew the Resurrection story and could proclaim it to the rest of the world.

Litany in Honor of Women Here and Around the World – please see slides for responses

We will begin our Litany and we will have responses from two sides, Right side first, then Left side. Please see slides for responses.

We honor all those who stand alongside these women. We bless those who encourage them to dream, who bring out the best in them, who help them bear their burdens, and who love them rightly.

ALL: May You watch over and keep all your people, these women and all who love them, with your care, gracious God. Consecrate this day for your glory. In the name of the Triune God, the one who parents us and creates us, who redeems us, and empowers us forever. Amen.

Scripture Readings: God of light and life, You are the source of all that is good in our lives. We give you thanks for Jesus, the Word made flesh, who sent women to tell the Gospel: St. Mary Magdalene, as well as Martha 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 the world. **ALL: Amen**

¹ <http://www.ibtimes.com/feast-mary-magdalen-2017-facts-about-most-controversial-woman-bible-2568940> - International Business Times, *Feast Of Mary Magdalene 2017: Facts About Most Controversial Woman In Bible*, By Pritha Paul, 07/22/2017

Celebration of Women Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene

July 22, 2023

Luke 1:39-45. **Response: Mary, mother of Jesus...pray for us. Elizabeth, you were filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit...pray for us.**

John 20: 11-18 **Response: Mary of Magdala, apostle to the apostles ...pray for us.**

Music: Place At The Table by Lori True: Who has inspired and encouraged you on your journey? Please softly name those who have helped to form your story, our mothers, daughters, grandmothers, aunts, sisters, colleagues and friends. We'll ask you to quietly name your personal thoughts.

A modified version of "Litany of Women for the Church" – Please see slides for responses

Let us conclude with the words of Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB as she tells us about the sisterhood of Saints. – see slides for Litany Response: **Pray for us.**

Conclusion: During this prayer we have honored and recognized our personal SHEroes. Now let us stand on those shoulders and step up to further in honor of these ladies. As Marianist men and women, we encourage all of US, during this Synod process to work for reform of our church and our world. May we ALL find our path of truth during these difficult times!

Now, we have been nurtured by Your love, nourished by the Word and strengthened by this community...[let's close as we began - with the sign of the cross]

ALL: We pray in the name of our Creator God, and our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier.

May the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified in all places through the Immaculate Virgin Mary. All: AMEN

Sources:

Feast Of Mary Magdalene 2017: Facts About Most Controversial Woman In Bible, International Business Times, By Pritha Paul, 07/22/2017

<http://www.ibtimes.com/feast-mary-magdalene-2017-facts-about-most-controversial-woman-bible-2568940>

Litany in Honor of Women Here and Around the World - A 21st Century Africana Worship Resource-by Stacey Cole Wilson

A modified version of "Litany of Women for the Church" by Sr. Joan Chittister, OSB

<https://discerningdeacons.org/>