



**FATHER JOHN MALLEY, O.CARM.**  
**DIRECTOR OF CARMELITE MISSIONS**

Dear Friend of the Missions,

The Summer months often bring us moments of rest and relaxation, moments of enjoyment and sharing with family and friends, moments of gratitude and love when we realize how blessed we have been in the United States and Canada. God has truly been good to us.

So often, you too have expressed your thanks to the Lord for such blessings by reaching out to others through our Carmelite Missions. You have made it possible for us to be of assistance to the poor throughout Asia, Africa and Central/South America — people who are less fortunate materially than ourselves. I am most grateful for your kindness.

*Just before Easter, our Carmelite Mission office received a very special gift! We were left a meaningful sum of money in the will of a woman who has responded since 1995 in very modest ways to our monthly mission appeals. Even at her death, she did not forget the words of Jesus: "When I was hungry, you gave Me to eat...." (Matthew 25). I was reminded so gratefully once again of the Lord's kindness as it is expressed so beautifully in one of my favorite quotes from Shakespeare: "God's goodness has been great to thee. Let neither night nor day unhallowed past but remember what the Lord has done."*

Because of the thoughtfulness of this woman in making the Carmelite Missions a beneficiary of one-third of her will, we have been able to help in a substantial way the following groups:

- 1) health clinics for the elderly and for mothers and children that are staffed by the Carmelite Sisters in East Timor.
- 2) help in building a chapel for our Nuns like St. Therese in Tarlac, Philippines.
- 3) support for Father Kevin Lafey after the earthquake in Ccapacmarca, Peru.
- 4) aid to the formation programs of our Sisters in Malang, Indonesia.
- 5) assistance to the Carmelite Missionary Sisters of St. Therese in their primary work in schools and orphanages in Brazil.
- 6) support for the Missionary Workers of the Immaculate in Vietnam.
- 7) help to the Carmelite Sisters of Our Lady in their teaching in the Philippines.

I have asked each of these communities to remember this woman, and her family and friends, in their prayers and at their daily Mass. I am sure that the good Lord has already blessed her for her goodness to Carmelite Missions and to the people we strive to support.

Love and peace,

*Fr. John Malley, O.Carm.*

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Director of Carmelite Missions



**REMEMBER THE CARMELITE MISSIONS WHEN YOU WRITE YOUR WILL**

# SAINT OF THE MONTH

## SAINT MARY MAGDALENE

### FEAST DAY – JULY 22

Christmas and Easter are the two most popular and important feast days of the Christian year. Christmas touches our hearts because we associate it so closely with the emotions and feelings of our childhood years. Easter challenges our faith, our decision to believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and to walk as disciples in His footsteps. We realize the importance of Easter as we remember the words of St. Paul: “If Christ was not raised, your faith is worthless” (1 Cor 15, 17).

Christians rejoice on Easter because our heavenly Father has made us sharers in the grace of His Son. By baptism we die with Him, are buried with Him in death, and are raised when He is. We share His victory and His life. Because of Easter, we also shall live forever!

According to the Scriptures, the first of God’s people to come to this Easter faith is the beloved **Mary Magdalene**, our current **Saint of the Month**. On that climatic Sunday morning almost two thousand years ago, Mary Magdalene did indeed see the risen Savior.

There is a contemporary novel that attempts to paint a different picture of Mary Magdalene. There is certainly no Scriptural basis for such a portrayal, and Christian history and tradition throughout the centuries give no foundation for the image of her that is shared in this best-seller. Let us instead relate to you the story of Mary Magdalene as we find it in the Gospel and in Christian history, leaving it to the good Lord to judge the value of the current novel and its author’s purpose and his attempt at truth.



*Postulants to be Carmelite Sisters in Caracas, Venezuela.*

#### The Resurrection

Mary Magdalene and the other women had come to the tomb just before dawn in order to put sweet-smelling ointment on Jesus’ body. They were wondering who would help them move the huge stone that was in front of the tomb. But to their surprise when they arrived, two angels dressed in bright, shining robes told them the marvelous message:

*“Do not be frightened. I know that you are looking for Jesus the crucified, but He is not here. He has been raised, exactly as He promised. Come and see the place where He was lying. Then go quickly and tell His disciples: He has been raised from the dead and now goes ahead of you to Galilee where you will see Him.”*

Matthew 28, 5-7.

St. John in his Gospel adds greater detail to Mary Magdalene’s experience on the first Easter morning. He describes how Peter and “the other disciple” meet the holy women. Mary tells them, “The Lord has been taken from the tomb! We don’t know where they have

put him” (John 20, 2). Peter and John look at the empty tomb and then go home. They are confused since they do not know what Mary’s message could possibly mean.

Mary is confused herself. She remains in the garden probably worrying about what to do next. In the midst of her fear and anxiety, someone speaks to her, “Woman,” He asks, “why are you weeping? Who is it you are looking for?” Then a profoundly touching moment occurs. Thinking that the voice was that of the gardener, Mary replies, “Sir, if you are the one who has carried Him off, tell me where you have put Him and I will take Him away” (John 20, 15). The speaker only has to use her name. “Mary,” He says. At once she is able to recognize the Lord. He is risen — even as He said! Finally Jesus sends her to His apostles to share the good news she has just experienced.

#### At the Cross

Mary Magdalene not only shared the joy of the Risen Lord but also His moment of pain and abandonment. The evangelists place her with Mary the mother of Jesus at the cross on Calvary. She is the very picture of attentiveness and devotion. The Magdalene is no plotter, no interrogator, no crucifier. She is there

to give support and comfort, and to grieve with the others who had truly loved the Lord.

Scripture scholars note that Mary Magdalene’s presence at the cross as well as at the empty tomb on Easter morning serves to bind the two scenes together into one indissoluble whole. There is an inner connection between cross and glory — for Jesus, for Mary Magdalene, and for every Christian who would follow Christ!

#### Mistaken Identity – The Real Mary Magdalene

One writer points out that Mary Magdalene could well be the patron of the slandered, since there has been a persistent legend in the Church that she is the unnamed sinful woman of Luke (7, 36-50) who anointed the feet of Jesus. This is simply a case of mistaken identity. Nor is there any real justification for identifying her with Mary of Bethany (John 11), the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Mary Magdalene’s character and attitudes in the Gospels are very different from those of these two other women.

Mary was a native of Magdala, a prosperous and somewhat infamous (perhaps the reason for the ‘bad

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*Carmelite Sisters who staff and direct a health clinic in East Timor.*



*Formation community in Dili, East Timor.*

# SAINT OF THE MONTH

## SAINT MARY MAGDALENE

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name' she received) fishing village on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, about four miles north of Tiberias. The Gospels do say that Jesus had cured her of a terrible affliction, being "possessed by seven devils.": This expression, it should be noted, probably describes a violent and chronic nervous disorder, rather than a sinful state.

It seems clear also that she and other women gave of their own wealth and service to provide for the material needs of Jesus and the apostles (Luke 8, 2). She was a practical woman who knew how to help build up the Kingdom of God. If Mary Magdalene lived today, she would most likely be called 'a pillar of the Church.'

### Her Last Years

It is not certain how Mary Magdalene spent her later years. Some say she went to Ephesus in Asia Minor with Our Lady and St. John. She probably died there and was buried. In the year 811, her remains were brought to Constantinople by the Emperor Leo VI. Her feast day is observed in the universal Church on July 22nd.

Because history has fused the characteristics of the nameless penitent and Mary of Bethany with Magdalene, artists frequently picture her carrying a jar and with her hair flowing freely about her. For these reasons she is the patron of perfumers, tanners and repentant people. But she is justly celebrated for being



*Daughters of Carmel, a new group in Sabah, Malaysia.*

the primary witness to the very heart of our Christian faith. She could have been the first to proclaim the joyful prayer that still echoes through the Church:

"Dying you destroyed our death.  
Rising you restored our life.  
Lord Jesus, come in glory!" (Eucharistic Acclamation)

### Monthly Prayer

*Father, Your Son first entrusted to Mary Magdalene the joyful news of His resurrection. By her prayers and example may we proclaim Christ as our living Lord and one day see Him in glory, for He lives and reigns with you and Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.*



*Novices of the Indonesian Province.*