

Sample Prayer Service

2015 CELEBRATION OF ST. MARY OF MAGDALA

*Created by the members of "It Was the Women Who Stayed" at St. Francis Xavier Church, NY, NY
For their Magdala Celebration July 25, 2014
Used with permission*

Theme: Being a witness to victims of human trafficking

Set-up: you will need an altar- add a candle, image of Mary of Magdala, Bible, and other items
chairs should be arranged in a circle around the altar (as many rows as needed)

supplies: four small bowls of water

basket for offering

nametags printed with the blessing- one for each participant

suggested actions sheets

action commitment sheets

Prelude: Music

As people enter, volunteers will greet people and hand out program and write their name on a name tag and give them instructions for seating, which are: Put your things on a chair around the altar, but sit in the front pews for the dance which starts the program. Designate sides for Group One and Group Two.

Introduction: Liturgical dance to "Alive" by Natalie Grant

Welcome

First President: *After the dance, invite people to move up and be seated around the altar.*

First President: Welcome!! Thank you for coming!

- The idea of celebrating MM has been promoted by the national organization Future Church; we encourage you to check out their website.
- Over 200 celebrations are taking place this week around the country and internationally.
- For our prayer service today, we will focus on Human Trafficking, especially of young children, teenagers and young adults. We will have action suggestions so that you can prayerfully consider what each of us can do to help put a stop to this modern-day scourge of slavery. We are asking in this prayer service: What does it mean to be a Witness? Mary Magdalene was the first witness to the Resurrection of Jesus. What does that call us to be and do as witnesses of Jesus in our world today?

Opening Song: "Gather Us In" by Marty Haugen

Opening Prayer

Second President: In the name of our God, our creator and friend

In the name of Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life

In the name of the Spirit who dwells among us, within us and who sends us forth

All: Amen

Second President: May the grace and peace of Jesus, our risen Christ, be with all of you.

All: And also with you.

Second Presider: Let us greet one another in the peace of the risen Christ.

pause for greetings

Second Presider: Dear God, we gather today to remember the faithful witness of your daughter, Mary of Magdala. We give you thanks for her story, which challenges us to live lives of truth, encouraged by our brother, Jesus. We are emboldened by your 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 our world. We ask your continued blessings on us as we strive to live your call to be faithful witnesses today.

All: Amen

Second Presider: please be seated.

Liturgy of the Word: Gospel Reading: John 20: 1-18

First Reflection: On Mary Magdalene – Sample by Rita Houlihan

Three Testimonies of victims of human trafficking *:

After each testimony, the reader will stretch out her hand in appeal to the participants and say:
“You are my witnesses; bring me the Good News!”

All respond: We will!

Second Presider: Our fourth and last testimony is a recording of a poem, “America’s Daughters,” written by a victim of trafficking. After we hear it, we will have a moment of silence to reflect on all four testimonies.

Second Reflection: On Human Trafficking – Sample by Nancy Lorence

Prayers of the Faithful:

First Presider: We will read the Prayers of the Faithful together, alternating between Group One and Group Two.

Group 1: Jesus healed Mary of Magdala of a very serious illness and then she followed Him, supporting His mission with all her resources.

Group 2: Thank you, O Christ, for all the ways You heal us. Open our hearts to receive Your healing grace and let us, like Mary of Magdala, put all we have at Your service.

Group 1: Mary of Magdala remained at Jesus' side through fearsome suffering, a brutal death and anonymous burial.

Group 2: O God, Who accompanies us when we suffer, give us strength to accompany those who have been abducted and sold as commodities into modern day slavery. We pray especially for our courageous Nigerian sisters. Through the intercession of Mary of Magdala, keep them in Your care, dear Lord, and bring them home.

Group 1: When Jesus called Mary by name, she recognized Him.

Group2: Saving One, give us ears to hear and eyes to see You calling our true name, calling deep within. Let us recognize Him in the victims of human trafficking.

Group1: Jesus called Mary of Magdala and the other women to be the first witnesses to the Resurrection.

Group 2: Wisdom Spirit, help us recognize and accept our call to witness to Your power to bring life from death and light from darkness.

Second Presider: May we find the strength to be witnesses like Withelma 'T' Ortiz Walker Pettigrew from the U.S. who knows first-hand the tragedy of being trafficked for sex, and Erwiana Suli-styaning-sih of Indonesia who knows first-hand the tragedy of being sold as a current day house slave. They stood up to their traffickers and pursued justice against all odds. Like You, O Risen Christ, they found the strength to rise out of darkness and became advocates for all victims of trafficking.

Group 1: Because of her witness and fidelity, Mary of Magdala is known as the Apostle to the Apostles, the first to receive the Good News and announce it to others.

Group 2: Help us, O God of Righteousness, to accept Your apostolic call with the persistent strength of St. Josephine Bakhita. She overcame twelve years of slavery, joined a religious order, and dedicated herself to preparing younger sisters for service as missionaries in Africa.

Group 1: Mary Magdalene and other women were faithful disciples of Jesus and significant leaders in the early Christian communities

Group 2: Help us, Most Inclusive One, to honor our baptismal call to leadership and help our Church welcome the women leaders in her midst today. Let us pray for the victims of trafficking who struggle to regain their sense of dignity as women and men.

First Presider: Strengthen us with Your courage, O God, as we proclaim our witness. Let us be inspired by those faithful witnesses who have come before us. Let us not be discouraged by those who would attempt to discredit those victims who have become leaders and those who advocate for them. May the Spirit spur us into action to uncover the truths that are often hidden. Let us celebrate our call to be witness to Your Presence today. We ask this in Jesus' name.

All: Amen

Song: "You Shall Be My Witnesses" by Miriam Therese Winter

Anointing/Blessing:

Presiders will give instructions on how to do the Anointing/Blessing and then demonstrate by calling up two designated people from the back of the closest circle of chairs. First Presider and Second Presider anoint them and they return to their places to anoint the person who was next to them. Then the First Presider and Second Presider anoint two persons up front to start the blessing on the outermost circle of chairs. The last persons can anoint the presiders. Collect the bowls.

Second Presider: Each person blesses the person next to him/her so that it goes around the circle. We will bless with the water from the baptismal font which will be in small bowls. To bless: dip your finger in the water bowl held by the person being blessed, and make the sign of the cross on the forehead of the person. As you are making the sign of the cross, read their name tag. To be blessed, hold the bowl of water in one hand and raise your other hand in the same way that Mary Magdalene raised her hand in joy as she announced Jesus' resurrection and in the same way we raise our hands to say Stop Human

Trafficking. Then turn and bless the person next to you on your other side. Give them the water bowl to hold as you bless them. It keeps passing down the row.

pause for the blessing

First President: We are blessed and called to give witness; let us find strength in you, O God, and in one another.

Action Commitment/My Witness

Second President: We will pass out a sheet of suggested actions. Please take a moment to read and reflect on these actions.

Then pass out small papers with the image of the hand as background.

Second President: Please write an action they can commit to within 24 hours and one for longer term (either from the suggested action or one they would add). Please write one for our offering and another copy to keep. We will collect them in a moment.

pause for completion of the sheets, then pass around basket

First President: *Place basket on the altar and conclude with:* Mary Magdalene had the resolve to stay at the tomb. May we too have the resolve to honor our commitments.

Concluding Prayer

Second President: Faithful witnesses empowered by the Spirit, we now go forth from this gathering. We are guided by the love of the Creator, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. May Mary of Magdala be our model of courage and faithful service to the Gospel. By her example, may we delight in the presence of Jesus and show with our words and our actions our joy from being able to say, "I have seen the Lord!" May the peace of the risen Christ be with you all.

All: And also with you.

First President: Let us go now to love and serve our God.

All: Thanks be to God.

Closing Song: "We Are Called" by David Haas

A special thanks to Nancy Lorence and Rita Houlihan for these materials and for their commitment to highlighting the roles of Mary of Magdala and other women leaders in the history and life of our church.

Liturgical Dance Song “Alive!”

Alive!
Who but You
Could breathe and leave
A trail of galaxies
And dream of me?

What kind of Love
Is writing my story until the end
With Mercy's pen
Only You

What kind of king
Would choose to wear a crown
That bleeds and scars
To win my heart?

What kind of Love
Tells me I'm the reason
He can't stay
Inside the grave?

You. Is it You?
Standing here before my eyes
Every part of my heart cries

Alive Alive
Look what Mercy's overcome
Death has lost and Love has won

Alive Alive
Hallelujah, Risen Lord
The only One I fall before
I am His because He is alive

Who could speak
And send the demons back

From where they came
With just one Name?

What other heart
Would let itself be broken
Every time until He healed mine?

You. Only you
Could turn my darkness into dawn
Running right into Your arms

Alive! Alive!
Look what Mercy's overcome
Death has lost and Love has won
Alive! Alive!
Hallelujah, Risen Lord
The only One I fall before
I am His because He is

Emmanuel, the promised King
The baby who made angels sing
Son of Man who walked with us
Healing, breathing in our dust

The author of all history
The answer to all mysteries
The Lamb of God who rolled away
The stone in front of every grave

Alive! Alive!
Look what Mercy's overcome
Death has lost and Love has won.

Alive! Alive!
I am His because He is alive
Alive!

NOTES: We played the music as liturgical dancers danced to it to start the program. The music is available on YouTube

SAMPLE REFLECTION

Reflection for Mary Magdalene Prayer Service 07-25-14. By Nancy Lorence

How does the story of Mary of Magdala inform us about what we are called to do in the world we live in?

Mary Magdalene was the one who stayed in the darkness of the tomb, weeping at the darkness of what Jesus' death meant, and then SHE was the one to receive the Good News of the Risen Christ. It is her story, her witness that tells us we are called to bring the Good News into every corner where there is darkness, where the light of Christ and the Resurrection is not shining.

And the darkness of human trafficking is very dark indeed. Overwhelming when you look at the statistics, the prevalence, the insatiable appetite for the money to be made from exploiting more victims – one every 30 seconds - whether it be for sex, for drugs, for money or for cheap or free labor... it has become a holocaust of human dignity on a global scale.... a 32 **billion** dollar business, second only to gun trafficking. Victims are treated as commodities and commercialized just like guns or drugs. We are witnessing over 20 million people caught up in the scourge of modern-day slavery.

MM calls us to witness this darkness just as she witnessed the passion and crucifixion of her Teacher and went to the dark tomb. She stayed through the darkness. Her continued witness brought her to the Risen Christ. **We** are called to be persistent in engaging the darkness of our world today and in seeking the light and bringing it to others.

Does that mean we go out to “rescue” teenagers who have run away from abusive home situations and are on the streets of NYC vulnerable to trafficking.... or to the street where prostitutes hang out to convince them that Jesus is the answer? Their pimps would go after us Does it mean we pray here, and leave our prayers in this church because we're too fearful to engage?

Engaging the darkness and bringing the light of the Good News CAN mean doing such things as providing safe havens for those who have been rescued from the clutches of traffickers, ... accessing job training and educational opportunities for survivors,...helping survivors of sex trafficking to restore a respectful image of body (just as Jesus' body was restored in a new way with the Resurrection). ...and providing a place where victims are listened to, where they can deal with their trauma, and where they can gradually

recover their true identities....and where, as one survivor said, "I can finally sleep deeply." It means supporting the organizations like LifeWay Network that are doing this difficult work and perhaps even volunteering with them. These efforts are bringing about the Resurrection in the lives of these survivors.

Engaging the darkness could also mean supporting organizations that actually rescue children or youth from traffickers...here or in Thailand or India or Pakistan. It can mean learning more and becoming a spokesperson against trafficking... Or learning the common indicators of a trafficked teenager - which are different from that of an adult - and reporting suspicions to a hotline or a mandated reporter.

Engaging the darkness of human trafficking also means looking at our consumer habits. Are we buying products made with slave labor or child labor? Do we look for Fair Trade labels? Are we consuming sex-related images on the internet? Do we take a laissez faire attitude toward pornography, which exploits women's and men's sexuality, or towards child porn, which is always a form of sex trafficking and child sex abuse. In our desire to be contemporary and cutting edge, do we ever stop to question mass media use of images of the human body that commercialize and exploit and push the envelope a bit more each year....the suggestive teenagers on the Calvin Klein bill boards, the explicit American Apparel ads that use sexuality more than its "sweat-free/made in America" tag line to sell its products.

As adults, we may brush this off, take a libertarian attitude towards it, but parents of young adolescents have a really hard time setting limits for their kids who feel socially pressured into following the next "hot" look or thing because the hypersexuality looks benign... Just recently while promoting her new MTV show, *Happylands*, aimed at adolescents, Bianca Santos told the interviewer, that "incest is hot, and we're going to have fun." A young incest victim called her on it, saying "It's their way of sending the message to teens that some incest is okay.... Anyone - she wrote - who is willing to even joke about incest being hot is attempting to make something obscene acceptable. It's very unfeeling towards (incest) victims."

Being witness also means to seek understanding of the root causes of the problem. The most profit in trafficking is made from trafficking for sex and pornography. Count up the money: one victim, 30 tricks a night. And just to be clear, that's 30 rapes a night. Victims are pressured to do what their pimp tells them - no matter what...model for photos, be in films etc.

What is underlying this commercialization of bodies and sex? Clear and simple: Money. Profit. Greed and Poverty (which impels parents to actually sell their children or their images).....and.... the Internet. The internet has helped the proliferation, especially a dark part of it called the DEEP WEB where users are anonymous and transactions are almost impossible to be traced. But **the real question is why is there a market for all of this?**

And the question for those of us who are trying to be witness to this seemingly overwhelming darkness is: where do we draw the line in our own choices and how do we promote a cultural milieu that respects the dignity and sexuality and spirituality of the human body rather than exploits it for profit.

Like Mary Magdalene, we are called to stay at the edge of the tomb of darkness, witness to the darkness of the Deep Web, of child sexual abuse, of teen brothels and of the slave mines and factories and the human trafficking for profit, and consider ourselves commissioned to engage the darkness to bring about New Life and Resurrection for those whom we can and to the degree that we able.

Like the gardener outside the tomb, Jesus has called US by name.

I will end with a comment about tattooing, which has become the rage these days. I recently heard a psychologist explain that victims of sex trafficking are often given a new identity as a prostitute – a new name and a tattoo that pierces into their bodies that new identity with phrases like “You are mine,” which really means “You are my possession, my property.”

This tattoo message contrasts sharply with the message that a loving God gives to us through Isaiah: “I have called you by name and You are mine,” And contrasts with the message that Jesus gives us when calling Mary Magdalene by name, establishing her new identity as the one commissioned to announce the Resurrection and bring the Good News to others. Rather than possessing her as property, Jesus says: Don’t hold on to me, I must go to my Father. He is my God and your God,” thus sharing Pure Love with us.

That is **our** identity, too, that we can experience because of Jesus’ passion and crucifixion and resurrection.

That is the identity with which each of us can reach into the darkness....and bring forth light.

Reflection on St. Mary of Magdala--The Ministry of Witness and the Trafficking of her Name and Image

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This brief reflection will examine what we can learn about witnessing from MM's example as the chosen witness and proclaimer of the Resurrection and will examine how her name and image have been 'trafficked' to diminish that witness. Studies of police work have revealed that "eye witnesses" are often not reliable because of the way people impose their own filters and assumptions on what they see. To be true witnesses we need to clear away social and political assumptions and emotions. We need to be present.

The work of 20th c. biblical scholars (and of at least one 16th c. scholar, Jacques d'Etaple who was silenced for his efforts) revealed that the identification of MM as the sinful woman, and even more so, the eradication of our memory of her as chosen witness, proclaimer of the Resurrection and apostle are distortions of Jesus' teaching.

As members of the ecclesia we are responsible to identify this error, to ask our leaders to correct it and to take our own actions, such as this celebration, to correct it.

I'd like to pause for a second to say – Even though I can be distressed that so, so many still see MM as "THE SINNER" – she is Okay. She doesn't need us to celebrate her to bring her joy. She's in the constant presence of the Son of God; she's fine. Yet I feel her nudging me, saying, "You don't have to do this for me - BUT I do want you to stop the trafficking of my name through the distorted, lusty Sinner image of "the Magdalene" which is still used to abase and abuse women."

That will take work. Her legacy of witnessing to the truth, especially in the face of 1st c. prohibitions against a woman leader speaking in public insists and directs us to seek out and broadcast the truth about Christ's teaching.

Through his choice of Mary of Magdala to proclaim the Good News, to be a leader in his ministry, Jesus teaches us that we all have the capacity to be witnesses. It takes faith and perseverance. As baptized Catholics, we are responsible to seek the truth and to ask our leaders to correct errors.

Distortion: Over the centuries, words and images have labeled her as 'sinful' and, even more sinfully omitted her role as witness and chosen proclaimer distort Jesus' teaching. How has our memory of MM's image been so distorted? For answers look to preaching and theological writings from the 6th c. through to the early 20th c.; look to art and music, look to social punishment of women.

Preachers and exegetes such as Pope St. Gregory I, the late 6th c. Bishop of Rome and 'Venerable Bede', a famous and much quoted 8th c. preacher and Renaissance and Baroque artists did much damage. Instead of blogs the preachers used their, almost exclusive, access to the pulpit to assert with authority – though without solid historical information - that Mary of Magdala was Luke's anonymous 'sinful woman' of chapter 7:36-50.

However, Biblical scholars using historical and literary records know that in the NT someone named as specifically as "Mary of Magdala" would not be an anonymous person in a gospel text.

Gregory asserted that being healed of "seven demons" had to mean she had the "totality of vices." (Homily #33) But none of the NT references to being healed of demons connects the victim

to any kind of a sin. So why connect Mary of Magdala's demons to the seven deadly sins?

Ironically, Gregory also preached that Mary of Magdala was the primary witness of the resurrection, the woman chosen after the men left and described her as an exemplary role model. In Homily 33 he praised her perseverance: "Though the disciples had left the tomb, she remained. ... And so it happened that the woman who stayed behind to seek Christ was the only one to see him. For perseverance is essential to any good deed...."

Gregory further praises Mary of Magdala by interpreting Jesus' calling her by name to mean, "For I [Jesus] do not know you as I know others; I know you as yourself." Do I have the patience and perseverance to stay with Mary of Magdala and her encounter with the Risen Jesus? Am I willing to let Jesus know me as I truly am? If I do, the rewards are great – I will encounter a true disciple in Mary of Magdala and learn more of the Jesus who she witnessed – witnessing begets witness.

Sadly, and tragically for women sent to the "Magdalene" houses – Gregory I's memory of her Resurrection role did not survive the centuries. Why? Because:

1. Liturgies with selected negative texts, the prejudices of church authorities and of society in general plus, distorted views of Christ's morality
2. and Art - so called "religious art"- all created a profoundly negative image of Mary of Magdala. By the 14th c. the memory of her as Resurrection witness and proclaimer was eradicated.

Artists “Trafficked” Mary of Magdala’s Image – Was it for Gain? Did their patrons commission the trafficked images?

Instead of Photoshop, Renaissance and Baroque artists developed a shorthand using paint and gold leaf to attract attention to a “lusty Magdalene” or a “penitent Magdalene.” All they had to do was remove the halo, expose her long, wavy hair, paint her dress red, place her on her knees at the foot of the cross – and the viewer sees the “sinful woman” rather than the faithful disciple, courageously present to Jesus in his agony.

In one of Giotto’s resurrection paintings from 1320, she’s kneeling at the tomb in a red cloak, reaching out, witnessing the Risen Jesus. But Giotto paints Jesus’ hand almost pushing her away and his face with a severe, unwelcoming look. What a scandal, to maintain the image of Mary of Magdala as the sinner, Giotto distorted Jesus into a disdainful, rejecting “savior.” Instead of “Resurrection,” Giotto’s painting is titled “Noli me Tangere” or “Don’t Touch Me” [Jerome’s translation] which is today translated as “Don’t hold onto me.” Giotto brings Luke’s “sinful woman” instead of Christ’s chosen witness to the tomb. Here, her image is trafficked to tell viewers that even Jesus would not touch her. In a second fresco of the same title, Giotto uncovers Mary of Magdala’s hair and Jesus has an even more disdainful look--two steps to traffic her image as a sinful woman in Jesus’ eyes.

To witness the Resurrection and witness Mary of Magdala’s truth we need more than eyes. We need open minds, courage to keep seeking, patience to observe the details of scripture, curiosity to read the discoveries of scripture scholarship and faith. To fully witness we must share the information.

We witness with our whole beings; we witness by being present – this is how we learn about the loves and sufferings of our dearest

friends, of our enemies and of victims we honor and wish to aid. Listening to Jesus call us by name and persistent searching for the truth are essential parts of Witnessing.

Persevering to find the truth, as our Biblical Scholars have done and as Mary of Magdala did, is essential to being a witness. Tonight we will have the opportunity to witness the truth of victims of Human Trafficking and to honor them for persevering to find freedom and to honor those who persevere to end these horrific crimes.

END OF REFLECTION

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Art Samples that illustrate the positive and negative images of MM can be found in “Samples of MM TrueFalse Images short version” power point presentation.

Background Material for Presenter:

For centuries Mary of Magdala has been misidentified as a repentant prostitute thus diminishing her leadership role to the point of eradicating it from the historical memory of most Christians, including Catholics. Yet, Mary Magdalene is expressly identified as one of the women who refused to leave Jesus during his crucifixion and death on the cross, in contrast to the male disciples who are depicted as scattering and denying Jesus. All four Gospels explicitly name her as present at the tomb, and in John and Matthew, and in the addendum to Mark she is the first witness or one of the first witnesses to the resurrection.

John 20:10 makes clear that only Mary of Magdala was in the garden. In verse 15 Jesus appears but Mary does not recognize him and asks him

to help find Jesus. She was determined. In verse 16 he calls her by name – Mary instantly recognizes him, fulfilling Jesus’ description of a true disciple in his story of the Good Shepherd (10:1-18 which can be paraphrased as, “Mine know me when I call their name”).

When you read all of John 20:1-18 you see that Mary goes to hold Jesus but he directs her to “go to my brothers [and sisters] and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God (14-17).” In verse 18 she goes and announces without reservations.

John’s resurrection account strikingly and without reservation portrays Mary Magdalene as the primary witness of the resurrected Jesus, the first commissioned by Jesus to proclaim this good news, and the first to carry the resurrected Jesus to the community. This is one of the most representative examples of Jesus’ Inclusive Ministry of Leadership.

Background: Who was St. Mary Magdalene?

1. She is first introduced in Luke 8:1-3 as a woman who had been healed by Jesus, as a faithful disciple and leader of the group of women supporting Jesus’ mission in Galilee. She was a fearless witness at the cross and tomb and was the first disciple commissioned by Jesus to announce his resurrection message and the first to proclaim this good news. (John 20:1-18)
2. Jesus healed her by exorcising ‘seven demons’ – scholars now know via historical critical analysis that the seven demons referred to an illness – most likely an internal, long term one and not to vices or deadly sins. But Gregory I, Bishop of Rome in the 590’s clearly had lost the historical memory of the use of ‘demons’ in Jewish literature to indicate an illness. We cannot underestimate the effect of the western Christian community’s loss of knowledge of the eastern/Jewish literature, language and traditions. IT’s quite clear that Gregory did not know the significance of naming a woman by her location. When he assumed MM was Luke’s anonymous sinful woman Gregory showed he also did not know that in the NT someone named so specifically would never be an anonymous person in a gospel text.
3. It’s even sadder to note that in his Homily #33 on Luke’s sinful woman Gregory conflated the sinful woman with ‘Mary of Bethany’ – another woman named by her place versus relation to a male. He conflated the two stories because in

John's version of the true anointing story it is Mary of Bethany who anoints Jesus' feet. By conflating the two, Gregory shows he clearly did not understand that the true anointing stories in Matthew, Mark and John are women anointing Jesus on the head (Mark and Matthew) or feet (John) as a prophetic act in anticipation of Jesus' death. Luke took elements of Mark's original anointing story and as he often did converted it into a way to demean a woman, this time by making it a penitential rather than a prophetic act.

4. She was probably an independent woman of some wealth; her identity is established with the epithet 'Magdalene' or in the NAB, 'of Magdala.' Historical Critical biblical analysis established that this naming by a place rather than by relation to a male identifies Mary Magdalene as an independent woman and that this type of name is always used to set her out as a unique person
5. No scripture text states that she was a 'sinful woman' or a prostitute.
6. From the end of the 13th c. through the 19th c. the dominant images of Mary Magdalene were of a buxom repentant with uncovered, wavy red or blond hair (sign of a prostitute in medieval and Renaissance art) or of a penitent hermit and thus, safely diminished, her powerful role as chosen resurrection proclaimer removed.
7. By the mid-20th century scripture scholars agreed that all texts, except two, that refer to Mary Magdalene use her full name. Therefore, she is not any of the anonymous women nor is she Mary of Bethany. The two exceptions are in John 20:11-18 when she is called simply, "Mary." Verse 11 states, "But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb." In verse 16 Jesus calls her, "Mary." Verse 17 established that Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and verse 18 states that the two other disciples returned home. No others are present so it is clear that this 'Mary' is Mary Magdalene.)

Background: A Brief History of the Diminishment and Slander. It is challenging to summarize all of the trends and influences that helped supplant the memory of Mary Magdalene's role as chosen witness, proclaimer of the resurrection and apostle. The following is an attempt by one student who is not a scholar.

1. Confusion about St. Mary Magdalene's identity began in the early church when some asked if Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany were the same woman (e.g., Ambrose, 4th c. Haskins, 93-97) and questioned Mary Magdalene's strength (Ambrose and Augustine, 4th c.). Yet others, such as Jerome praised Mary Magdalene's 'Earnestness and strength of faith' (Haskins, 58). In the east, Mary Magdalene's identity was not confused with Mary of Bethany or Luke's 'Sinful Woman'.
2. The confusion about Mary Magdalene's identity continued with different attempts to link her to other women and to reason away the significance of her witness and proclamation of the Resurrection. In his late 6th c. homily on John 20:11-18 Pope Gregory I asserted that Mary Magdalene 'who had been in the city a sinner came to the sepulcher.' (Homily #25, *Forty Gospel Homilies: Gregory the Great*, Cistercian Publications, 1990, 187)
3. In homily #33 on Luke 7:36-50 (Cistercian, 269) Gregory stated that the sinful woman is Mary Magdalene and further conflated her with Mary of Bethany. He

presented Mary Magdalene to the people of Rome as an example of conversion and penitence. Gregory's homily collection was quite popular in the 8th & 9th centuries and his "formulation of the composite Magdalen thus ... [became] stock-in-trade in the Middle Ages." (Haskins, 96)

4. "Venerable Bede's commentary on Luke's gospel (written 709-715) in England further developed the imagery of Mary Magdalen as the sinful woman who was also Mary of Bethany the contemplative." (Haskins, 109)
5. It could be that the negative beliefs about women seen in Aristotle's writings and the 1st c. Roman laws regarding the roles and proper behavior of women were so deeply held by influential members of early Christian communities that they overrode Jesus' teaching of the full dignity and inclusion of women as disciples and leaders.
6. This slander of the conflated identity of Mary Magdalene gained wide acceptance by the 13th c. The last image of a dignified Mary Magdalene preaching to a group of disciples that I've seen is in a small side picture of the 'Magdalene Master's' altar piece painted in 1280 (Haskins plate 46, 227.) After that, it is rare to find a dignified image of Mary Magdalene with a halo and veil, not in a red dress, let alone announcing the Resurrection in any art produced from 1300 to the mid-20th c.

Testimony of Maria Elena

Honduras Girl Story

I am Maria Elena, from a small town near San Pedro Sula in Honduras. I started working in the maquila, the garment factory in the free trade zone, when I was 12 years old. The pay was not bad, but the work was hard and sometimes we would have to stay in the factory for 36 or 48 hours to finish the work. If any of us reached the age of 24, the boss would fire us and replace us with younger girls. If we got pregnant, we had to have an abortion or lose our jobs. Many times I wanted to quit, but my family needed the money.

One day when I was 13, I was going home on the company bus. When I got off the bus, a man came up behind me and pushed me into a car. I could not get away from him because he was so strong. I yelled, but no one could help me. In an instant, I was kidnapped,... disappeared from my family. I had heard of this happening to many other girls my age, some of them co-workers. They disappear and their families never hear from them again. My kidnappers were part of a gang. They locked me up in a house in the countryside with several other girls. After several days, they squeezed all 10 of us into a small truck, and said we were going on a trip. After several days, we ended up in Mexico near the U.S. border and the men pulled us out of the truck like we were animals and threw us into another truck. It was dark and out in the middle of nowhere. We crossed the border that night.

It was extremely hot in these trucks with no air. We all ended up getting bruises and headaches, and were carsick. Our clothes were filthy. The men didn't care. They treated us like trash and would hit us if we cried. We were finally let out and taken to a run-down trailer. We were given clean clothes and told to take a shower. Then the real nightmare started. We were gang-raped

by the men who brought us, and then that very night we were sold as prostitutes to the woman running the house. We had to “service” around 30 men a night. My body and my heart became like stone. I lost feeling for anything. I couldn’t even cry anymore. I thought I would never get out of this prison. I knew from one of the clients that we were in New Jersey, but I didn’t know where that was. The pimps treated us like we were their property. The Johns would come in with their little “Chica Cards” and ask who was the youngest. I lied saying I was older than 13.

I escaped from this nightmare when I was 15 because of an immigration raid. That’s when I knew that I could try to make a new life. It has been hard. I have the horrible memories, and struggle with feeling guilt and shame; it is hard for me to believe in myself again. I still have not contacted my family in Honduras because I am afraid the gang who kidnapped me will harm them.

PAUSE, then extend a hand in appeal to the audience, and say:

YOU ARE MY WITNESSES; BRING ME THE GOOD NEWS!

NOTE: *This story is a creation of Nancy Lorence and is based on first-hand experience speaking with women who worked in maquilas in the area of San Pedro Sula in Honduras as well as news coverage of a raid of a brothel in New Jersey where most of the prostitutes were young girls from Central America, and testimonies of trafficking survivors about their treatment by their traffickers.*

Testimony of Dai

Trafficked within the U.S.

My name is Dai. In 1995, I fell in love with a military man, who persuaded me to move with him to an undisclosed remote area. There, I was raped and beaten continually while handcuffed to a door of an abandoned house. One day, I was approached by a middle-aged woman who had been watching my every move. She insisted that I come work for her Escort Service. Unaware that she was a female pimp, I did.

After several weeks, I found myself well provided for and economically stable. Then the unthinkable happened: a client bargained me for sex. After I refused his offer, he grabbed my hair, forced me to the floor and raped and beat me.

Eventually, the pimp who recruited me sent me to Nevada where my experience in Human Trafficking began. To this day, I am still haunted by flashbacks regarding certain smells, as well as cold floors which numbed my bare feet.

We were constantly paraded before potential clients; their lustful eyes examining and perusing us before we became final choices for each predatory customer.

In reality, no female desires to be a part of this nightmare. Most of us were incarcerated in basements, underneath casinos and in abandoned warehouses. Our desperate cries for help were silenced by the walls which separated us from the rest of the world. While tourists roamed the streets of Las Vegas admiring the architectural beauty and the celestial lights, we, the victims, were in perpetual fear for our lives. Even though language barriers prevented my communication with the other women, we shared the same relentless fears. Somehow, we also shared the dim ray of hope that maintained our survival.

I remember, at different times, holding each of them in my arms letting their tears stain my clothing, while all along, sharing the same pain.

I was involved in trafficking for more than six months. Repeatedly, I witnessed the beatings, rapes and murders of innocent women. After months of ongoing physical and mental agony, I became apathetic regarding my life; I did not care if I lived or died. America needs to have its eyes open to this reality happening twenty-four hours a day.

PAUSE,
then extend a hand in appeal to the audience, and say:

YOU ARE MY WITNESSES; BRING ME THE GOOD NEWS!

NOTE: This actual first-person testimony was shortened and edited by Roisin Duffy-Gideon

Testimony of Barbara

Runaway Youth

My name is Barbara. I was abused by family members beginning at the age of nine. I tried to tell my mother about the abuse, but she did not want to believe me. I eventually stopped trying to tell her. I felt like nothing I did mattered; I did not want to go to school or talk to my friends. Feeling very depressed, I ran away from home dozens of times between the ages of 12 and 14, trying to escape the abuse. Sometimes the police would find me and bring me home or take me to detention centers or reform schools and hospitals.

One time after I ran away, a couple found me hungry, cold, and in need of shelter on the streets of Washington, D.C. They picked me up and groomed me for prostitution. I was 14. After months of being trafficked by them in Washington D.C., they sold me to another trafficker who whisked me away to New York. I stayed with that trafficker, selling my body for him on the streets of New York City.

In the beginning I believed he was my protector. Later, when I began to see what he really was, he controlled me with severe beatings and death threats. He beat me with coat hangers, tried to throw me out of his car, and threw me down several flights of stairs. I tried to leave him a few times, once even making my way all the way back to Virginia, but I never succeeded. He always came after me.

During the time I spent on the streets being trafficked I went to jail numerous times. I was raped and robbed more times than I can count. The police would come through the streets and round up dozens of women and girls, never the pimps and traffickers, and take us all down to the station. Although I was a victim, I had a criminal record. The pimp who trafficked me was never arrested.

Between the ages of 14 and 17, I spiraled downward into drug addiction and was no longer a productive commodity for my trafficker. He eventually released me, leaving me on my own in New York City and addicted to heroin. At age 20, I met a drug counselor at a clinic who reunited me with my family in nearby Philadelphia, PA, where my older sister had been living for several years.

PAUSE, then extend a hand in appeal to the audience, and say:

YOU ARE MY WITNESSES; BRING ME THE GOOD NEWS!

NOTE: This actual first-person testimony was shortened and edited by Roisin Duffey-Gideon.

Poem for Prayer Service

You can choose to read the poem or play the audio from YouTube:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=aTAVZChvLR4

America's Daughters

She was four years old the first time a man looked at her
The way a man looks at his wife on their wedding day.
Little girls are supposed to dream about being models and doctors and veterinarians.
Instead she fought sleep eyes wide with terror
of another night greeted by her stepfather's shadow.
He was a real monster In her bedroom.
And Mom... she was too fragile, too selfish, to accept the truth
that her little girl's innocence had been stolen one night when her boyfriend
decided that she wasn't good enough anymore.
And since the little girl never had a real father, she accepted his advances
because he always promised her his touches were acceptable - because he loved her.
You don't know yourself 'n you don't love yourself -
You will fall for anything that sounds like love and feels like love.
She was a walking corpse, staying with the fingerprints of strangers.
All she wanted was to walk the earth without the heaviness,
the weight of all the men who took a piece of her and took it with them.
She never made it to see her 18th birthday.

This is for the pain, for the stains that bad water won't wash away
for the scars of the hurts, for the fatherless child.

This is for the girl objectified instead of praised like a queen.

This is for the agony, growing up without a father.

But all you really want is love, and you don't understand love.

So one day when some guy stops you at a train station or street corner

and tells you you're beautiful, you are quickly intrigued.

You like the fact that someone notices you.

And you will do anything to feel like his everything.

'n he promises you everything.

And the things he convinces you to do - they don't seem that bad.

And afterwards he shows you how much he loves you.

Your morals are abandoned on that sidewalk where you turned your first trick.

Your beauty is up in that hotel room where some stranger touched you like his girlfriend

And then left the money on the nightstand.

And every night you die again, compromising your words for what your pimp calls love and security.

The hustle, the street lights, the schemes - it never seems worth it,

But you have to live and comfort your fears.

And as long as your profits meet expectations, you will have what you always wanted your whole life:

LOVE.

Love. it doesn't feel right, but it's all you think you're worth, so you take it every day....

Sleep when the sun comes up; rise when the sun is down.

Conceal the torment with make-up and stylish hairdos

Put on your best outfits – something arousing,

cuz you have to make them happy: the men, the tricks, the pimps.

This is for the pain.

This is for America

In hopes that you will notice that 12-year old girl
who was forced to trade her lunchbox and sneakers for Chanel purse and pops.
This is for the 16-year old girl kidnapped by a gang of men on her way to school
and held captive in a house right next door to you.
This is for the 20-year old girl who took her life bleeding today
because she couldn't bring herself to let another man hold her down and violate her.
We are all slaves for love, degrading ourselves for acceptance of a man
that's the closest thing to a father figure we've ever known.
We were once just girls with aspirations and a small piece of hope.
Now who will notice us?
Who will save America's daughters?

Written by a victim of human trafficking from the Polaris Project website

Transcribed by Nancy Lorence

You Shall Be My Witnesses

You shall be my witnesses through all the earth,
telling of all you have heard and received,
for I arose and am with you, and have believed.

Women at the tomb,
weeping for the dead.
He is not here,
he has risen as he said.
They ran to tell those who were in authority.
The men dismissed the news as idle fantasy.

You shall be my witnesses through all the earth,
telling of all you have heard and received,
for I arose and am with you, and have believed.

Magdalene at the tomb:
Whom do you seek?
Her eyes were opened
when she heard him speak.
His love for every woman shone upon his face.
The hopes of every age were held in their embrace.

You shall be my witnesses through all the earth,
telling of all you have heard and received,
for I arose and am with you, and have believed.

Women, leave your tombs.
Roll the stones aside.
Do not despair,
though so many dreams have died.
Do not be fearful of the vision that you see.
Believe in miracles again. Believe in me.

You shall be my witnesses through all the earth,
telling of all you have heard and received,
for I arose and am with you, and have believed.

Miriam Therese Winter

WomanPrayer, WomanSong ©Medical Mission Sisters 1987

music available for purchase online or contact FutureChurch for assistance

**You are called to witness.
Go forth and proclaim,
“I have seen the Lord!”**

John 20:18

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Sample Announcement

FutureChurch
and the
Young Adults Group
Invite you to a

Mary Magdalene Prayer Service **7:00 pm, Wednesday, July 22, 2015**

River's Edge, Worship Space

3430 Rocky River Drive

All are Welcome! Bring a friend.



Join us as we connect Mary Magdalene's raised hand announcing the Good News of the Resurrection to the hand raised today to say Stop Human Trafficking.