

July 22

## MEDITATION ON SAINT MARY MAGDALEN

### 144.1 First Point

One cannot admire too greatly the tender love that Saint Mary Magdalen had for Jesus Christ. Attracted by the sight of his miracles and by his very moving discourses, she left the world in which she had been involved and gave herself entirely to Jesus Christ. Nothing held her back, neither human respect which might have made her think of what people would say about the sudden change in her conduct, nor her attachment to the pleasures and comforts of life, nor her concern for status (since Jesus Christ's followers were, for the most part, drawn from the outcasts of the people). She had so strong a thought to follow him that she renounced at once everything else for love of him, without regard for any human considerations.

You, who have left the world, have you renounced it in such a way that you no longer think of it at all? Are you completely disgusted with everything that makes up the pleasure of people living in the world? Are you no longer attached to anything?

### 144.2 Second Point

This love she had for Jesus Christ so filled her heart that once she was converted, she resolved never to abandon him again. She was one of the holy women who followed him everywhere on his journeys and supplied his needs and those of his disciples.<sup>683</sup> At a banquet held in Bethany where Jesus was present a few days before his death, she poured a fragrant ointment over his feet,<sup>684</sup> and later accompanied him even to Calvary, where she saw him die.<sup>685</sup> She did all this to show that she could not leave Jesus Christ, so deeply did she love him.

Are you as faithful to follow Jesus Christ when he causes you to suffer as when he showers you with his blessings? Alas! As soon as someone says something to you that causes you some pain, or as soon as you are given some reproof, do you not show your resentment? It is on occasions such as these that you should show that you follow Jesus Christ and are one of his disciples.

### 144.3 Third Point

When love is ardent, it is even stronger than death.<sup>686</sup> This is clear in Saint Mary Magdalen's love. It was so great that when Jesus Christ was buried, she stayed near the sepulchre.<sup>687</sup> Then she bought a great quantity of perfumes to embalm the body of Jesus and returned to the tomb early on the morning of the resurrection with the other holy women.<sup>688</sup> Seeing that the stone which had closed the tomb had been rolled away, she ran to tell Saint Peter and Saint John that someone had removed her Lord.<sup>689</sup>

Because she loved him so tenderly she remained close by the sepulchre weeping.<sup>690</sup> She looked here and there until she saw two angels who assured her that Jesus Christ had risen.<sup>691</sup> By her faithfulness at the tomb of Jesus Christ, this saint merited to be the first one to whom he appeared after his resurrection.<sup>692</sup> After consoling her he ordered her to go and tell his apostles that he was risen, which she did at once.<sup>693</sup>

By the kindness he showed to Saint Mary Magdalen, Jesus Christ has made it clear how good God is to those who love him, and with what tenderness he rewards even in this life the love they have for him.

You should show the great love you have for Jesus by being eager to talk with him in prayer and by your desire to receive him as often as possible in the Eucharist.

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Mary Magdalen is identified in the Latin Church as the Mary present at the crucifixion and resurrection, also as the Mary of Bethany, sister of Martha and Lazarus, and also as the sinner who came to Jesus when he was a guest of Simon the Pharisee. In the Greek Church these three are considered as three separate persons. De La Salle follows the Roman tradition in his meditation. The devotion to Mary Magdalen in France was enhanced by the belief that her body with that of Lazarus was brought to Provence in the 9th century. In 1713 De La Salle, discouraged by the turn of events in Marseilles, made a retreat in the monastery of Saint Maximin near the Sainte Baume grotto of Saint Mary Magdalen, about 30 miles from Marseille.

683 Lk 8:2, 3  
684 Jn 12:1-3  
685 Jn 19:25  
686 Song 8:6  
687 Mt 27:61

688 Lk 24:1  
689 Jn 20:1-2  
690 Jn 20:11-12  
691 Lk 24:4-6  
692 Mk 16:9

693 Jn 20:17-18