

## 22<sup>nd</sup> July St Mary Magdalene

Mary Magdalene is truly the model of a woman in love, who was fascinated and conquered by Christ when He freed her from the 7 demons that possessed her. And she was indeed the best disciple of Christ, showing it with her attitudes. She was a faithful follower of Christ and, when the moment of Calvary arrived, she was together with Mary Most Holy and the beloved Disciple, under the Cross. She did not run away in fear like his disciples did, she did not deny him out of fear like Peter did, but she was present every hour until the Holy Sepulcher. It is worth considering how much power of love had invaded the soul of this woman, that she did not detach herself from the tomb of the Lord. She persevered in searching for him and was given the grace to find him. In fact, her was a persevering love that the Lord rewarded. It was the first of the disciples, on Easter morning, to whom the Risen One appeared, calling her by her name, and making her worthy of being "apostle of the apostles": she was the first to announce her resurrection "I have seen the Lord".

St. Gregory the Great has extraordinary words for her who made Christ her only reason for living. *«She went on Easter Sunday to the Sepulcher, with her ointments, to honor the Lord. But she did not find him: "Mary instead stood outside, near the tomb, and she wept"»* (Jn 20:10-11). In this fact we must consider how much strength of love had invaded the soul of this woman, who did not leave the sepulcher of the Lord, even after her disciples had left it. (...) It therefore happened that she was the only one who could see him who had remained to look for him; because the strength of a good work lies in perseverance, as the very voice of Truth affirms: "Whoever perseveres to the end will be saved" (Mt 10, 22). So she looked for the first time, but she didn't find, she persevered in looking for him, and she was given to find. (...) Holy desires grow with prolongation. If, on the other hand, they fade away while waiting, it is a sign that they were not true desires. (...) *"Woman why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"* (John 20.15). She is asked the cause of the pain, so that her desire grows, and by calling the one she seeks by name, it inflames more in love for him. *"Jesus said to her: Mary!"* (John 20.16). After she has called her by her generic name (...) without being recognized, he calls her by her name as if she wanted to say: Recognize the one by whom you are recognized. I know you not as you know an ordinary person, but in a very special way.' Mary wakes up from the nightmare: *«Rabboni!»* ("Master!"). The humble penitent Magdalene becomes a witness to the triumph of the Crucifix. Now she would like to stay there, in adoration, but instead she doesn't: *«Do not hold me back, because I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brothers and tell them: I am ascending to my Father and your Father, my God and your God»* (Jn 20, 17). So she will bring the announcement to the Apostles and will become the Apostle of the Apostles.

Saint Mary Magdalene teach us to be passionate disciples of Christ in order to be able to announce him to others: "I have seen the Lord" and bring them to a personal encounter with him like her.