

July 22



G. † Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal to the Apostles Mary Magdalene

She was born in Syria, within the environs of Magdala, and, believing in Christ, she followed Him. Up to her conversion to Christ she had the terrible illness of possession by demons (Lk. 8:2; Mk. 16:9). Gratitude for the Savior Who expelled seven demons from her and gave her new life ignited in her heart such faith and love for Him that could not be extinguished by anything in the world. She turned her soul and heart to Him alone; all her thoughts, desires and hopes were concentrated in Him; all the treasure of her heart, all the life of her soul was contained in Him. Following Jesus Christ, deeply believing, ardently, disinterestedly and with selfless love in relation to the Savior, Mary combined in herself the worthiness of both sisters of Lazarus, Martha and Mary. And she received from Him the mystery of the Kingdom of God, and served Him from her own estate (Lk. 8:2-3; Mk. 15:40-41). St. Mary did not leave the Savior even when His very disciples, "forsook Him, and all fled" (Mk. 14:50). Full of faith, love and boundless fidelity to the Savior, Mary, not being frightened by the rage of His enemies, accompanies Him to Golgotha through the crowds of people who were jeering at the Crucified One, draws near to His very cross and suffers with Him participating in the severe grief of the most pure Mother of Jesus, eases the inconsolable illness of her soul, is present at the burial of the Savior, will not leave her Lord after His burial and sits "directly by His grave" up to the complete darkness of night and the Sabbath Day of rest does not force her to leave (Mt. 27:55-56, 61; Mk. 15:40-41, 47; Jn. 19:25). "Saturday having past by, Mary Magdalene", having anticipated everything, "came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, to anoint Jesus", Who for her and in the tomb was her Lord and Master (Lk. 24:1; Jn. 20:1). Such ardent love for the Lord, such constant fidelity to Him in the very difficult minutes of testing of faith was adequately rewarded by the Lord Himself. St. Mary was the first to see the empty tomb where "two Angels in white robes were sitting" who announced to her the resurrection of Christ; she was deigned to be the first who was shown the risen Lord Himself and Who sent her to announce to His disciples the holy joy of the resurrection (Jn. 20:11-18; Mk. 16:9-10). All the rest of the life of St. Mary was entirely devoted to the humble service to the preachers of the Gospel of Christ, to their assistance in converting unbelievers, in the education and statements in the faith of those converted, in glorifying the name of the Lord Jesus Christ all over the world.

In the church hymns, "after the awesome Ascension of the Savior, she went

about everywhere announcing the precious word, and drawing many, seduced by ignorance into her net, as a glorious disciple of the Word".

Tradition says that St. Mary penetrated Rome to the court of Caesar and announced to the terribly-gloomy Emperor Tiberius "Christ is Risen!", and as a gift brought him a decorated egg (a symbol of death out of which life is born), and told him about the lawlessness of Pilate and the Judaic high priests, who condemned Jesus Christ.

Traveling to Rome and back to Asia from Italy, she passed through many countries, telling the good news about Christ, as well as the Holy apostles. Later, having arrived in Ephesus to St. John the Theologian, she served together with him for the salvation of man, when finally she reposed in the Lord with a blessed dormition, having earned this, together with the sacred name of myrrh-bearing woman, and the other most sacred name of Equal to the Apostles and the eternal glory both with the Lord God in the heavens, and among Christians on earth.

During the reign of Emperor Leo the Wise the relics of St. Mary were translated to Constantinople and placed in the Monastery of St. Lazarus.

Troparion, tone 1

**Keeping His statutes and laws, honorable Mary Magdalene,
You followed Christ who was born for us from the Virgin.
Therefore today celebrating your all holy memory,
Let us receive remission of sins through your prayers.**

Kontakion, tone 3

**Standing before the cross of the Savior with many others,
And suffering with the mother of the Lord,
And with tears flowing, the most glorious Mary offered praise saying:
What is this strange wonder?
The Creator of all creation chooses to suffer.
Glory to Your mighty power.**

Matins Gospel: Lk. 8:1-3; sel. 34. **Epistle:** 1 Cor. 9:2-12; sel. 141. **Gospel:** Jn. 20:11-18; sel. 64.

The Return of the Relics of the Holy Martyr Phocas - from Sinope to Constantinople in the year 403 or 404. See September 22.

Kontakion, tone 6

**As a hierarch bringing an offering, O Father,
You offered yourself as a living offering at the end.
Having lawfully witnessed about Christ God,
Strengthened by an angel and willing death
You are with those hymning you:
Come, O Phocas, be with us, and no one will be against us.**

Ven. Martyr Marcella suffered for Christ on the island of Chios where her memory is especially honored by its inhabitants.

Repose of the Ven. Cornelius of Pereiaslav

The son of a Riazan merchant, as a youth he secretly left his parental house, and practiced asceticism in the St. Lucian Hermitage. From here he left for the Sts. Boris and Gleb Monastery in Pereiaslav (abolished in 1764), where for 30 years he practiced asceticism in seclusion. He died as a schema-monk on July 22, 1693. His relics rest in a hidden place in the former monastery, now parish, church of the Smolensk Mother of God in Pereiaslav.

*S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0251-0253.
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