



Pastoral Liturgy

Formation and Resources for Lectionary-Based Worship



Ordinary Time, Trinity & Corpus Christi

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Year A

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Pastoral Liturgy

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From the Editors

Dr Angela McCarthy and Fr Vincent Glynn



Editor: Dr Angela McCarthy



Editor: Fr Vincent Glynn

From the Editors

Ordinary Time – as described in the General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar:

Apart from those seasons having their own distinctive character, thirty three or thirty-four weeks remain in the yearly cycle that do not celebrate a specific aspect of the mystery of Christ. Rather, especially on the Sunday, they are devoted to the mystery of Christ in all its aspects. This period is known as Ordinary Time.¹

In English, the term Ordinary Time does not really do justice to the season as the word ‘ordinary’ designates something to be less than special, just ordinary. As Gerard Moore points out, the word comes from the Latin word *ordo* which means to set things in order, to make an orderly progression of things.² Hence, our orderly progression through the gospel of the year and through various epistles. We can also use the time to be aware of God in the ordinariness of our lives, the mystery of Christ continues to renew us and to change our lives through the celebration of the liturgy and our formation through the action of the Word.

Last year a new Feast was established for St Mary Magdalene and we have therefore included her feast day in this particular calendar as well as an article about the liturgical material and her history. St Mary Magdalene will not be on the list in years to come but having her feast day elevated to the rank of Feast is worth noting. Over the last decade or so much has been written about her and some of it has been detrimental so a careful view of the material was necessary. She can be our new hero in this time when the Church is struggling with damaging scandals and trying to seek a way to lift our communities out of the damage.

An article on the basics of liturgy by Angela Hibbard, a religious sister in the USA, gives a gentle insight to our understanding of what we are doing when we prepare to celebrate Eucharist. I think her approach is fresh

and welcoming and could be very valuable as liturgy committees review their own work in their parishes and schools.

The publication of *Musicam Sacram* in 1967 is 50 years old this year.³ It was written immediately after the Second Vatican Council to enlarge on the section about music in *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and to ensure its correct implementation. A celebration of the anniversary of this document was held in Rome in March with a conference which explored current issues for the Church in the field of liturgical music. It was called “Music and Church: Cult and Culture” and the proceeds of that conference are available online.⁴ It is very worthwhile for liturgical musicians to explore the work of that conference. Another conference on music to be held in Perth by the Australian Pastoral Musicians Network is advertised elsewhere in this issue. Another opportunity to explore and develop our skills and understanding of the important role of music in liturgy.

Subscriptions will be due before the next volume begins and so our invoices will be sent out primarily by email. We have a new administrative assistant helping us, Elizabeth Roff, so we deeply appreciate your assistance in the renewal and payment of your subscription.

Again on music, we welcome Alessio Loiacono who works for the Centre for Liturgy in Perth. He has joined the music selection team and we are delighted that he is contributing in this area. Chris deSilva has been a long-time collaborator in the music selections. Both of them will be delivering workshops at the APMN conference in October in Perth.

May this orderly ordinary time of contemplation of the mystery of Christ be fruitful for you all.

¹ Congregation for Divine Worship, “General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar,” (1969), <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Info/GNLY.pdf>.

² Gerard Moore, *Earth Unites with Heaven: An Introduction to the Liturgical Year* (Northcote, Victoria: Morning Star Publishing, 2014), 21.

³ Sacred Congregation of Rites, “*Musicam Sacram: Instruction on Music in the Liturgy*,” (1969), <https://adoremus.org/1967/03/05/musicam-sacram/>.

⁴ <http://www.cultura.va/content/cultura/en/dipartimenti/music/conference.html>



Back to Basics: Notes on the Preparation of Gifts and Table

by Angela M. Hibbard, IHM, D.Min

Let me introduce myself. I'm an American Roman Catholic religious who belongs to a small congregation founded a little over 170 years ago in backwoods Michigan, U.S.A. I am blessed – and cursed – with the sort of eye that sees crooked pictures and sets them straight. I am a teacher blessed – and cursed – because incorrect grammar and spelling set my teeth on edge. I could give other examples. In short, I'm a fussy budget. This extends to my experience of liturgy. I'm one of those people for whom the joke fits: "What's the difference between a liturgist and a terrorist? You can negotiate with a terrorist." Actually I don't think negotiation is the point. I'd rather teach people how to understand liturgical action so that its underlying meaning becomes clear. After all, the meaning is the point. All liturgy is a kind of sign language, and unless participants understand the "words" and the "grammar," nothing is communicated.

Back to the beginning

According to the gospels, what we call the Eucharist began as a community meal on the eve of Passover around the year 30 A.D. It included some basic foods and followed the ordinary customs of fellowship gatherings called *chaburot* (plural). L. Cohen says,

A Chaburah (meaning friend) is a group formed by Jewish people for the purpose of religious study. In most cases, they will also share Shabbat and festival meals and may also work together to raise money for charitable causes.¹

Jesus and the Twelve very probably formed such a close-knit group and had such meals regularly. Like every Jewish meal, this one began when the leader, using specific ritual words, blessed God for the bread, broke it and shared it with everyone. Distinct from ordinary meals, however, festival meals and *chaburah* gatherings ended with a longer three-part thanksgiving over a single cup of wine. On this particular occasion Jesus added a few words to the familiar ritual blessings, words which his followers, and the church that grew out of their post-resurrection ministry, never forgot.

This event – the meal rituals and the added words – have remained at the heart of Christianity, East and West, for 2000 years; but the original context and its meanings were blurred and then lost as soon as Jewish Christians moved into the Greek culture well before the Church rejected everything Jewish (cf. 1 Cor 11:17-33). Ever since Paul chastised the Corinthians for modeling their "Lord's Supper" behavior on Greek cultural assumptions, new social contexts have caused Christians to modify the way they celebrated the sacred meal and its associated meanings. A parallel instance would be the cultural effect of shifting images of Jesus. We know that in the very earliest centuries, catacomb art, true to the gospel, portrayed him as a shepherd. By the sixth century, Byzantine Christians

imagined Jesus as an emperor ruling all things, an image far-removed from the reality. Ritual follows culture, so over time the ways the Lord's Supper was explained, prepared, and celebrated, took very non-gospel paths.

By 1960 Western Eucharistic liturgies shared little ritual shape or meaning with Jesus' first-century final meal with his close friends. Only a few scholars with access to Christianity's – and Judaism's – original languages and writings were fully aware of the differences. The Second Vatican Council provided an opportunity to correct this. Liturgical historians helped the bishops to recover some of the ritual "grammar" of the original event and to remember it with greater fidelity.

The Ritual Grammar of the Meal

The story starts with a meal shared around a table where friends have gathered to ponder and deepen their understanding of God's saving action. They always share bread and wine. They always use certain words handed down through generations from their original Teacher. They accept the witness of the first community gathered around this teacher: "he was known to them in the breaking of the bread" (Luke 24:35, RSV), and they still experience him as "with them."

The early Greek-speaking bishops used the word *mysterion* to refer to this sacred meal and to the other actions of Christ and his disciples which continued in the church. Primary among these were baptism and Eucharist. Our word "mystery" is a simple transliteration of the Greek, and the fundamental concept in Greek or English is, "I don't know how to explain it." That is not very helpful as a definition, but it was closer to the real meaning than the word the Latin Church began using in the 3rd century. The early Latin-speaking bishops didn't know how to translate the meaning of *mysterion* so they substituted the Latin *sacramentum*. This military term meant two aspects of induction into the Roman army: the oath of loyalty to the emperor and the tattoo which identified the soldier's unit. The oath and tattoo are concrete and observable things, and they may have been a harbinger of the theological literalism which overtook the Western sacramental imagination by the 9th century.

What were the Greeks trying to say by *mysterion*? The root of that word, *mus*, cannot be explained in words. To understand it, imagine how your face looks when you have just seen something amazing, either beautiful or terrible. Your jaw drops, your mouth opens, and you are the picture of "awe and wonder." That face and the inner experience that goes with it are what *mysterion* evokes. The challenge to contemporary formators, liturgists, and presiders is to perform the Church's sacred actions in settings and in ways that evoke awe, wonder, and joy in the community.

A celebrating community

The first document promulgated by the Second Vatican Council was the *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*. In paragraph 7 the Council addressed the meaning of Christ's presence in liturgical celebrations which, more than fifty years later, still has not been fully assimilated by clergy or people. Since the medieval period the Western church had a laser-like focus on the presence of Christ in the consecrated bread. The cult of Corpus Christi with its associated guilds and paraliturgical rites became deeply rooted in the Christian consciousness. In 1963, this first Council document reminded us that Christ is present not only in the Blessed Sacrament but in the person of the minister who presides in all the sacraments, in the Word proclaimed – whether by ordained or non-ordained ministers – and “when the Church prays and sings, for He promised: ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them’” [Matt. 18:20]² (SC 7). It had been long forgotten that the community gathered, praying, and eating and drinking together is the fundamental context of a Eucharistic celebration – or the celebration of any sacrament. The community itself is the first “word” spoken in the liturgy.

The Table

In the first Eucharistic celebration, the community gathered around a table. This may seem so obvious as to need no mention; but these invisible, taken-for-granted matters have the most powerful ramifications. In the United States we have a nationally observed secular feast we call “Thanksgiving.” It commemorates the abundance experienced by the original European settlers, who had learned from North American aboriginal people how to find and share the plants and game animals indigenous to this continent. As the story goes, at harvest time Europeans and Indians ate together around a shared table. This feast, which Americans observe annually – these days sometimes around tray tables watching a televised football game – makes sense to people as a metaphor for Eucharist. People understand a family gathered around a table of abundant foods provided by all and shared by all. They also understand the symbolic power of trying to include everyone, no matter how troublesome they may be. We know our tables are not just boards set up on supporting sticks. The table is a gathering place, a place of reconciliation and blessing where family comes together. After all, even Judas was welcome at that first table.

Well before the gospels were written, Paul had made an intuitive connection between Jesus' death on the eve of Passover and the paschal lamb slaughtered to save the Israelites from slavery: “Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our paschal lamb, has been sacrificed” (1

Cor 5:7). In this text he also recognises the connection with bread by using the word “leaven.” Clearly Christianity has understood from the very beginning that our shared table is also an altar of sacrifice. Dying and the mysterious transformation that takes place in the one who dies and in the community that remains are also implied in our ritual meaning-making.

For us today, what are the implications of these two metaphors for our sacred furniture? Does our altar-table resemble either an altar or a table? Both? Neither? Is it hidden by flowers or cloths or banner-like hangings? Has it become a table of convenience for cruets, song books, homily notes, or other clutter? Do the candles, crucifixes or other items required for the liturgy sit on it? Next to it? When do the needed things come to the table? Before, or when needed, for the Liturgy of the Eucharist? Who makes the decisions about all these things and who can begin a process of making the deep meaning of this ritual sign clearer?

Bread

The middle Eastern wild grasses that eventually became wheat were domesticated at least ten thousand years ago and had spread to what is now Europe well before Abram heard God say, “Go to the land that I will show you” (Gn 12:1). Every people on earth has its form of a rock-bottom basic food that even the poorest people can eat when there is nothing else. In the West that is wheat bread. The bread broken and shared at Jesus' last supper with his closest disciples may or may not have been wheat bread, since Passover coincided with the barley harvest. The point is that at every meal, including a *chaburah*, the leader first took a loaf of bread, broke it and said, “Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.” All answered, “Amen,” the broken bread was shared with everyone, and the meal was officially begun. These words are now familiar to us because the scholars designing the “new” liturgy after the Second Vatican Council inserted them into the preparation of gifts and table. Observant Jews still say them every time they eat bread.

This links the use of bread in our liturgies with the Last Supper, but it does not exhaust the meaning of bread. What else is there for us to “read”? Some people still bake their own bread, but most bread comes from the market. How did it get there? It was delivered by a truck from a bakery somewhere. The truck driver got it from bakers who used flour, water, yeast, sugar, salt, and oil. Those things came from farms in various places and were processed in various ways. Literally hundreds of people and products are involved in what we serve at our tables on any given day. The community presenting and offering its bread relies on a community of service far beyond the table. It is important to remember that community as present with us too.

For us today we need to ask ourselves, “How we can make it clear to the worshipping community what we are doing?” Is there a way to teach this generation so that they remember who and what is included in their sacred meal? Is there a way to prepare the bread so that it looks and tastes like bread? “The meaning of the sign demands that the material for the Eucharistic celebration truly have the appearance of food” (G.I.R.M. 321). Is there a way to present and share the bread so that its true meaning is uncovered? Who makes decisions about all these things and can begin a process of making this ritual sign clearer?

Wine in a single shared cup

Unlike bread, wine is not an ordinary food. It requires many seasons to establish a vineyard and harvest its first crop. It requires skilled care to prevent it from going wild and producing sour fruit. Once a crop is harvested, it takes a long time to crush the grapes, collect the juice, bottle and ferment it, and keep sediment from settling to the bottom. When it is finally ready, simply sharing a bottle of wine can produce its own problems, as any family with an alcoholic member will testify. Yet we boldly present it along with the bread at every Eucharist, following the tradition of Jesus and his disciples.

What is this ritual element saying to us as we present it alongside the bread? First of all, it is reinforcing our connection to the earth, to growing things, to natural processes and to the importance of not just slaking our thirst but of celebrating with a limited resource, “expensive” because it has cost us time, patience, and constant care while we wait for it to be transformed.

How do we communicate the significance of the final shared cup at Jesus’ last supper? We need to remember that it was “the blessing cup,” the single cup everyone drank from after the leader had completed the *Birkat Hamazon*. Our ritual approximation of this culminating moment of Jesus’ last meal has been made more difficult in recent years by the requirement of pouring all the Eucharistic wine into the number of cups needed before it is consecrated. Still, we must ask the question and continue teaching and creatively responding to this challenge.

How can we make it clearer to the worshipping community what we are doing with the wine? With the cup(s)? First of all, are we offering the cup to the community at all – for fear of spilling? For reasons of expense? For concern for alcoholics? If we are bringing forward sufficient wine for the gathered assembly, what kind of vessel is it carried in? A cruet? A wine bottle? A carafe or pitcher? What difference do these choices make? Finally, who makes decisions about all these things and can begin a process of revealing the true meaning of this ritual sign?

Putting it all together

To move our imaginations a bit, I would like to share two models for the actual preparation of gifts which have been personally helpful for me. The first comes from a parish in Chicago, Illinois. At the end of the Liturgy of the Word, the musicians begin a hymn and two altar servers bring candles from the central platform to the small table holding the gifts at the back of church. The servers then lead the gift bearers to the altar steps where the priest is waiting to receive them. When they arrive, the singing stops – although instrumental music continues – and the priest receives the bread and wine, holds them up, and hands each one to another server. When this is finished the hymn resumes. No words are spoken because the action itself speaks.

The second model comes from a parish in suburban Detroit, Michigan. At the beginning of Mass the altar is bare and the gifts are on a table near the church doors. During the collection, the servers dress the altar in a very unhurried manner with cloth, corporal, chalice, purificator and Missal. During this action, the processional cross comes from the altar platform and leads the gifts procession to the altar steps. The servers receive the gifts, and give them – bread first, then the pitcher of wine – to the presider, who is now standing at the altar. He takes great care in placing them on the corporal. All of this action is accompanied by an appropriate hymn. When I first saw this, what struck me was the great care taken by the servers. They moved almost like well-rehearsed dancers. Without words they clearly demonstrated that the altar was a sacred table and that they were preparing holy things for holy people.

There are a few things I do not like about these two models. The four accounts of the Last Supper in the New Testament – Matthew, Mark, Luke and Paul – all include Jesus’ four ritual actions: he took, blessed, broke and gave first the bread, then the cup of blessing to those present. The first of these, the “taking,” is signified by the community’s ritual preparation of gifts and table – presider and people together. In both of the models described above, servers are the intermediaries between the people’s gifts of bread and wine and placing them on the altar-table. This has the effect of clericalising the action and distancing the people from what they have prepared: “fruit of the earth and gift of human hands.”

These examples are two communities’ practical ways of arranging things, but having the gift bearers approach the altar and hand the bread and wine to the presider directly would communicate the meaning of what is happening more clearly. I have seen this done very effectively in the campus chapel of a Jesuit university in Detroit. During the collection, the sacristan prepares the necessary cloths on the altar. When all the gifts are ready a student brings forward the collected

money. After the presider receives it, it is taken to the sacristy. Then the bread on a paten is carried to the presider, who receives it and says the prayers silently. Next a pitcher of wine is given to the priest, who receives it and immediately puts wine and water into a chalice brought by the sacristan. Only then is it placed on the altar. The visual message is exactly what the General Instruction of the Roman Missal requires: “The bread and wine are placed on the altar by the priest (not servers or deacons) to the accompaniment of the prescribed formulas” (par. 75). That action demonstrates his role relative to the community, and the gift-bearers clearly retain their role as the holy people who bring the fruit of their labour to be blessed and shared by all.

Conclusion

My grandmother had a saying: “There’s more than one way to skin a cat.” That would be my final word to you. The ritual text we use as well as the gestures and meanings it conveys have traveled far from Jesus’ last supper and from the practice of the early church. There are many reasons for that – cultural changes, lack of education, human arrogance, political influences both inside and outside the Church and more. I believe that our task today is to be as faithful to the original meaning of the Eucharist as we can be within the limits of our understanding, our imagination, our freedom to initiate change, our ritual books, and the human relationships which govern all of it. I encourage you only to ponder what is here and to do what you can to make your community’s practice a little closer to what the Church intends when it invites us to take bread and wine, repeat the prayers modeled on Jesus’ words at his last supper and, fed by our transformed gifts, transform the world when we leave the building. There are many ways to do this. The blessing will be in discovering the one that is both faithful to the tradition and communicates clearly what we believe.

¹ http://www.answers.com/Q/What_is_chaburah, accessed April 2, 2016.

² Sacrosanctum Concilium, paragraph 7, The Basic Sixteen Documents, Vatican Council II, revised translation, edited by Austin Flannery, O.P. Costello Publishing Co., Northport, New York, 1996.



The Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene

by Dr Angela McCarthy

This year the Church in Australia has, through the Royal Commission, faced the enormity of the extent of the sexual abuse by clergy and the appalling depth of the damage done by the perpetrators and by those in authority who did not respond in the best way when faced with the issue. This has caused immeasurable pain at every level and, for some, the loss of their capacity to practise their faith as they had in the past. We all have to look for some way in which we can restore our Church and the faith of those who have been so deeply hurt. How do we make our faith present in a world wracked by war, poverty, famine, institutional abuse and other such evils? At times like this we need a hero, someone who will offer us inspiration and determination to do things differently with an enriched faith in the Risen Christ who has conquered all death and all evil. We need to behave as a resurrected Church!

In the person of Mary Magdalene we can see such a hero. She was determined, she was present with Christ in his life's work and in his death, and was chosen as the first to whom the Risen Lord appeared. As this is noted in all four gospels we can be assured of her real place in biblical history and her positive role in the early Christian community. She was the one chosen to be the apostle to the apostles, 'apostolorum apostola,' the one who ran to tell them that their Lord had risen. She did not give up when Jesus' body was not in the tomb but was determined to find him. She had witnessed the extreme degradation meted out by brutal Roman soldiers as they crucified him. She endured that and still sought him even though most of the others ran away in fear. When she did see him the four evangelists offer us differing interpretations. Matthew describes Mary Magdalene and the 'other Mary' as being 'filled with great awe and great joy' as they ran to tell the disciples. On their way they encounter Jesus and their response is to fall at his feet and worship him (Matt 28:8-9). In Mark's gospel, Mary Magdalene goes to the tomb with Mary the mother of James, and Salome, to anoint Jesus' body but finds the tomb empty except for an angel who tells them he is risen and they are to go to Galilee to see him. The three women are terrified and run away and say nothing to anyone (Mk 16:8). A different ending (perhaps added later) says that Jesus appeared to Mary of Magdala but when she went to tell his companions they did not believe her. Jesus then appeared to two disciples who were on their way to the country and they went back and told the others but were not believed either! Jesus finally appeared to the Eleven and 'reproached them for their incredulity and obstinacy' (Mk 16:14). Luke similarly recounts Mary of Magdala, Joanna and Mary the mother of James finding the empty tomb and returning to tell the others that he had risen but they were not believed as their story 'seemed pure nonsense' (Lk 24:11). In John's gospel (20:1-29) there is a much longer and more detailed account. Mary, on finding the empty

tomb, goes to tell the others and Peter and the beloved disciple return to the tomb with her. When they found the tomb empty as Mary had said, they return home, but Mary remains, determined to find what had happened to his body. She is confronted by two angels who ask her why she is crying. She turns around as if to answer them and sees a man whom she supposes to be the gardener since she is in a garden. She does not recognise him until he calls her name and her life changes. Now she is called to the same intimacy with God as Jesus has shown in his life as he says he is returning to 'my Father and your Father, my God and your God' (Jn 20:18).

As Church we need to embrace the fact that we have been called through our baptism to behave as resurrected people called to an intimate relationship with our Father through the power of the Holy Spirit in the resurrection of the Son. We need to restore our ability to answer to this call and who better to lead us in this action than Mary of Magdala?

The decree

On 3 June 2016, a decree emanated from the Congregation for Divine Worship in regard to the Feast Mary Magdalene.¹

The Church, both in the East and in the West has always regarded Saint Mary Magdalene the first witness of the Lord's resurrection and the first evangelist, and with the greatest reverence has always honoured her although in diverse ways.

Given that in our time the Church is called to reflect in a more profound way on the dignity of Woman, on the New Evangelisation and on the greatness of the Mystery of Divine Mercy, it seemed right that the example of Saint Mary Magdalene might also fittingly be proposed to the faithful. In fact this woman, known as the one who loved Christ and who was greatly loved by Christ, and was called a "witness of Divine Mercy" by Saint Gregory the Great and an "apostle of the apostles" by Saint Thomas Aquinas, can now rightly be taken by the faithful as a model of women's role in the Church.

Therefore the Supreme Pontiff Pope Francis has established that from now on the celebration of Saint Mary Magdalene should be inscribed in the General Roman Calendar with the rank of Feast rather than Memorial as is presently the case.

The new rank of celebration does not involve any change of the day on which the celebration itself takes place and, as for the liturgical texts, the following is to be observed:

- a) The day dedicated to the celebration of Saint Mary Magdalene remains the same as it appears in the Roman Calendar, that is 22 July.
- b) The texts to be used in the Mass and in the Divine Office remain the same as those



The Witness Courtney Spence, Ink on Hahnemuhle paper, Intaglio Etching. Finalist Mandorla Art Award 2016.

contained in the Missal and in the Liturgy of the Hours on the day of the Feast, with the addition in the Missal of a proper Preface, attached to this Decree. It will be the responsibility of the Conferences of Bishops to translate the text of the Preface into the vernacular language so that, having received the approval of the Apostolic See, it can be used and in due time included in the next reprint of the Roman Missal.

Where, according to particular law, Saint Mary Magdalene is legitimately celebrated on a different day and as a Solemnity, this day and rank remains as before.

This decree is very important for the Roman Rite from three aspects: the increased liturgical importance, the dignity and truth of Mary of Magdala's history, and the increased understanding and respect for the role of women in the Church.

Liturgical Importance

In the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (CSL),² the first document of the Second Vatican Council, the liturgical year is given new emphasis and carefully refined. This refining process meant that many saints were pruned from the General Roman Calendar as over the centuries it had become encrusted with honours for people who, in some cases, could not be historically proven to have existed.³

Following CSL, a further explanation was given in 1969 in *The General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar (GNLYC)*.⁴ Celebrations are divided into three groups in order of importance: solemnities, feast and memorials.⁵ Liturgically, solemnities are celebrated with evening prayer, vigil Mass and Mass of the day. Feasts are celebrated within the limits of the natural day, and memorials are either obligatory or optional.⁶ The solemnities focus on the major parts of Christ's life and titles, or a special saint.

In the liturgical year, the principal celebrations are those of Christ and the mysteries of redemption.⁷ The Church also honours Mary, the Mother of God, in a special way and there are Feast Days dedicated to her honour, some of them solemnities.⁸ The celebration of the saints and martyrs are included because they are raised up through God's grace. "By celebrating their passage from earth to heaven the Church proclaims the paschal mystery achieved in the saints, who have suffered and been glorified with Christ".⁹ It is usual to celebrate particular saints on the day that they died or, if that is unknown, the day that their relics were installed in a particular place.

These feasts are celebrated within the flow of the liturgical year. God's time is not just a linear sense of history through which we travel but is the celebration of God's presence, through the actions of Christ, in the world, now. The special seasons of Advent,

Christmas, Lent, the Triduum and Eastertide give form to the General Calendar. There are two parts to the General Calendar, the temporal cycle which moves through the special seasons, and the sanctoral cycle when we celebrate the saints who have been born into eternal life through their lives graced by God. These two cycles within the calendar "are concurrent – independent of one another, but not necessarily mutually exclusive – since all our liturgies celebrate the paschal mystery."¹⁰ In addition to the General Calendar local dioceses are allowed to have a particular calendar. It will include occasions such as the dedication of a cathedral, or of the parish church. These then become important celebrations for the local community (GNLYC 48-55). Mary Magdalene's day of honour, 22 July, has now been raised to a Feast Day. She is the only woman other than Mary, the Mother of God, who has a Feast celebrated in her honour. This honour, finally given to the Apostle to the Apostles, "apostolorum apostola",¹¹ is an important change. The reform of the liturgical calendar that happened in 1969 changed the prayers and readings to focus on her role as the first witness to the resurrection, not as a penitent sinner.

As an indication of her increased level of importance a Preface for the Eucharistic Prayer has been written specifically for her Feast. Following the initial translation, this has now progressed to the green book stage:¹²

Preface: Apostle to the Apostles

It is truly right and just,
our duty and our salvation,
to glorify you in all things, almighty Father,
whose mercy is no less than your power,
through Christ our Lord.

He appeared in the garden
and revealed himself to Mary Magdalene,
for she had loved him while he was alive,
seen him dying on the Cross,
sought him as he lay in the tomb,
and was the first to adore him, newly risen from the dead.
He honored her with the task of being an apostle to
the Apostles,
so that the good news of new life
might reach the ends of the earth.
And so, Lord, with all the Angels and Saints,
we, too, give you thanks, as in exultation we acclaim:
Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

The presidential prayers richly embrace this new feast as we see in the Collect:

O God, whose Only Begotten Son
entrusted Mary Magdalene before all others
with announcing the great joy of the Resurrection,
grant, we pray,
that through her intercession and example
we may proclaim the living Christ

and come to see him reigning in your glory. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

And again in the Prayer after Communion:

May the holy reception of your mysteries, Lord, instill in us that persevering love with which Saint Mary Magdalene clung resolutely to Christ her Master. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

Once appropriate translations have moved through the various stages and are approved the new texts will be added into the any further reprints on the Roman Missal.

Historical Importance

The raising of Mary Magdalene's feast day to the rank of Feast is also important for the restoration of the dignity and truth of her own history. The Eastern Orthodox Tradition has always held St Mary Magdalene in high regard and there has been no confusion as to her role and there has been no conflation of texts.

In recent times perhaps the most serious damage to the character of Mary Magdalene was by Dan Brown in his novel *The Da Vinci Code*.¹³ His portrayal of the character of Mary Magdalene was completely erroneous and has been absorbed into popular culture. As early as the third century a homily on the 'Song of Songs' attributed to Hippolytus, (died 235CE) suggested that the bride prefigures Mary and Martha who seek Jesus in the garden near his tomb. This conflates Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany and he calls them apostles.¹⁴ The application of this term to both Mary and Martha shows a broader understanding than simply referring to the twelve but perhaps suggests a high level of dignity in their relationship to the early Christian community.

Two centuries later Gregory the Great caused a diversion between the East and West traditions by conflating the story of Mary Magdalene with the unnamed woman in Luke's gospel (7:36-50).¹⁵ The woman in Luke 7 is known as a public sinner but is unnamed. In the next chapter of Luke, Jesus is described as going through towns and villages preaching and accompanied by the Twelve and 'certain women', one of whom is Mary Magdalene 'from whom seven demons had gone out' (8:2). Gregory the Great then casts Mary's seven demons as the seven deadly sins which were not even named until the middle ages. Centuries later, the character of Mary Magdalene was turned into a cultish devotion when Pope Innocent III at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215) helped reform penitential theology and included her in his homiletic emphasis on penance.¹⁶ This development was beneficial in that there was a real focus of a real person to absorb the frailty of the human person and the need for penitence. Her

penitence was so profound that she was chosen to be the first witness of the resurrection. There are many artworks of superb beauty that image Mary Magdalene and her relationship to the Risen Christ, many of them termed 'Noli me tangere' or the 'penitent Magdalene'. This emphasis was clearly of benefit to people struggling with accepting their sinfulness in the eyes of the Church. While there are weaknesses in the interpretation of Scripture that lead to this image of the Magdalene, her noble position as the perfect penitent would have been of benefit to the Church at the time.

This divergent representation of Mary Magdalene continued until recent declarations to the contrary. It is no longer necessary to retain this gospel interpretation as we can see that Mary of Magdala was a woman of faith chosen by Jesus Christ to be the first witness to the resurrection.

The role of women in the 21st Century Church

In the gospels, we can see that women were active witnesses to the reality of the resurrection as well as to the work and support of Jesus in his Galilean ministry. Despite patriarchal dominance for the past 1900 years, women have continued to contribute to the Church in a faith filled manner but have been denied full representation in decision-making positions. Since Pope Francis was elected there have been some welcome changes and women have been appointed to the International Theological Commission and hold five of the thirty positions. Also, welcome discussion into the possibility of women deacons is now apparent. In 1999 a report into the participation of women in the Catholic Church in Australia was published.¹⁷ This presents a thorough view of women's activities and support of the Church but notes that two 'obvious elements in the pattern of this history', are the 'ongoing involvement of women in the mission of the Church beyond the home and the desire of women to be accepted as fully-functioning adults, seriously included in the decision-making processes of the Church'.¹⁸ Inclusion of women in the Church in decision-making leadership positions is slowly being realised in Australia but the social structure of the Church is still patriarchal and clerical. The development of women in tertiary theological studies was only available in the 1980s as the Australian Church limited theology to seminaries. This is unlike other places in the English speaking world where all lay people have been welcome throughout much of the 20th Century to do theology in Catholic universities.

Recent research has aligned the scourge of sexual abuse by clergy with the particular culture and socialisation of male clerics.¹⁹ Where there is a culture of God seen as male - Father, Son and male Holy Spirit, and that those who have authority derive their titles from God language, real change will require a change in the socialisation of male dominated leadership and a true respect for women and their

potential leadership roles. This will necessarily change the culture of the Church.

With Mary Magdalene as a focus, and the reality of women in the early Church clearly in leadership, we can perhaps be rid of the demonization of women. We can be rid of institutions of oppression of unmarried women being named after Mary Magdalene and perhaps we can move to a place where life is respected, treasured and fulfilled. The memory of Mary Magdalene has been used to obfuscate and collude with sexual abuse problems where the blame was laid on the woman and often she and the children suffered dreadfully in Church institutions. These attitudes of shame could be turned into attitudes of resurrection. Androcentric interpretations of how women should behave and decisions made entirely by men about women's roles need to be a thing of the past. We could have a new vision where the ranking of St Mary Magdalene as a solemnity and feast could lead us to change the memory, change the systemic bias against women and move to a place where the contribution of women could be honoured and valued, not just in words, but in structures and processes that include women of capability.

Endnotes

- ¹ Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, "Decree: St Mary Magdalene," ed. Robert Cardinal Sarah (Rome 2016).
- ² Second Vatican Council, "Sacrosanctum Concilium," (1963), http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html.
- ³ Cheslyn Jones et al., eds., *The Study of Liturgy*, Revised ed. (London: SPCK, 1992).
- ⁴ Congregation for Divine Worship, "General Norms for the Liturgical Year and the Calendar," (1969), <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Calendar/Info/GNLY.pdf>.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, 10-14.
- ⁷ Second Vatican Council. 102.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 103.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 104.
- ¹⁰ Rita Thiron, *Preparing Parish Liturgies: A Guide to Resources* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2004), 165.
- ¹¹ Arthur Roche, "Mary Magdalene: Apostle of the Apostles," *Salt and Light Media* (2016), <http://saltandlighttv.org/blog/saints-and-blesseds/mary-magdalene-apostles-of-the-apostles-archbishop-arthur-roche>.
- ¹² The International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL), *The Roman Missal and the Liturgy of the Hours Supplement* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016), 9-11. Once the green book has been passed then it moves to the grey book and onto the white book after which it is finally accepted for the Roman Missal.
- ¹³ Dan Brown, *The Da Vinci Code (USA: Doubleday, 2003)*.
- ¹⁴ Katherine Ludwig Jansen, *The Making of the Magdalen* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 29.
- ¹⁵ Homily 33 is recorded in *Homiliarum in evangelia*, Lib. II, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 76 (Paris: J.P. Migne, 1844-1864), cols. 1238-1246. Christopher Witcombe, "Mary Magdalen, the Gospels, and the Church," *Art History Resource* (2004), <http://arthistoryresources.net/ARTHgothic.html#Manuscripts>.
- ¹⁶ Jansen, 199.
- ¹⁷ Marie Macdonald et al., *Woman and Man: One in Christ Jesus* (Sydney: Harper Collins Religious, 1999), Report on the Participation of Women in the Catholic Church in Australia.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.
- ¹⁹ Jane Anderson, "Socialization Processes and Clergy Offenders," *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 25, no. 8 (2016); "Comprehending and Rehabilitating Roman Catholic Clergy Offenders of Child Sexual Abuse," *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* (2015), <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/10538712.2015.1077367>.