

**LIFE OF ST. MARY
MAGDALEN. TRANSLATED
FROM ITALIAN**

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Life of St. Mary Magdalen. Translated from Italian by Bishop McCloskey

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BISHOP MCCLOSKEY

**LIFE OF ST. MARY
MAGDALEN. TRANSLATED
FROM ITALIAN**

TO THE
SISTER MAGDALENS OF BETHANY

AT THE

CONVENT OF ST. MARY OF THE ANGELS,

LOUISVILLE, KY.,

THE FIRST AMERICAN CONVENT

OF THE

SISTERS OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD,

This Life of St. Mary Magdalen is
respectfully dedicated.



INTRODUCTION.

AMONG the many holy women whose souls now enjoy the blessed vision of God in Paradise, whose steps we should follow, to whom we should direct our thoughts, and by whom our souls should be guided, we may safely say, that, next to the Mother of God, Saint Mary Magdalen shines forth resplendent with heavenly beauty. For if the heroic virtues and heavenly gifts which our Lord bestowed on them here below be a token of the splendor of their glory in their home beyond the skies, what holy woman, after the Blessed Mother of God, can we fancy higher up in the heavenly court than sweet Mary Magdalen; her soul overflowing with celestial joy, the friend of JESUS, who, from the moment she fell at His feet and bathed them with tears of penitent love, poured out on her devoted, loving soul the richest treasures of divine grace.

Mary Magdalen hearkened to the words of Christ and was converted to a better life. She did not wait for the morrow, but as soon as she felt that her heart had been touched by divine grace, she rose up at once, and sought Him who alone could heal the wounds of her soul, and bring comfort to a heart that now so earnestly yearned for

it. She was the first penitent who went to JESUS for the forgiveness of her sins. She finds Him at the house of Simon the Pharisee, pays no heed to the presence of the guests who were there, but with the sole thought that He alone could cure her, she throws herself at His feet, bedews them with tears of penitential love, wipes them with her luxuriant hair, and silently awaits from the lips of JESUS those tender words of forgiveness which she knows He will pronounce over her. Many sins are forgiven her, because she loved much. Happy soul! whose tears of mingled love and sorrow drew from the lips of Christ those blessed words; words which won for Magdalen not only the love but the friendship of JESUS CHRIST. From that moment those two hearts were knit together in a friendship so peculiarly beautiful, so true and tender, that the world has never seen anything like it.

Magdalen follows Him as He goes about preaching and doing good to all; she weeps over Him at the foot of the Cross, seeks Him as He lies in the sepulchre, and is the first to see Him after His Resurrection. JESUS converted her. He defends and excuses her to the Pharisee, to her sister Martha, and later on to the disciples. When she weeps over her brother's death, JESUS mingles His tears with hers. "And JESUS wept." In the garden He calls her by name, Mary! and swift as an arrow from the bow she is at the feet of Him she loved to call Lord and Master. He creates her His Ambassador, visits her in her cave when her time of penance is over, and calls her to heaven. Oh! happy penance that merited JESUS' love, and had for its exceeding great reward the glory of the elect, the eternal vision of God in Paradise. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God has pre-

pared for those who love Him. If, then, Mary Magdalen was so near and dear to Christ on earth, why not now also in heaven? If her faith was so great here below, why shall not the vision of God's beauty be all the greater above the skies? and if her love was so intense, so burning in her earthly life, why should not the radiant splendor that surrounds this child of benediction be all the greater in that life which will never end? If on earth Christ honored Mary Magdalen with the apostolic dignity by making her His Ambassador, why should He not have exalted her to a corresponding rank by conferring on her a dignity which raises her above that of all other women save and except the Blessed Mother of God.

If on earth Magdalen was so dear a friend and companion to the sweet Mother of JESUS, why should she not be just as intimately united to her in heaven, resplendent with that glory which her Saviour has thrown around her whose sins He forgave, whom He honored with His friendship because she loved much? If so sharp and protracted, after her sins had been forgiven, was dear Mary Magdalen's earthly penance above that of any other woman, why, on the other hand, and in view of JESUS' deep, personal friendship for this singularly holy penitent; why, I say, should not her glory, her lofty dignity, and her heavenly consolation surpass that of all others save Heaven's Sinless Queen?

The ardent love for her Heavenly Spouse with which Mary Magdalen's soul was inflamed during life, and the immense glory which, through His divine condescension, she now enjoys in the heavenly paradise; the influence she has with Him for whom, in her cave at St. Maximins, she breathed out that life which was lived for Him, and for Him alone, these things may well make us turn with

confidence to her loving intercession, with the full assurance that her prayers will be heard. We may then safely say, that a true follower of this sweet Queen of Penitents, gifted as she was by such rich and abundant graces, may walk securely on her way to heaven; feeling confident that, by following closely in Magdalen's footsteps, her heart is always pleasing to her Divine Spouse.

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