



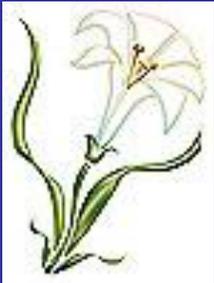
The Marian Journal

Keeping members and friends of the
Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos informed.

SPECIAL EASTERTIDE EDITION

April 2010

Volume 2, Number 2



Eastertide ~

**The Easter
season,
extending from
Easter to
Ascension Day,
Whitsunday, or
Trinity Sunday.**



**Dom Robert,
O.S.S.T.
Bishop-Abbot**

Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos

(Ordo Sanctissimae Theotokos, O.S.S.T.)

Abbot's Easter Message

My Dear O.S.S.T. Family and Friends,

During this Easter season we celebrate the most important doctrine of the Church... the resurrection of the dead. This Easter mystery of Jesus Christ's dying and rising is what we celebrate each Sunday at the Eucharist as we profess, "we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." In celebrating Christ's death and resurrection, we must be certain that we also include our own death and resurrection. If we fail to do this, we fail to Believe in the fullness of the Easter mystery.

When St. Paul preached to the Christians living in Corinth about the truth of the dying and rising of Jesus, he was aware that, though these Christians believed in Jesus' rising from the dead, they did not include themselves. Saint Paul reminded them, "If the dead do not rise, neither has Christ risen; and if Christ has not risen, vain is your faith, for you are still in your sin...if with this life only in view, we have had hope in Christ, we are of all the most to be pitied." (I Cor. 15:13, 19)

In his teaching, St. Paul is clear in pointing out this inconsistency in these first believers. If we humans believe we die and do not rise, then it makes no sense to believe that Jesus rose from the dead. Jesus is like us in all things but sin. Jesus is the first fruit of our victory over sin and death. His resurrection is the guarantee of our own resurrection.

We live in an age of a death culture. More than ever, we need to believe in the complete doctrine of the resurrection. If all our striving in our Christian life to promote health and life has been to merely be happy in this world, we are, as St. Paul says, the most foolish and miserable of all people.

During the Easter season we repeat more often the prayer of St. Peter when he and the other disciples were tossed by the angry waves of the sea. As St. Peter, walking on the water, began to sink, he cried out, "Lord save me!" Jesus at once stretched out his hand and took hold of him, "Oh, you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Today, you are the heirs of a great tradition. Each one of you has been called by Christ to preach the Gospel by word and example and so make known to those among whom you live the message of salvation. "You are the light of the world and the salt of the earth," as Jesus said to his disciples.



For the Celtic Christian, there was no divided church. We walk today in that truth: one Lord, one spirit, one baptism.



***Rev. Mother Alys
Spiritual Director
Aisling
Community***



In the Celtic tradition the Holy Spirit is represented as a bird, but not the peaceful and serene dove landing on Jesus at his baptism. For their symbol of the Holy Spirit, the Celtic Christians chose the Wild Goose (A' ghèadh allta in Scots Gaelic).

At the very heart of the Gospel is the person of Jesus Christ and the great mystery of his death and resurrection in which we share through faith and baptism. Faith is not so much what you believe as who you believe in and who you put your hope and trust in. In his Passion and Crucifixion Jesus has shown us what great love the Father has for us and in his Resurrection we discover his desire to share his very life with us through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Created in the image of the Holy Trinity, we have been saved and sanctified by the same Triune God, who is the source of our being, the purpose of our life and the end of our existence.

I wish you all a very happy and grace-filled Easter. May the good Lord bless you and all your loved ones, living and dead, with the joy of new life. Totus Tuus.

Your Servant in Christ,

Dom Robert, O.S.S.T.
Bishop-Abbot

Maundy Thursday Sermon

If I could say one thing to you this evening it would be:

Don't listen to me. Don't listen to a word I say. Don't look at the priests and the servers and the softly lit glint of silver, and the curls of incense, don't listen to the soft and gentle night, don't look at the moon, the same full moon that shone all those years ago in Palestine, over Jerusalem, through the branches of the ancient olive trees of the Garden of Gethsemane...

It is all here for you. He is here for you. He is here with you. You know they say Put your hand in the hand of the man who changed the water? If you go to do that tonight, you will find a towel in his hand, and then a piece of bread, and later a cup of wine: Tonight He will sing a hymn, and pray, and speak mysteriously compelling words. Tonight He will wrestle his human fear and his love of the Father till the sweat runs like blood on his face. Tonight, angels will comfort him. Tonight a friend will come, a friend for whom He prayed, a close friend.

Tomorrow that hand will hold a bruised reed, tomorrow those hands will be bound: and tomorrow a cross beam, and tomorrow a nail... and tomorrow the hand of His mother, and His friend, and the hand of Mary Magdalene, and Joseph and Nicodemus...

Tonight it is your hand. Your hand in His.

Let yourself walk with Him, ask Him what He means, and what He feels, and why He does this.

Open your eyes, stretch them, watch Him as He walks through this night, watch him as he bends to wash your feet, it is all here, written in the things done, the songs sung, the bending and the kneeling. Let yourself smell Jerusalem, let yourself sit near the table, and listen to the disciples quarrelling about who is greatest, walk with Him in the dusk, hear the Olive Trees stirring in the evening breeze.

Think for a moment. If you were one of those with Him, what would you want



Jesus said that those Christians who were led by the Spirit were like the wind — you don't know where it comes from and you don't know where it's going. A Christian who follows the wild goose is wild and free themselves. They have lives that are less than predictable. They live life to the full (John 10:10). They are wild and free, untamable either by society that would bind them with lies or by denominations that would chain them with duty and obligation.



to do, what would you want to have said? If you were the angel comforting Him, would you speak of those to come, those who would love Him, those who would share His suffering? Would you tell Him, perhaps, that what He has done this night, and will do would save your life, would turn you around and give you hope and love? Will you thank Him that He has given you life and strength, perhaps?

See the disciples sleeping, sleep yourselves, hear the voice of friends, hear the Kiss of friends...

The truth is in the story, and, because the truth is living, because the truth is beside you as He is beside no one else, only you can write the story as He tells it to you. May you write it in the flesh of your life, in the pattern of your love for others, in the vision of your service, day by day.

See. Taste. Feel. Listen.

Taste and see how gracious the Lord is.

If I could say one thing this night, it would be:

Don't listen to me. Listen to yourselves. Listen to Him.

- Reverend Mother Alys, Maundy Thursday 2010

Reverend Mother Alys is the Spiritual Director of the Aisling Community in Mt. Roskill, Auckland, New Zealand. The Aisling Community is a Celtic Christian community within the Fellowship of the Holy Theotokos. To learn more, visit the Aisling Community web site at: <http://www.aisling.org.nz/>

Aisling Community



The “Real” Mary Magdalene: an Easter Witness

(NOTE: This Faith Journal, written by Ray Waddle, originally appeared in the April 2006 edition of the "Presbyterian Voice". Its message is still relevant today.)

The first time I really noticed Mary Magdalene, she was in Jesus Christ Superstar, the rock opera that premiered 35 years ago. She was the racy gal with the hit song (I Don't Know How to Love Him). She was unabashedly a prostitute.



***Wherefore I say
to thee, her sins,
many as they are,
shall be forgiven
her, because she
has loved much . .
" (Luke 7:47)***



***From the moment
of her conversion,
St. Mary
Magdalene was
exceptionally
favored by Our
Lord. After most
of His friends had
deserted Him, she
stood at the foot
of the Cross,
assisted at His
burial and was
the first recorded
witness of the
Resurrection.
Only the Blessed
Mother would
have seen her
Son first,
although the New
Testament does
not mention such
an appearance.***

This came as a (thrilling) shock to us teens. But I figured it was an accurate portrayal confirmed by the New Testament. No one would make up stuff that wasn't in the Bible, right?

Eventually I discovered the truth. Mary Magdalene is nowhere described as a prostitute in scripture. Yet such overheated fantasies about the Magdalene have persisted for nearly 2,000 years — Mary the whore, or Mary the wealthy blue-blood, even Mary the bearer of Jesus' child who escaped to France and whose descendants live there in secret even now.

None of it's in the Bible or officially taught by the churches. Yet speculation about Mary Magdalene has never been greater. We might ask why.

Year 2006 is shaping up to be her crowning year. We've seen a wave of new books, studies and magazine covers about her. Her biggest boost comes next month with the release of the movie version of the blockbuster novel *The Da Vinci Code* by Dan Brown. This fictional page-turner — part thriller, part conspiracy theory, part anti-Vatican position paper — retells the old legend that Mary was the true chief disciple of Jesus but was suppressed by Peter and other male founders of the church and so fled to Europe and raised the divine family in scintillating secrecy.

This is all very fascinating. It is also beside the point. The trouble with heavy-breathing theorizing about Mary is it distracts from the world-bending importance of the Easter story itself and, ironically, clouds Mary Magdalene's matchless role in it.

There aren't many New Testament references to Mary, but she is always listed first in the gospel lists of female followers of Jesus. In Luke, she is described as a person cured of seven demons. She apparently was a woman of means who helped Jesus "out of her resources." Most of all, Mary was one of the first persons — in some reports, the very first — to encounter the Risen Lord on Easter morning. In John's Gospel, standing loyally at the empty tomb, she had the first experience of the Resurrection. She ran and told Peter and the rest. She became the disciple to the disciples.

Yet her impact, her Resurrection faith, were unjustly minimized. A new biography of Mary, by scholar/minister Bruce Chilton, complains that Mary's role as an anointer, healer and Resurrection witness was nearly erased from the biblical record because of the early church's ambivalence toward women. That the Risen Lord appeared first to a woman embarrassed the male dominated church.

So she was turned into a prostitute as a way to demote her. Church folklore invented slurs and fabricated "facts." The Bible suggests she was a single woman with money? Then let's insist she made her money by prostitution. And let's also insist that the anonymous female "sinner" in Luke 7, the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears — well, let's just stipulate (without evidence) that her sin was harlotry, and her name was Mary Magdalene.

Chilton believes Christian history might have been different — less male centered and gender-obsessed — if Mary had been given her due. Her gifts as a visionary might have flourished. Her style might have founded a branch of the church, much like Peter's.

What we do have meanwhile is the gospel record. It was produced closer to



Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of death. Amen.



the Easter scene than the medieval rumors and Gnostic texts that now preoccupy spiritual seekers and give the alternative history of Mary new life.

What all this buzz about Mary Magdalene has made me do is return to the gospels themselves and confront again the overwhelming experience of that first Easter. Scandalous secrets about Mary are a brightly-lit side show, kids' stuff compared to the demanding adventure of living an Easter faith.

She was there, and her witness puts us there.

Mary Delighted in the Fullness of the Paschal Joy



The Gospels mention various appearances of the risen Christ, but not a meeting between Jesus and his Mother. This silence must not lead to the conclusion that after the Resurrection Christ did not appear to Mary; rather it invites us to seek the reasons why the Evangelists made such a choice.

It seems reasonable to think that Mary, as the image and model of the Church which waits for the Risen One and meets him in the group of disciples during his Easter appearances, had had a personal contact with her risen Son, so that she too could delight in the fullness of paschal joy.

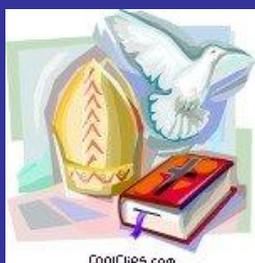
The unique and special character of the Blessed Virgin's presence at Calvary and her perfect union with the Son in his suffering on the Cross seem to postulate a very particular sharing on her part in the mystery of the Resurrection.

John Paul II
General Audience of May 21, 1997

NOTE: A Moment with Mary is a brief daily email sent free of charge by the "Mary of Nazareth" Association, to discover each day a new aspect of the Mother of God. For information about how you can subscribe to "A Moment with Mary" (Daily Email) visit <http://www.mariedenazareth.com/7110.0.html?L=1>

Two New Postulants Join the Order and One New Candidate Prepares to Make Her Promise

Father Roberto Alonso Sosa, an Old Catholic priest from Somers, New York participated in the Rite of Blessing and Reception of a Postulant on March 6, 2010 and made his Promise as a Postulant.



“The joyful news that He is risen does not change the contemporary world. Still before us lie work, discipline, sacrifice. But the fact of Easter gives us the spiritual power to do the work, accept the discipline, and make the sacrifice.”
~Henry Knox Sherrill



Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos

Jeremy (Josh) Jay Salquenettii, a former Dominican Novitiate from Tigard, Oregon participated in the Rite of Blessing and Reception of a Postulant on March 25, 2010, and made his Promise as a Postulant.

Deacon Denise Boley Long, from Odessa Texas holds dual membership as a postulant in the *Community of St. Ita and St. Fillan*, one of our sister communities in the Fellowship of the Holy Theotokos. Denise was ordained to the diaconate in the Anglican Diocese of the Southwest. Denise will participate in the Rite of Blessing and Reception of a Postulant on a date to be set in the near future.

Congratulations to our new and prospective members of the Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos on this wonderful occasion... Welcome!



Message from the Abbot

Dear O.SS.T. Family and Friends,

~ *Totus Tuus* ~ "Totally Yours"

Monastic life is distinct from the "religious orders" such as the friars, canons regular, clerks regular, and the more recent congregations. Both ways of living out the Christian life are regulated by the respective Church law of those Christian denominations that recognize it (e.g. the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox Church, the Anglican Church, or the Lutheran Church).

While many people think of the Christian monastic life as "living in a religious community", its purpose is not always communal living with like-minded Christians. Rather, the purpose is many times perpetual training that is meant to help those Christians who feel called to dedicate their life to God. This is in accordance with the perfect example given by Jesus and following his exhortation to "be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect." (Gospel of Matthew 5:48) This ideal, also called the state of perfection, is expressed everywhere that the things of God are sought above all other things. This can be seen, for example, in the *Philokalia*, a book of monastic writings.

For a monk, asceticism is not an end in itself. For him or her the end of life is to love God. Monastic asceticism then means the removal of obstacles to loving God, and what these obstacles are is clear from the nature of love itself. Love is the union of wills. If the creature is to love God, he or she can do it in one way only; by sinking his or her own will in God's, by doing the will of God in all things: "if you love Me you will keep my commandments". (Gospel of

***Our Lady of
Peace Abbey,
Atlanta, GA.***

***Our Lady of
Divine Providence
Abbey,
Roanoke, VA***

***Our Lady of
Solitude Abbey,
Mayer, AZ***

***Abbey of Our
Lady and
Benedict,
Lancs. UK***

***Abbey of Our
Lady of Grace,
New Port Richey,
FL***

Hayward, CA

***Our Lady of
Perpetual Hope
Abbey
Pasadena, CA***

Somers, NY

***Saint Francis the
Good Shepherd
Abbey
Tigard, OR***

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John 14:15) Monks remember that: "The greatest way to show love for friends is to die for them" (John 15:13), for in their case life has come to mean renunciation. Broadly speaking this renunciation has three great branches corresponding to the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Although monks take the vows of chastity, poverty and obedience, it must be clearly understood that the monastic order differs from other later developments of the religious life in one fundamental point. The latter have essentially some special work or aim, such as preaching, teaching, or other forms of secular work, which occupies a large place in their activities and to which many of the observances of the monastic life have to give way. Monks of the Order of the Most Holy Mary Theotokos have actually undertaken external labors of the most varied character, but in every case this work is extrinsic to the essence of the monastic state. Christian monasticism has varied greatly in its external forms, but, broadly speaking, it has two main species (a) the eremitical or solitary, (b) the cenobitical or family types. St. Anthony may be called the founder of the first and St. Pachomius of the second.

Today Christian monasticism is experiencing renewal in the form of several new foundations with an 'inter-Christian' vision for their respective communities. Additional expressions of ecumenical monasticism can be seen not only in our own community, but within the many communities of the Fellowship of the Holy Theotokos as well.

While we remain a relatively small community when compared to some of the more traditional cloistered Orders, we have nonetheless come a long way since our meager beginning in September of last year when we founded this small remnant community. Yes, we have grown in number. From the three charter founding members, we have now grown to ten. But more importantly....more important than numbers, we have grown in Spirit and in Truth. And for that I am thankful to Almighty God and the Ever Blessed Virgin Mary for leading and guiding us in the way we should go.

As we celebrate the Easter Season and the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ, let also celebrate this faith-filled family's resurrection, and the many blessings that we have received at His hand.

Wishing You God's Peace and Abundant Blessings,

Dom + Robert - Bishop-Abbot, O.S.S.T.



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