

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Jul 22nd 2017

Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene

Love certainly plays a key role, one could even say the dominant role, in our walk with Jesus. Mary Magdalene provides us with an amazing example of how we should live out love in our lives.

In Solomon's Song of Songs, we are provided with a look at love in perhaps the best way that we could possibly understand true love in our world - the love found in a marriage relationship. It is no coincidence the Jesus often used marriage to help us understand His love for us - His bride, the Church. The pure spontaneous love described in the first part of chapter 3 of that book speaks of a love from the heart that drives one to seek out the focus of that love. A perfect picture of Jesus seeking us.

In Second Corinthians, Paul reminds us of that kind of love – the kind that Jesus demonstrated for us as He died for our sins. Jesus profoundly demonstrated the kind of love found in the Song of Songs where one no longer lives for oneself, but for the one we love. The kind of love that makes us a new creation, a creation that begins to understand that love really is the fulfilling answer for how we should seek to live out our lives each and every day.

Psalm 63 speaks clearly and eloquently to the reality of that new creation, the one where we become “all in” for Christ. It speaks to an unquenchable thirst for God's love and His presence in our life.

While these and many other passages throughout God's word provide us with powerful insight into God's love for us, we return to Mary Magdalene to see a near perfect example of what that kind of love might look like in reality, even in our own reality. Mary had been with Jesus, she had witnessed His love in action, had been cured of an ailment by Jesus and had helped to care for His needs during the later stages of His earthly ministry. She had witnessed Jesus's love first hand and certainly seemed to have developed an unquenchable love for her Lord. But her world was turned upside down on that fateful Good Friday morning when Jesus suffered that unimaginably cruel death. Three days later, her love drove her back to the tomb where she was shattered once again as she saw that the stone was rolled away and she thought she had lost Jesus once again, even in death. Through tears, she ran to tell the disciples and then returned with them to Jesus's tomb. After confirming Mary's story the two disciples left and went back to tell the others, but it is interesting to note that Mary stayed behind at the tomb, crying. She was obviously broken hearted, but God's amazing love stepped into the picture. As she glanced into the tomb, two angels appeared which alone helped to turn her tears into hope. But if that were not enough, she turned around to see Jesus to complete her transition from sorry to pure, unimaginable JOY.

Was it a coincidence that God chose to use Mary Magdalene in such a key role in this story? Or perhaps could it be that even though she did not clearly understand what was happening, her love for Jesus was real and He cared for her in her time of sorrow, even to the point of turning that sorrow into JOY.

Dear Lord, help me to never forget, even for a moment, that the thirsting in my heart can only be quenched by You. Help me to follow Mary Magdalene's example of true love for You and to live out

that kind of love in my interactions with all those you have placed in my day-to-day life.

In Jesus's holy, holy name - Amen.

Larry Hopp-Creighton University's Energy Technology Program