

THE FEAST OF SAINT MARY OF MAGDALA

Celebrating Women Preachers

July 2017

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Suggested Opening Songs:

A Place at the Table music by Lori True, text by Shirley Erena Murray
© 1998, Hope Publishing Co., Carol Stream, Il, 60188; 2001, GIA Publications, Inc.

All are Welcome by Marty Haugen (Verses 1, 2 and 5)
© 1994, GIA Publications, Inc.

You Are Called to Tell the Story by Ruth Duck
© 1992, GIA Publications, Inc.

Sign of the Cross and Sign of Peace

LEADER: (*while making the sign of the Cross*):

The grace of Jesus, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

ALL: And also with you

LEADER: Let us welcome one another with a sign of peace.

Opening Prayer:

LEADER: Let us pray.
God of light and life,
You are the source of all that is good in our lives.
We give you thanks for Jesus, the Word made flesh,
Who sent women to tell the Gospel: St. Mary of Magdala, Martha, Mary,
the Samaritan woman, and so many others.
We give you thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit,
That bold Wisdom-Spirit who impels us today
to proclaim your good news
of peace and justice in our homes, communities, and our world.
We ask your blessings on our gathering here.
In Jesus' name we pray.

ALL: AMEN

LITURGY OF THE WORD

A Chorus of Voices

This set of readings presents some of the women of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures who proclaim the word of God. Please feel free to adapt to suit your community and your allotted time frame.

Consider inviting multiple women from your community to proclaim the individual readings.

Sung Response

A response is sung once by the cantor and then repeated by the congregation before the readings begin. Then, the sung response is repeated again after each reading.

Suggested Songs (refrain only):

You Are the Voice by David Haas
© 1987, GIA Publications, Inc.

Your Words Are Spirit and Life by Bernadette Farrell
© 1993, OCP. *Consider replacing "LORD" with "God"

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Exodus (15:20)

Then the prophet Miriam took a tambourine in her hand and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: "Sing to our God who has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider are cast into the sea."

Sung Response

Reader: A Reading from the Book of Judges (4:4-5; 14, 16 shortened and adapted.)

Deborah, a woman, a female prophet, a fiery women, was judging Israel at that time. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim and the Israelites went up to her for judgment....Deborah said to Barak, "Get up!...Does God not go before you?" So the entire army of Sisera fell...not a single one remained.

Sung Response

Reader: A Reading from Second Chronicles (34:22-28 shortened and adapted)

So Hilkiah and those whom the king had sent went to the woman-prophet Huldah...she was living in Jerusalem in the Mishneh and they consulted her. She declared to them, "So says the God of Israel: 'I will indeed bring calamity upon this place and upon its inhabitants...because they have abandoned me and have offered incense to other gods...' But as to the king of Judah...So says the God of Israel...' because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God...and you have torn your clothes and wept before me,...I have also heard you. For my part you shall be gathered to your graces in peace, your eyes shall not see all the calamity I will bring upon this place..."

Sung Response

Reader: A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke (1:39-45)

During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother the Messiah would come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by God would be fulfilled."

Sung Response

Reader: A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke (1:39-45)

Mary said:

“My soul proclaims your greatness, O God,
and my spirit rejoices in you, my Savior.
For you have looked with favor
upon your lowly servant,
and from this day forward
all generations will call me blessed.
For you, the Almighty have done great things for me,
and holy is your name.

Your mercy reaches from age to age for those who fear you.
You have shown the strength of your arm;
you have scattered the proud in their conceit;
you have deposed the mighty from their thrones and raised the lowly to high places.
You have filled the hungry with good things, while the rich you have sent away empty.
You have come to the aid of Israel your servant, mindful of your mercy – the promise you made to our
ancestors—to Sarah and Abraham and their descendants forever.”

Sung Response

Reader: A Reading from the Gospel according to Luke (2:36-38 Adapted by Meriam Therese Winter, MMS.)
Anna, Phanuel’s daughter, of the tribe and traditions of Asher, a devout, dedicated woman, a prophet able to see and interpret the silent, veiled revelation of God’s mysterious ways, was seventy years a wife and the rest of her life a widow. She remained now in the Temple, serving her God day and night through ritual fasts and prayer. She was eighty-four years young when she saw the Child with his mother. Praising God for this blessing, she spoke of the Child to all concerned about Israel’s liberation, and from that day, she preached the miracle made flesh, Whom her own eyes had seen.

Sung Response

Reader: A Reading from the Gospel according to John (4: 28, 29, 39-42)
The Samaritan woman left her water jar and went into the town and said to the people, “Come and see someone who told me everything I have done! Could this be the Messiah?” At that everyone set out from town to meet Jesus.

Many Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus on the strength of the woman’s testimony -- that “he told me everything I ever did.” The result was that, when these Samaritans came to Jesus, they begged him to stay with them awhile. So Jesus stayed there two days, and through his own spoken word many more came to faith. They told the woman, “No longer does our faith depend on your story. We’ve heard for ourselves, and we know that this really is the savior of the world.”

Sung Response

Allow for a brief moment of silent reflection before beginning the Gospel Acclamation

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia! Raise the Gospel Text by Owen Alstott, Music by Bernadette Farrell
© 2002, OCP.

Gospel Proclamation: (John 20: 1-18)

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the tomb. So she ran and went to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we do not know where they have laid him." Then Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there, and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple, who reached the tomb first, also went in, and he saw and believed; for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes.

But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not hold on to me, because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord"; and she told them that he had said these things to her.

Some Preaching Themes:

- Our role -- modeled on Mary of Magdala and other women preachers -- in the preaching ministry of the Church
- Mary of Magdala as the "apostle to the apostles"
- Mary of Magdala as the culmination of a series of woman proclaiming the Good News
- The need to recover the voices of women in the preaching ministry of the Church

Questions for Shared Reflection:

- What was it like to hear the story of Mary of Magdala's commissioning to "go and tell" against the backdrop of other women who proclaimed the word of God?
- What is Jesus asking you to "go and tell"? What truth are you being called to speak -- either in word or deed? How have/will you respond?

Optional Sung Reflection:

Women of the Church by Carey Landry
© 2005, GIA Publications, Inc.

LITANY OF WOMEN AND BLESSING

Litany of Women of the Word:

LEADER: In a few moments, recognizing that we are all gifted and called to share in some way in the preaching mission of the Church, we will call upon the Holy Spirit to empower us for this ministry.

And so, we call upon a cloud of witnesses, a chorus of voices of women who have served as proclaimers of the word of God to stand and pray with us.

ALL RESPOND: Pray with us

As an option, a different reader may be assigned to each set names. Additionally, if time permits, consider allowing time for members of the congregation to name other women (e.g. "With whom else shall we join?")

Reader: Let us join our voices with the voices of the women prophets and preachers of the Hebrew Scriptures. May our voices joined with theirs bring about a covenant of justice and peace:

Miriam, prophet and leader among the Israelites ... pray with us
Deborah, the judge ... pray with us
Huldah, the prophet ... pray with us

Let us join our voices with the women of the Gospels who proclaimed the good news. May our voices joined with theirs bring about a Church which embraces the inclusive ministry of Jesus:

Mary, mother of Jesus ... pray with us
Anna, the Temple prophet ... pray with us
The Samaritan woman, evangelizer ... pray with us
Mary of Magdala, apostle to the apostles... pray with us

We join our voices with the women who were leaders and proclaimers in the early Church. May our voices joined with theirs bring about a church where women's leadership is valued and understood as necessary.

Phoebe, the deacon ... pray with us
Prisca, the missionary ... pray with us
Lydia, leader of the first house-church in Europe ... pray with us
Junia, esteemed by Paul as "outstanding among the apostles" ... pray with us

We join our voices with the women preachers of the Middle Ages. May our voices joined with theirs bring about a church of compassionate understanding:

Catherine of Siena, speaker of truth to power ... pray with us
Hildegard of Bingen, mystic, abbess, and preacher ... pray with us
Rose of Viterbo, mystic and preacher of penance ... pray with us

We join our voices with the women preachers and martyrs of recent history. May our voices joined with theirs bring about a poor church for the poor.

Dorothy Day, journalist, activist, and founder of the Catholic Worker Movement ... pray with us
Thea Bowman, evangelist and Servant of God ... pray with us
Dorothy Stang, martyr of the Amazon ... pray with us

Blessing:

after a brief moment of quiet reflection

LEADER: We now call upon the Holy Spirit, that she may bless and strengthen us as we claim our own role in the preaching mission of the Church and join our voices with the voices of so many women preachers, prophets, and proclaimers of the word.

Some instruction may be necessary. Depending upon your space and upon the size of your congregation, participants may partner with the person to either side of them, form small groups, or extend their hands in blessing over the entire congregation -- perhaps in a circle -- as the following blessing is read.

Blessing our foreheads, we invoke the Spirit of Wisdom, that we may always seek to more fully understand the Word of God.

Blessing our eyes, we invoke the Spirit of Right Judgment that we might rightly see and denounce the forces of darkness in our midst and proclaim the light of Christ.

Blessing our ears, we invoke the Spirit of Understanding, we we may hear and proclaim the truths she speaks to us and to our Church.

Blessing our lips, we invoke the Spirit of Knowledge that we might always speak the truth about our experience;

Blessing our throats, we invoke the Spirit of Courage that we may never fail to lift up our voices even when others attempt to silence us.

Blessing our hands and feet, we invoke the Spirit of Reverence, that our entire being might preach the gospel.

Blessing each other, we invoke the Spirit of Wonder and Awe that we recognize the Word of God that dwells within each of us and share this Word with the Church and the world.

LEADER: We make this prayer in Jesus' name,

ALL: AMEN.

Our Father/Mother:

all pray together in a way that is familiar to the community gathered

Closing Prayer:

LEADER: Let us pray:

O God, you are the source of all love and life.

we give you thanks for the women of faith

who have gone before us,

these valiant women who heard the call

to “go tell” and did so in their own unique ways.

We give you thanks for Jesus, who is the Christ,

The Anointed One,

whose bold women friends came with myrrh and ointment

and whom he sent forth with the good news

that he was risen from the dead!

Make us strong today, make us just as bold that we may join this chorus of voices.

We pray this in Jesus’ name,

ALL: AMEN.

Dismissal:

LEADER: Empowered by the Spirit, inspired by the valiant women of our past, we go forth now to be proclaimers of the Word and witnesses to the ends of the earth

We do not go alone...

making a Sign of the Cross

For we go within the love of the Creator in whose image we are made,

and of the Eternal Word who speaks to us today,

And of the Holy Spirit who gifts and empowers us,

ALL: Amen.

LEADER: May the peace of Christ be with you all.

ALL: And also with you.

LEADER: Let us go now to love and serve our God.

ALL: Thanks be to God.

Suggested Closing Songs:

We Are Sent into the World by Ricky Manalo, CSP

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God Has Chosen Me by Bernadette Farrell

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