

**AN IMAGE OF TRUE REPENTANCE**

**Throughout the season of Great Lent, one message is echoed repeatedly: REPENTANCE. In fact, even before the beginning of this 40-day fast, our Church places before us the thought, that we must repent of our sins. Will we be found worthy of the great gift of salvation that the Resurrected Christ brings to His faithful followers?**

**True repentance is a process that is often misunderstood. It involves much more than merely confessing our sins. It even goes far beyond expressing sincere sorrow for our transgressions. Indeed, true repentance call out to us to CHANGE OUR LIVES COMPLETELY! When we repent of our sins, we are expected to strive with all of our strength to rid our lives of the shameful things that we do which are contrary to God's laws. Repentance is "making right" all of the "wrongs" if which we are guilty.**

**No one understood the necessity of true repentance better than ST. MARY OF EGYPT. In her early years, Mary lived a life of immorality and promiscuity. While visiting Jerusalem one day, her eyes were opened to the sinfulness of her ways when some "hidden force" prevented her from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Realizing her unworthiness before God, this 6<sup>th</sup> Century saint retired to the desert region beyond the Jordan River, leaving her past life behind. For nearly 50 years, she devoted her life to prayer and fasting, as she attempted to live in a manner that properly captured the spirit of repentance.**

**This is why our Church honor her memory annually on the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent. As this sacred time of year rapidly draws to a close, we are asked to be imitators of Mary of Egypt. May we find encouragement in her example as we struggle to overcome our sins.**