

THE ORTHODOX WEEKLY BULETIN . . . VESTAL, CLIFFWOOD, NEW JERSEY

“WOMAN, WHY DO YOU WEEP?”

Today we celebrate the Sunday of the MYRRHBEARING WOMEN . While the various Gospel accounts differ in respect to the number of women who dutifully pursued the task of returning to the tomb to anoint the Body of the Lord, There is no doubt as to which has attained the most notoriety: MARY MAGDALENE.

Mary was from the town of Magdala by the Sea of Galilee. After being freed from the possession of seven demons by Christ, she became a faithful follower of His, ministering to Him during His lifetime, and loyally remaining with Him at the dark hour of His Crucifixion. Her devotion was rewarded, for, according to the Gospel of St. John, she had the privilege of being the first person to encounter the Risen Christ. After assuring the grieving Mary that, indeed, He was truly alive, Jesus instructed her to return to the Apostles with this message: “Say to them “I am ascending to My Father and Your Father, and to My God and Your God.”

According to the Sacred tradition , Mary Magdalene went to Rome shortly after this and went before Tiberias Caesar, presenting him with a red egg and greeting him with the words: “Christ is Risen!” It is believed that she convincingly denounced Pilate to Caesar for his unjust condemnation of Jesus, causing Pilate to be removed from his position in Jerusalem.

After leaving Rome, Mary Magdalene journeyed to Ephesus, where she assisted St. John the Evangelist with his missionary efforts. It was here that she died peacefully, and was laid to rest. In 890 A.D., her remains were taken to Constantinople, where they were buried in a chapel where Lazarus was said to have also been buried.