

Topic Page: [Mary Magdalene, Saint](#)

Definition: **Mary Magdalene, Saint** from *Philip's Encyclopedia*

(active 1st century AD) Early follower of Jesus Christ, from the village of Magdala on the W shore of the Sea of Galilee. According to the gospels, Christ freed her of seven demons. Mary accompanied him on his preaching tours in Galilee, witnessed his crucifixion and burial, and was the first to see him after his resurrection. She is often identified as a repentant prostitute. Her feast day is July 22.



Image from: [Saint Mary Magdalene in National Gallery Collection](#)

Summary Article: **Mary Magdalene**

From *Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*

The figure of Mary Magdalene is mentioned twelve times in the NT. She is characterized in each of the four Gospels as a follower of Jesus. Her name presumably refers to her being from the town of Magdala Nunayya on the Sea of Galilee. Luke claims that she had at one time been possessed by seven demons, and that she was one of a number of women who provided material support to Jesus and the twelve apostles during their ministry (8:2–3). All four evangelists place her among the women who witnessed Jesus' crucifixion and found his tomb empty on Easter morning. John describes her as the first person to see the risen Lord and, correspondingly, as the first to proclaim Jesus' resurrection to the other disciples (20:11–18; cf. Mark 16:9). On the basis of this account, she is sometimes called the 'apostle to the apostles' (*apostola apostolorum*).

In later Church tradition a variety of legends about Mary became popular. In the third century she began to be identified with the Mary of Bethany mentioned in John 11:1–2 and thereby with the sinner in Luke 7:36–50. Based on this conflation, Mary came to be regarded in western (but not Orthodox) Christianity as a repentant prostitute. This unflattering view of Mary's past may have emerged in part as a reaction against streams of early Christianity in which she was viewed as a figure of authority (e.g., the *Gospel of Philip* 59 describes her as one of Jesus' closest companions, and the *Gospel of Mary* 10 describes her as having received secret wisdom from Jesus).

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Mcfarland, I. A., & McFarland, I. A. (2011). Mary Magdalene. In I. A. McFarland, D. A. S. Fergusson, K. Kilby, & et. al. (Eds.), *Cambridge dictionary of Christian theology*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Retrieved from https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/mary_magdalene_saint

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McFarland, Ian A., and Ian A. McFarland. "Mary Magdalene." *Cambridge Dictionary of Christian Theology*, edited by David A. S. Fergusson, et al., Cambridge University Press, 1st edition, 2011. *Credo Reference*, https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/mary_magdalene_saint. Accessed 14 Oct. 2019.