Columns
Spirituality



Mary Magdalene washes Jesus' feet in this detail from a fresco in the Carmelite church in Vienna, Austria. (Dreamstime)



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July 22, 2024

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New breezes bring different sounds that are more than just words. As we listen attentively, powerful and inspiring images emerge from deep within us.

In our community, July is the month of Mary Magdalene. She is the source of our prayer and celebrations. Her close friendship with Jesus and the trust the Master placed in her guide us in forming Christian communities today, inspired by the first disciples.

Significant celebrations often stir something within those of us who try to listen.

Living by the sea for a few months, in a high place near a lighthouse, makes the winds, the sounds of the sea and the lights in the darkness take on a realism I wish to interpret. What does it mean when something "moves" within us? When I look at the sea, I understand that it has an inner dynamism — internal currents and dynamics — in dialogue with the winds, the stars, the sun and the moon. From the outside, we see only a fraction of the life bubbling within, the force contained by soft or strong winds, depending on their origin and mysterious internal dialogues.

If the sea, with all its power and complexity, can be illuminated on the darkest night by a simple lighthouse, what does it indicate to those of us who, with simple and contemplative wisdom, try to give voice to what we sense, to "what moves" within us?

The figure of Mary of Magdala is a beacon for most women today, especially for many of us who are attentive to the whispers and the winds of the Ruah, to the lighthouses and the small fishing boats that, from afar, will bring the fruits of their labor at night to our tables.



(Unsplash/Robert Wiedemann)

Three years ago, amid storms and apparent failures, Mary of Magdala whispered loudly for us to shape a community that bears her name. It was the fruit of years of navigating through difficult waters, guided by a single lighthouse: the Ruah. Despite the comings and goings of many people with different interests, we have been sustaining this gift, primarily with laypeople, committed to a spirituality inspired by it.

She invites us to turn our heads, minds and reasoning towards Jesus, to let ourselves be carried by love grounded in a commitment that begins with Him. On the eve of her celebration (July 22), in a simple online ceremony, the Community of Magdala — comprising people from Europe, Mexico and Argentina — will commit ourselves and the Ruah to this lifestyle of doors that are always open

The days and the winds flow, as do the waves, stars and the moon that continuously change size, just as our interiority does. It hints to us, "widen the space of your tent," let the light expand your space, let it be seen, let it be known.

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Once again, trying to respond to this inner movement around their feast, we receive a call through Zoom and WhatsApp: Open your house, the house of the disciples, to people in consecrated life, whether they are within or have left a community that no longer offered them light on their journey and are now at the mercy of the winds, without a community of equals.

Mary of Magdala smiles at us again because she sees that we welcome her initiative. Women who left everything to follow Jesus are invited, for different reasons, to take a step and give shape to something new.

The Community of Magdala opens its arms and heart to those seeking free spaces who, in dialogue with the sun and the moon, moved by winds and sometimes only by whispers, leave their homes and their uncertain securities to see the light, feel the wind and join, possibly online, to discover new wine in new wineskins.

Many are there, faithful to their calling, alone or with others, looking for ways. We have simply invited them to be part of "something new." There are already three of us, and more are beginning to inquire; we are from Europe and Mexico, and we continue to dialogue to discern if our calls coincide and to forge a path together.

We have been called for similar reasons:

- We believe that consecrated life is evolving, and we wish to be moved by this dynamism.
- We need a community of equals to interpret our vows in today's light.
- We left a community and wish to explore a new style inspired by biblical figures such as Mary of Magdala, Elizabeth, Mary of Nazareth, Ruth and Naomi — all of whom also sought a lighthouse in their night.
- We are inspired by women closer to us in time and ways of thinking, such as the Beguines, who without the support and weight of the institution, made their way through the great tide of the Middle Ages in Europe. They inspire many today who wish to deconstruct patriarchy through concrete commitments, such as the way we pray and the language we use in prayer, and how we treat each other.
- We desire a consecrated life without hierarchy, with a mature responsibility to be called as women who transform history.

- We are not afraid to live without money or common property that could entangle interests. We are sustained by our work and our pastoral activities inspired by them.

The community has already begun gathering; several of us have gathered in its name. The table stretches long and open, filled with anticipation and inspiration. When the winds of fear sneak in through cracks and their roar shakes us in the night, all we need to do is lift our eyes and gaze at the lighthouse.

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Did you know that lighthouses pivot from side to side to illuminate a wider area? This image resonates deeply with us: There is always light, or if it momentarily fades, we know it will shine brightly again. The darker the night, the more luminously our little lighthouse glows, just a few meters from our home.

I am continually amazed by how much the small and natural things around me teach, though often overlooked because of their simplicity. In this year's celebration, as we commit ourselves alongside the group of lay people, this wonderful branch of consecrated life will already be emerging. For many, it serves as a light, a beacon during our darkest nights.

Happy celebration of Mary of Magdala!

***Editor's note**: A version of this column was previously published on the Magdala Community's website.*