

St. Mary Magdalene Novena Day 1: Model of awe of the Lord (prototype of reverence)

-Pray one Our Father-

As the primary intention of this novena is for a true revival in reverence and love for Our Lord in the Eucharist, there is no better intercessor than the prophetess of Eucharistic love (see *Saint Mary Magdalene: Prophetess of Eucharistic Love* by Fr Sean Davidson) herself. St. Mary Magdalene followed Christ along the path to the cross and was there as He was taken down from the cross. She didn't leave. She helped prepare His body for burial and she ran to the tomb as soon as she was able after burial. For hundreds of years St. Mary Magdalene has been believed to be the same woman who washed Jesus's feet with her hair and expensive oil. She had great reverence for Our Lord's body as the dwelling place of God on Earth. She treated His Body with awe, because His Divinity deserved it. How do we treat our Lord's Body? Do we try to avoid prideful expectations of what we should "get out of mass"?

Reverence means *in awe of*, and comes from the Latin word for *intensely fear*. Often, fear is a bad thing because the evil one uses it to distract us from God's goodness. However, the evil one twists even his own "use" of fear, because nothing about the prince of darkness is forthright. He tells us that we don't need to fear the Lord (the One we should). And then, the world tries to convince us that because Jesus is approachable, He doesn't want our reverence anymore. This is a grave error because God is still God, who sacrificed His Son to redeem our faults! Yes, He is our friend; God loves us and cares for us, but when the God of the universe dies for our sins (as we are represented with at each mass), that necessarily provokes a certain amount of awe and trembling at the unwarranted merciful gift. The Lord's people in the Old Testament feared the Lord because of wrath; but in the New Testament we fear the Lord because of awe for His extreme mercy. Our reverence is also an act of gratitude.

We pray that the way our priests pray the mass reminds us each and every time of the powerful gift that the Eucharistic is – Christ's Body and Blood broken for us. May their personal preferences never become a distraction, and may they be strengthened to resist pressures to shorten, alter, or water-down the Holy Mass. We pray for their spiritual strength in being humble servants, with the Apostles – particularly St. John - as their guides and the Blessed Virgin Mary as their Mother.

We ask St. Mary Magdalene to implore, on our behalf, for a reverent, humble love of the Eucharist worldwide—but particularly in our own soul and those of His priests.

Mary Magdalene, patron of sinners – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, first to adore the risen Lord – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, powerful intercessor – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, model of perseverance – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, devoted to the Body of Christ – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, disciple of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, prototype of humble reverence – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, Apostle to the Apostles – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, Ora Pro Nobis. (pray for us)

-Glory Be-

St. Mary Magdalene Novena Day 2: Model of humility before the humanity of Jesus (devoted to the Body of Christ)

-Pray one Our Father-

St. Mary Magdalene was given the great blessing to truly see Our Lord upon His Resurrection. Yet, it was not until Jesus called her name that she recognized Him, and then He told her to not hold on to Him! Pope St. Gregory the Great wrote of her, "...the one who she sought outwardly was the one who inwardly taught her to keep on searching." Searching for what? All of life is a search, isn't it? Searching for the will of God—searching for Him moment by moment, day by day. Clinging to Him as our Savior, yet being sent on mission in a variety of life circumstances and being unable to remain in a church or adoration chapel constantly.

The humility of St. Mary Magdalene is shown as she lives in accord with the truth of who she is in relation to Who God is. Her humanity is made more complete by being near His Sacred Humanity. Her life takes on new meaning. She lives to bring Him glory. Can we say the same? Where are our priorities? Is living to stay close to Christ our goal?

As we grow in our interior life, we can become tempted toward lukewarmness and complacency. We must struggle against this. We must intentionally, daily, cling to the truth of our need for God. We must continue seeking Him. When the busyness of daily life closes in on our time; when the uncertainties of a messy life or health challenges take all of our mental capacity; what do we compromise on? Quiet time with God? Going to mass? Being a visible Christian in our sphere of influence? Suffering well?

Jesus has made Himself approachable in the Blessed Sacrament, we don't need to attempt to "make" Him any more approachable than He Himself already has. Mass, for our part, is our prayerful participation, our presence with Christ, receiving Him as gift. We don't actually have to physically "do" or "feel" something to be fully present with our Lord at Calvary. The majority of those who stayed near Him at the cross were there simply out of humble reverence. They loved Him and recognized Him as Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. There was nowhere else they needed to go. Do we go to mass out of guilt, or worse: habit? Our humility before His Sacred Body should draw us in. He is God, we are not.

We come before Him as He extends the invitation—by the hands of His holy priests. Would that He deign to give the Church more zealous, humble, and reverent priests! Kyrie eleison! Shockingly, God continues to permit irreverence and even sacrilege by the necessity of free will being within True Love. Let us then, attempt to shower Him with our return of love - out of our free choice - to overcome the temptation to make even the mass about us, and in reparation for the sins against His Sacred Heart. It is love through the Holy Spirit that gives us the desire to revere the Lord.

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St. Mary Magdalene Novena Day 3 Model of intercessory prayer

-Pray one Our Father-

Only in recent history has the Western Church questioned if St. Mary Magdalene was the sister of Lazarus and Martha. We can't be sure, but the case that she is his sister is pretty convincing (see *Saint Mary Magdalene: Prophetess of Eucharistic Love* by Fr Sean Davidson). The fact that the Church has, for hundreds of years, had the octave day for St. Mary Magdalene's memorial as St. Martha's memorial makes it even more interesting. Octaves used to be a much bigger celebration in the Church, connecting events in Our Lord's life and ministry, and the lives of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints, as part of the unified liturgical life and culture of Catholics. Let us pray for a revitalization of the liturgical unity of the Church! This would help the reverence of the Church at large, if we lived our lives more in tune with the rhythm of connection to the Lord and His saints.

From the mass for St. Mary Magdalene, Extraordinary Form; "May we be assisted O Lord, we beseech thee, by the intercession of Blessed Maria Magdalénæ, for whom, moved by her prayers, Thou didst bring back her brother Lazarus, then dead for four days, alive from the grave."

John 11: 32-33, "When Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she knelt at his feet and said to him, 'Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died.' When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, he was greatly disturbed in spirit and deeply moved."

Reading the full narrative shows that Jesus wasn't "overly concerned" with the death of Lazarus, until He encountered Mary's prayerful, broken hearted weeping. God's perfect will isn't "changed" by our prayers, because He is unchanging. Yet, His will mysteriously embraces our prayerful interconnected intercession, as we are made for relationship—with Him and the whole Body of Christ.

In this novena, not only are we praying for a return to reverence for the Blessed Sacrament, and not only are we asking for holy priests, but we are showing our devotion to that beautiful Tradition of the Church—the intercession of saints. We are all connected in our human nature, and God has shown time and time again in Scripture, history, and Revelation that He desires the Church on Earth to utilize intercessory prayer. It's a sign of our love for each other that we care about the needs of others. It is also biblical. St. Paul wrote to the Romans (15:30): "I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by our Lord Jesus Christ and by the love of the Spirit, to join me in earnest prayer to God on my behalf..." And in Colossians 4:12 he writes of a disciple, "...He is always wrestling in his prayers on your behalf, so that you may stand mature and fully assured in everything that God wills."

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St. Mary Magdalene Novena Day 4 Model of contrition

-Pray one Our Father-

Perhaps the most touted patronage of St. Mary Magdalene is for repentant sinners—those with great contrition for their sins, desiring to make reparations to God for the ways in which they have broken the loving relationship between Creator and creature.

Luke 7:47 says, “Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love...”

St. Mary Magdalene had demons driven out; and because of this great mercy of God, knows nowhere else to go but to stay close to Jesus. God permitted her to feel such agony, such temptation, such depth of sin that the Scriptures record it as literal demons had to be driven out from her soul (scholars think that not much detail is given about the actual exorcism because it was done privately, and the main glory to be brought out of her healing is what happened *after*).

Have any of us experienced powerful healing in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and then continue to distract ourselves into worldly concerns or attachments to vices yet again. We ask for St. Mary Magdalene’s intercession to avoid even venial sins.

Contrition comes from Latin, meaning, “rubbed together”, like “worn down”. The weight of sin wears on us; it feels so heavy that our heart breaks from the harm it does to our relationship with God. The purest goal of contrition is to reunite us with God because we love Him – but often it begins as a slightly selfish motivation to avoid hell and get out from under the feeling of guilt. Let us love Christ so much that our heart breaks at any sin, so much that we try to avoid them. Let us struggle against our concupiscence, the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Venerable Fulton Sheen has said, “Sometimes the only way the good Lord can get into some hearts is to break them.” Isn’t this so true when we reflect on the past hardships of our life? The hindsight we now have can show us God’s Providential care and love through those times. He always wants our good, even if it seems like a great suffering.

CCC 1436: Daily conversion and penance find their source and nourishment in the Eucharist, for in it is made present the sacrifice of Christ which has reconciled us with God. Through the Eucharist those who live from the life of Christ are fed and strengthened. "It is a remedy to free us from our daily faults and to preserve us from mortal sins."

This love for the Eucharist, and reverence for God, is connected to true contrition for our sins, and those of the whole world. And the Eucharist strengthens us to avoid them, because any aversion to sin that we have is first and foremost from the Holy Spirit.

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St. Mary Magdalene Novena Day 5 Model of Marian devotion

-Pray one Our Father-

St. Mary Magdalene walked in the footsteps of Christ as His disciple, and most likely she spent even more time with His Mother Mary, learning how to love God and others from His own mother! This is what we are called to do as well. No one was more reverent of Christ than His mother. No one loved His Sacred Body and Divinity more than she.

St. Mary Magdalene's example helps us grow in our devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, as she was one of the first "disciples" of Our Lady. The discipleship of Christ is actually enhanced through being a disciple of His Mother Mary. Mary Magdalene would have seen Jesus's mother care for Him if she visited or followed Him on any of His travels, and most importantly would have seen the Blessed Virgin Mary reverently receive Our Lord's body at the foot of the cross after He had been taken down. We can know Christ reverently and intimately too, even if we aren't walking with Him 2000 years ago. We can adore Him in chapels for adoration, in the mass/before the tabernacle, and when we receive Him sacramentally. It is the same Jesus in mass as it is in the adoration chapel. Do we bow, kneel, and genuflect with profound amazement at His presence? St. Mary Magdalene knelt before Him to clean His feet. What is our offering? She sat at His feet listening. How do we receive His love?

Something else to consider is how the Lord prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to receive Jesus Christ into her body. Mary didn't prepare herself for it. God gave her the particularly unique gift of conception without sin. Mary did have free will, though, so it is her *response* that makes the difference. We are also given graces necessary to be receptive. How do we allow God to prepare us to receive the Blessed Sacrament? It is the Holy Spirit working in us that predisposes us to a prayerful receptive state for the Eucharist. It does take our surrender to the grace offered to us, though. We must be open to Him. Often times, so many of us go through the motions and don't stop to pray, pause for recollection, and intentionally avoid distractions as we head to mass. We may actually be closed off, and the fullness of grace can't penetrate our worldliness, our hardness of heart. Are we truly making a shift in our day as we encounter the Lord in mass or adoration? Does our attitude, dress, posture, and most importantly the state of our soul reflect what we are about to do (see CCC 1385 / 1387)? Do we need to seek peace with someone or within ourselves? If we are desiring a deeper love for the Eucharist worldwide, what are we doing to give witness of that to others?

St. Josemaria Escriva wrote: "Keep struggling, so that the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar really becomes the center and root of your interior life, and so your whole day will turn into an act of worship — an extension of the Mass you have attended and a preparation for the next. Your whole day will then be an act of worship that overflows in aspirations, visits to the Blessed Sacrament and the offering up of your professional work and your family life..."

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St. Mary Magdalene Novena Day Model of adoration of our Lord

-Pray one Our Father-

As a culture, we often fall into an attitude that says we can just have a relationship with Jesus on our own, we don't really need to go anywhere. We can "encounter God" in nature, our living room, or in the car. These ideas are true because God created nature and His fingerprint is all over it. However, He desires to come *more fully* to us in the Eucharist. He explicitly spoke about this at the Last Supper and His disciples have continued it down through the ages. This is why the Church believes we need a 'revival' of Eucharistic Amazement. We need to remember that we need the True Presence of God. We need to have more than just words about the Eucharist. We need authentic experiences that lead us deeper into the mystery that God enters into the Host. We need our surroundings to be directed to God alone for the soul to encounter Him. We need the Church, the priest, and those around us to be unified in worship of God.

St. Mary Magdalene would have been aware of the Last Supper, even if she wasn't present at the table. She would have been present at some of the very first masses prayed. There are legends about what happened to her after Pentecost – some say she lived the last decades of her life on the Eucharist alone. Whether she did or didn't, we can trust that she had a very deep devotion to adoring the Blessed Sacrament. The Lord who forgave her sins, who transformed her life, the One who came to her that first Easter morning.

How do we live with a recollected spirit throughout the day so as to keep His Presence on our mind? Are we aware of the nearest tabernacle? Do we know the adoration opportunities nearest us? Do we seek Christ out, making use of this knowledge? Christ is drawing us close to Him. We should adore Him.

CCC 1378: Worship of the Eucharist. In the liturgy of the Mass we express our faith in the real presence of Christ under the species of bread and wine by, among other ways, genuflecting or bowing deeply as a sign of adoration of the Lord. "The Catholic Church has always offered and still offers to the sacrament of the Eucharist the cult of adoration, not only during Mass, but also outside of it, reserving the consecrated hosts with the utmost care, exposing them to the solemn veneration of the faithful, and carrying them in procession." (St Paul VI)

CCC 2628: Adoration is the first attitude of man acknowledging that he is a creature before his Creator. It exalts the greatness of the Lord who made us (see Ps 95:1-6) and the almighty power of the Savior who sets us free from evil. Adoration is homage of the spirit to the "King of Glory," (Ps 24, 9-10) respectful silence in the presence of the "ever greater" God. (St. Augustine, En. in Ps. 62,16:PL 36,757-758) Adoration of the thrice-holy and sovereign God of love blends with humility and gives assurance to our supplications.

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St. Mary Magdalene Novena Day 7 Model of perseverance

-Pray one Our Father-

It takes great perseverance to progress in the spiritual life. We have to frequently get back up when we find ourselves growing colder or the temptations/burdens quite heavy. We have to strive onward even when things within our parish or the Church at large are seemingly dysfunctional or confusing. We have to avoid distractions from the only priority we should have: becoming a saint. Are we being personally responsible for the things we can actually effect, and are we then letting go of our desire to control things we cannot? Are we committed to daily prayer, frequent confession, spiritual reading, regular holy hours, engaging others in virtuous conversation, and a spirit of hospitality for others?

“We should reflect on Mary’s attitude and the great love she felt for Christ; for though the disciples had left the tomb, she remained. She was still seeking the one she had not found, and while she sought she wept; burning with the fire of love, she longed for Him whom she thought had been taken away. And so it happened that the woman who stayed behind to seek Christ was the only one to see Him. For perseverance is essential to any good deed, as the voice of truth tells us: whoever perseveres to the end will be saved.” – St. Gregory the Great

St. Mary Magdalene is a great model of perseverance because of her constancy to accompany our Lord. She was steadfast in her devotion to Jesus and even when things looked bleak on Good Friday, she desired to be near Him. She may not have had a “plan of life” over 2000 years ago, but one can certainly help us today. We have more things vying for our attention, and we have the challenge of living with technology that has trained us to flit from one thing to another. Perseverance is connected to love, and because love is a choice, we have to continually make the choice to love even when it’s hard to stay focused. A plan of life can help us be perseverant by committing to a choice to pursue holiness, even when we don’t feel like it. Perseverance is from the Latin *persevereus*, which means very strict or very serious. We have to be very strict and serious about our love for God! We have to be very committed to loving the God of the universe! Our reverence for Him needs our perseverance, as it could be easy to just go through the motions but reverence is focused and full of awe. We want to do every act of devotion with intentionality, so when we find that we have faded into a complacent state, let us ask for St. Mary Magdalene’s intercession to persevere in our search for Christ.

Song of Songs 3:2-4, “Let me rise then and go about the city, through the streets and squares; Let me seek him whom my soul loves.” I sought him but I did not find him. The watchmen found me, as they made their rounds in the city: “Him whom my soul loves—have you seen him?” Hardly had I left them when I found him whom my soul loves. I held him and would not let him go...”

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-Pray one Our Father-

“She is asked why she is sorrowing so that her desire might be strengthened; for when she mentions whom she is seeking, her love is kindled all the more ardently.” – St Gregory the Great

The word Rabboni is an Aramaic word transliterated in the Bible into the original Greek. It means “my teacher,” or “my master.” It was only transliterated [twice](#) in the New Testament. Transliteration is different from translating in that the former tells the reader the pronunciation of the word in the original language, not its meaning as the later does. It’s interesting that the Gospel of John desires to keep the pronunciation of what St. Mary Magdalene proclaimed to the risen Lord on Easter morning. After He calls her name, she sees that it is Jesus, and exclaims, “Rabboni!” (John 20:11-16) Why is this important? The other time is in the Gospel of Mark when Bartimaeus calls out to Jesus that he wants to see. Many English versions of the Bible translate Rabboni in the verse Mark 10:51 as “master,” or the common English “rabbi” but the transliterated Aramaic word shows much deeper respect.

Connecting these two verses’ use of Rabboni, there is a certain element of *clarity* it conveys. The ability to truly *see* Jesus as our teacher, our high master, is necessarily from our purity of heart. We may see a lot with our eyes, but we really *see* with our soul. Trust in God comes from faith, which is within our souls not our sight. St. Mary Magdalene saw the Risen Lord but she couldn’t actually *see* that it was Him. It took the Lord reaching into her very soul and identifying her as His. He had appeared before her in a different way than she expected or was used to. Her initial desire was to care for His body, but He wanted her to purify her intentions. Jesus wanted St. Mary Magdalene to seek Him out of love, not to cling to His humanity. On the other hand, Bartimaeus couldn’t *see*, yet He knew Jesus is God and could heal him. He had faith, he *saw* Him with his soul, his pure heart. *Then* the Lord allowed him to see with his eyes. The soul sees first, then the eyes. This is how grace works. We can’t do anything to recognize God without His prompting it first.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. (Matthew 5:8)

This novena for great reverence and belief in the True Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist requires a clean heart. Jesus remains hidden in the species of the Bread. We can’t *see* Him. It takes faith. It takes trust. Like Bartimaeus, we come before Jesus and say, “Rabboni, that I may see!” It takes a pure desire of unity with God. We won’t *see* Him otherwise. We will miss out on so many of the graces He desires to pour out for us. The Eucharist and the mass are not about the feelings we get or the things we “*see*” with our eyes, but rather it is God who humbly comes to us. How do we respond? Let us worship Him as He desires to be worshiped, not to go to be seen, but rather to seek until we *see*.

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St. Mary Magdalene Novena Day 9 Model of evangelization

-Pray one Our Father-

St. Mary Magdalene has the title of the Apostle to the Apostles. Although we generally use the word to describe the twelve closest men to Jesus, it simply means “one who is sent.” St. Mary Magdalene was the one first sent to share the Good News of Easter morning. The people to whom Christ sent her were the “brothers,” which is to say the twelve. Thus, she became the apostle to the Apostles. She is our model of evangelization. We encounter the mercy of Christ, we stay close to Him through the Eucharist, and then we share His mercy with others.

“The story of Mary of Magdala reminds us all of a fundamental truth: a disciple of Christ is one who, in the experience of human weakness, has had the humility to ask for his help, has been healed by him and has set out following closely after him, becoming a witness of the power of his merciful love that is stronger than sin and death.” – Pope Benedict

St. Mary Magdalene’s story has been one of the most twisted of all the followers of Christ. People want to make her out to be whatever fits their narrative. This should tell us that something about her stirs the devil up. First, the devil hates women for their ability to bring life into the world. Secondly, her devotion to the sacred Eucharist. Still now, the Eucharist seems to be used by the devil to divide us. He’s convinced so many people to stop believing in the True Presence—primarily through irreverent behaviors in the mass and physical changes in churches that take the focus off of worship of Him. Then those of us that do believe are increasingly divided on views of the various forms of the mass, styles within mass, or norms surrounding the liturgical procedures. Rather than let the devil continue to distract us and divide us, we must get our priorities right. God first. Worship Him for Him. Pray for, and support, good and holy priests who lead with servant hearts, and pray & sacrifice for us to the Lord. Then live a life of witness to the Good News.

If we study history, we will find that there really isn’t anything new under the sun (see Ecclesiastes 1:9-11). The division, arguments, scandal caused, and liberties taken by “Catholics” really shouldn’t surprise us. Everything that’s going on in the world, these types of things have happened before. Jesus’ Kingdom is not of this world, so worldly ideas and things won’t fix our division! He wants to give us His peace—which is unity—but that’s only possible when we remain in Him.

We shouldn’t receive the Blessed Sacrament with cynicism in our hearts. We can pray and fast for all people to come to a love of the Eucharist, but we must **impact** what we can. We, like St. Mary Magdalene, are sent. The mass is our commission. We first come to encounter the Lord reverently through the priest *in persona Christi*. Then we receive Jesus, magnified in our souls through the Holy Spirit. Then we are sent, sent to the particular place in the world that we have influence over, and we magnify the Lord to others with virtuous living and words.

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Mary Magdalene, devoted to the Body of Christ – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, disciple of the Blessed Virgin Mary – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, prototype of humble reverence – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, Apostle to the Apostles – Keep me close to Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, Ora Pro Nobis. (pray for us)

-Glory Be-