



AN ANALYSIS OF MARY MAGDALENE'S CHARACTER: A FEMINIST APPROACH

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Abstract: *This study entitled, "An Analysis of Mary Magdalene's Character: A Feminist Approach" is aimed to characterize Mary Magdalene in various perspectives. Specifically, it looked into her biographical sketch and characterization. In this study, the research presented only the character and issues pertaining to the sole subject - Mary Magdalene. It is psychosocial relevance to contemporary life and other issues concerning women relevant to the character. Moreover, it also looked into biblical, social, physical, and moral perspectives. The study made use of the qualitative method of research because the study did not only depend on the data provided in the library but also considered the ideas of authorities. The researcher also provided the biography of the subject of the study basing on the different aspects laid. The study made use of the psychological approach in the analysis that provides clarification for actions and reactions of character, sociological approach that puts relation to society's vital role in the organization and deepening of man's role. The summary is as follows: Mary Magdalene's character as a repentant whore is still within the mainstream of consciousness even though the Vatican did a revision in its missal and accorded her the title "Apostle to the Apostles"; Mary was Jesus' pre-eminent female disciple and the leader of a branch of the early movement of Christianity that promoted women's leadership. This study takes cognizance on the suggested recommendation as such it must be treated with caution because of the danger of giving wrong interpretations; education administrators and policy makers should include strict implementation on studies uplifting women and sponsorship of activities towards the development of women.*

Keywords: *analysis, biblical perspective, character, feminist theory, moral perspective, psychological approach, sociological approach*

INTRODUCTION

For thousands of years the world has been exposed to the regulatory power of the phallus – male dominance over women. Women belonged to the disenfranchised class. They were not allowed to exercise their own person. Their contribution to progress and development has been left much less regarded.

So much with the bickering and battering of relegating the female society to a lower



position because they have risen from the deep slumber. Their voices could now be heard. There is a deeper and growing strength that comes from such femininity. It is an outburst of repressed optimism that has long been curtailed. Now that women are out in the mainstream of almost everything, influx of a tender yet gentle outpour of feminine evolution is exercised.

Quite a time, intellectual orgasm for the feminine side has awakened the souls of the sleeping morals. It is in this milieu that the truth should be known why there was male dominance. This is the time we ask ourselves: How does the feminine side look like in these modern times?

If there is one icon in history which would tell us of a revolutionary thought on feminism that is Mary Magdalene. She stands to be one of the most terrifying secrets the world has to know. Was she bound to alter faith or endanger a solid structure here on earth or even to storm thy kingdom? For so long, she was known to be the “fallen woman”, “the repentant whore”, “sinner”, or the most controversial of all “Jesus' bride”.

If she holds such titles, the last being mentioned has left deep thoughts for many scholars and even the ordinary thinkers.

What is in Mary Magdalene that terrifies the foundation of faith? What is in her that may question the credibility of faith or the church? First, she is a woman. A woman who was best known in the bible as a whore but acclaimed in more than a dozen of writings to be one of Jesus' closest allies. She was a faithful companion, confidante, follower, supporter, benefactor and a friend.

(Lester) 2006, Mary Magdalene's ascent to popularity, has fired the imaginations of historians, theologians, writers, and artists for more than two millenia. Venerated as a saint and maligned as a prostitute, she had an important role in the birth of Christianity.

Furthermore, Mary Magdalene would serve as a reminder, if facts were right, that Jesus had undoubtedly lived as an ordinary human being like the rest of us. The character of Mary Magdalene in Jesus' life made a sudden impetus with an extraordinary acclamation and such has been recognized in a huge circulation. She, until today holds a gripping thrill in the minds of many. Even before Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* made a tumultuous invasion in the market, many other books and documentaries have elbowed their way to the consciousness of people. Intriguing and shocking information would come and go but one



thing remains – the woman who apparently knew the all.

Mary Magdalene stood firm in her pedestal. She was one woman who has borne the emotional weight of man's primal fascination with woman – and his fear (<http://www.magdalene.org/gnosticism>).

Hence, Mary Magdalene's character, if viewed differently would give us a rather different illustration of a woman reborn. In fact, after Pope Gregory the Great falsely identified her as a prostitute during the sixth century, a dramatic change was made when The Vatican cleared her name in the 1960s and revised its missal. Pope John Paul II called her “Apostle to the Apostles.” (Lester, 2006)

It is seemed like a signal to applaud her contribution and acknowledge her wisdom as a woman. To this extent, women empowerment would be taken in a higher context not because Mary Magdalene was far more associated in the history of the church but because she embodied a fundamental change in her feminine image inspite of the dictates of the norm of her times.

“...to proclaim women as the source of life, power and energy and to hail the advent of a new feminine language which ceaselessly subverts these patriarchal binary schemes where logocentricism in an effort to oppress and silence women. (Derrida).”

As an initial effort, the researcher has realized the need to not just present Mary Magdalene's character but to offer an avenue for the gradual eradication of social biases, social injustices and prejudices to the female society. That through this approach, many social constructs may be forgiven and be given a new face. Such is not a competition of both sexes – male versus female, but a widening of the spectrum.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

The concept of women empowerment and the recognition or acknowledgement of the feminist views, where women are given a new position in the society is further assailed. While women in the olden times were revered as the weaker sex, new society of today contradicts such. Thus, the argument of altering the old belief and the standpoint of feministic arrogance, so to speak, does not intend to malign the other sex, but only to remind the significance of the existence of women, whether at par or not.

Thus, the character of Mary Magdalene as an embodiment of a woman reborn is a salient



icon in the growing knowledge and awareness of a woman's strength. As Marx (Gay Theory and Criticism) puts it, "Listen to the people who belong to the outside boundaries, and giving chance to the disenfranchised voices, unprivileged or marginalized individuals to speak-out." The idea pointed out is the act of recognition of what women can do in their own capacity and its probable effect in a larger scale.

Subservience is not an idea to be attached. Not even isolation or oppression. If there be an idea of social taboo on homosexuality in order to legitimate heterosexuality then where lies the line for women? Is this what is called a naturalized norm?

The core of feminism is the quest for equality, but somewhere in the evolution of the movement, the central objective turned from achieving equality to achieving supremacy over the opposite sex. (Brusco, 1994)

To this day, how we connect the feminine ideology in a way that challenges and deliberates at the same time will push us to reflect while we expand on some lessons of modernity.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study aimed to characterize Mary Magdalene in various perspectives Specifically, it looked into the following:

1. What is the biographical sketch of Mary Magdalene?
2. What is the characterization of Mary Magdalene along:
 - a. biblical perspective
 - b. social perspective
 - c. physical perspective
 - d. moral perspective
3. What significant perspective of Mary Magdalene contributed to the feminist theory?
4. What is the psychosocial relevance of Mary Magdalene's character to the contemporary times?

SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

This study focused on the analysis of Mary Magdalene's character. It pictured the biographical sketch as a person and her characterization along the biblical, social, physical and moral perspectives. It pointed out which perspective of Mary Magdalene contributed to the feminist theory. Further, it also brought out the psychosocial relevance of her character to contemporary times.



The documentary analysis was limited to reading materials that centered on Mary Magdalene. The external approach to literary criticism was used, particularly the feminist theory as a sole basis to deal on the motives of the writers view of Mary Magdalene.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms are defined and clarified according to the context of the study:

Analysis refers to the detailed examination of anything complex, made in order to understand its nature or to determine its essential features. (Mc Dougall Littel, 1989)

Biblical Perspective pertains to a particular evaluation of a situation or facts, especially derived from the bible or is in harmony with the Bible. (<http://uk.encarta.msn.com/dictionary>)

Character refers to the set of qualities that make somebody or something distinctive, especially somebody's qualities of mind and feeling. (<http://uk.encarta.msn.com/dictionary>)

Feminist Theory is the doctrine which declares the equality of sexes and advocates equal social, political and economic rights for women. (Webster Comprehensive Dictionary, 1996)

Moral Perspective pertains to common standard of justice regarded in terms of what is known to be right or just, as opposed to what is officially or outwardly declared to be right or just. (<http://uk.encarta.msn.com/dictionary>)

Physical Perspective refers to the attributes that are real and touchable: existing in the real material world, rather than as an idea or notion, and able to be touched and seen.

Social Perspective refers to the relation and interaction of people, relating to the way in which people in groups behave, interact and perceive things.

Sociological Approach refers to a method or a way of doing or solving something that which concerns human social relations or conditions.

Psychological Approach refers to a method or a way of doing or solving something which concerns the human mind, affecting human mind: affecting or intended to affect the mind or mental processes.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter presents a brief description of the research method and procedures used in carrying out this study.

When the research to be made was finally decided, the researcher looked for possible available resources, where she could find materials relevant to the study specifically on the



Feminist approach with a sole subject on Mary Magdalene.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The researcher used the qualitative method of research because the study did not only depend on the data provided by the library but also considered the ideas of knowledgeable authorities. Thus, the documentary analysis was the sole technique adopted in the analysis of Mary Magdalene's character.

The research design also provided the biography of the subject of the study basing on the different aspects laid. Likewise, the external approach in the literary analysis helped provide clarification for actions and reactions of character to point out the different perspectives – such as biblical, social, physical and moral perspectives to put relation to society's vital role in the organization and deepening of women's role in contemporary times.

DATA GATHERING

The researcher also visited websites in the Internet that specifically deals on Mary Magdalene, which served as its primordial net of information and data for the study. Pertinent news items, articles, documentaries and other similar write-ups were made as references in the furtherance of studies. Likewise she availed of the books which directly tackled issues on Mary Magdalene and made some references of the different studies, which has relation on the study conducted. No external artifacts were used during the study.

ANALYSIS

The researcher made use of the external approach in the analysis of the materials. Specifically, it focused on the feminist approach to make a critical presentation of Mary Magdalene's character along the literal, interpretative and application levels.

It made use of the Jerome Biblical Commentary Book to clarify the issues surrounding the character of Mary Magdalene.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results and discussion present the interpretation, concept and insights derived from the characterization of the subject of the study – Mary Magdalene.

Biographical Sketch of Mary Magdalene

Today, she bears the name Mary Magdalene. But in Aramaic, she is known to be *Miryam* (an



alternate spelling is Miriam) of *Magdala*. Many sources suggest that Mary Magdalene came from Magdala, a Galilean town mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew immediately following the fishes and loaves story. Magdala was located along the banks of Lake Gennesaret between the cities of Capernaum and Tiberias, an area where Jesus ministered.

Mary Magdalene, whom others call or refer as the “tower of strength,” is mentioned in the New Testament Gospels than any other female follower of Jesus. Scholars say that it is a sure indication of her importance to Christianity. As for her name, Magdalene or Magdala, it was derived from the Hebrew word, *migdal*, meaning tower.

The Greek translation of Magdala Nunnaya (a city where Mary Magdalene came) is “tower of fishes.” Mary Magdalene’s name has been associated with the strength and fortification imagery that a tower represents and the place name of the prosperous fishing community that was her hometown. (Lester 2006)

The Gospel of Mark reveals that Mary Magdalene was possessed by seven devils (devils presented a metaphor for illness) that Jesus cast out, suggesting the he treated and healed her: “Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils” (16:9)

Mary Magdalene’s story might never have been told if it were not intertwined with Jesus’ Resurrection narrative. She was the first eyewitness to the risen savior, commissioned by Jesus to go forth and spread the Good News, and mentioned by all four gospel writers. (Lester 2006)

Moreover, it is a fallacy that Mary Magdalene was ever a prostitute. Biblical scholars have found no evidence to support that myth, which was created by Pope Gregory the Great to illustrate the forgiving nature of Christianity. After unfairly portraying Mary Magdalene for centuries as a redeemed harlot, the Roman Catholic Church in 1969 revised its position and revised its Missal. It now calls Mary Magdalene “Apostle to the Apostles.”

Her feast is celebrated every 22nd of July and she is venerated not only by women but also by men in most part of the world.

Characterization of Mary Magdalene

Biblical Perspective

Mary Magdalene is one of the several women named Mary who appear in the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The following are all the references to Mary Magdalene in



the New Testament, in chronological order of events:

John 8:1-11 A woman caught in adultery subject for stoning

Luke 8: 36 – 50 The Pardon of a Sinful Woman and a anointing of Jesus' feet

In this story of the pardoning of the sinful woman, the woman manifests faith in God that has led her to seek for forgiveness for her sins, and because so much was forgiven, she now overwhelms Jesus with her display of love. On the other hand, anointing of the feet was an unknown custom in the Jewish tradition, while wiping away the oil with the hair would be to say the least, unusual, furthermore, a respectable Jewish woman would hardly appear in the public with her hair unbound.

Luke 8:1-3: Afterward [Jesus] journeyed from one town and village to another, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. Accompanying him were the Twelve and some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary, called Magdalene, from where the seven demons had gone out, Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, Sussana, and many others who provided for them out of their resources.

Mark 15:40: There were also some women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the Less and Joses, and Salome.

Matthew 27:56: Among them was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee. *John 19:25:* But standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

Mark 15:47: Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses were looking on to see where he was laid.

Mary Magdalene and other women followed Jesus and served him Galilee. The detail suggests that after one is being cured or forgiven by Christ, their services in the ministry are expected.

Matthew 27:61: And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite to the grave.

Matthew 28:1: Now after Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to look at the grave.

Mark 16:1: When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, brought spices, so that they might come and anoint Him.



John 20:1: Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already taken away from the tomb.

This suggests faith, which Mary Magdalene and her other companions display in their visit to the tomb but found out that Jesus' body is no longer there. Their bringing of spices to anoint Jesus' body shows their loyalty. On the other hand, the ointment of pure nard would mean in Greek *pistikos* suggestive of its unadulterated state which denotes genuine, pure as to their intention in Christ's company. It may also be suggested as royal dignity.

Mark 16:9: Now after He had risen early on the first day of the week, He first appeared to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had cast out seven demons.

John 20:18: Mary Magdalene came, announcing to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and He had said things to her.

Luke 24: But at daybreak on the first day of the week [the women] took the spices they had prepared and went to the tomb. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb; but when they entered, they did not find the body of Jesus.

While they were puzzling over this, behold two men in dazzling garments appeared to them. They were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground. They said to them, "why do you seek the living one among the dead? He is not here, but he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to the sinners and be crucified, and rise on the third day."

And they remembered his words. Then they returned from the tomb and announced all these things to the eleven and to all the others. The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; the others who accompanied them also told this to the apostles, but their story seemed like nonsense and they did not believe them.

Jesus' apparition to Mary Magdalene must not be facilely identified with being the sinful woman. In here, an irony was presented as to why the savior appeared not to the Twelve but to a woman known for her fallen image. Jesus imparts a new dignity and role to a woman in granting her a right not only to learn the good news of the Kingdom of God but even to participate in Ministry. It must be noted that in Jesus' time, some of the rabbis doubted a woman's ability to learn the *Torah*.

From all of these passages which her name appears bear and reflect the following themes:
She was relieved of seven demons.



She was provided for Jesus' ministry out of her financial means.

She witnessed the crucifixion.

She witnessed the entombment.

She went to anoint Jesus' body in the tomb,

She witnessed angels and other signs at the tomb.

She was either the first or one of the first people to see the resurrected Jesus.

She received a commission to tell the other disciples about the resurrection.

She told the disciples about the resurrection and was disbelieved.

Mary Magdalene is a primarily Christian figure who is mentioned several times in areas of significance in the New Testament Gospels. Her identity is often conflated with those other women, which may have led to her faulty identification as a reformed prostitute. During the Middle Ages she was alternately honored as a faithful follower of Jesus and a lustful courtesan, and ultimately became an incredibly popular saint. Medieval legends paint Mary Magdalene as an apostle, healer, and hermit in addition to her traditional gospel roles. The Roman Catholic Church no longer officially teaches that she was a reformed prostitute, but many Catholic and non-Catholic Christians are still receiving that message. The more positive aspect of the reformed prostitute identity is that it has spawned a great number of helpful women's relief organizations.

She appeared in the New Testament Gospels but after the resurrection narrative, nothing more was said about her. But whether her accounts were only up to that stage, what would certainly matter were the works she has done during those appearances.

As Jesus went on in his ministry, evangelizing and preaching the word of God, there had to be one figure that was close to her aside from her mother and the Twelve, Mary Magdalene. Her first encounter with Jesus was when He had cast out the seven devils and the stoning incident. From then on, she was never seen without Jesus. Such act of being forgiven was reciprocated by more acts of goodness. When Jesus healed and saved her from the angry crowd, Mary Magdalene's fate seem have made a three hundred sixty degree turn. She took pride of such opportunity to be personally healed by the savior and joined her ministry later on. There came about a different Mary Magdalene.

It was told that she was Jesus' friend, a close ally, confidante, and a faithful follower. A shift from then on surfaced as she came to know God's words. A strong-willed woman, who



despite the dictates of her times, moved over with great ease in proclaiming the good news by standing beside Jesus' most troubled and humiliating moments. She was there during Jesus' crucifixion, agony and death. With a few companions, with a few companions so to speak. She did not hide like Peter or the other disciples nor denied Jesus. She stood firm on His side displaying a great deal of loyalty, devotion and independence. She was not all fueled to sulk in the tent like the others.

Mary Magdalene made a great step as a woman when Peter was thinking of what could be done to him when they would know that he was in Jesus' company and so with others who took their own flight.

Lester (2006) tells us that most Christians believe that Mary Magdalene was a faithful follower of Jesus and that their relationship may have evolved until she became a close friend and confidante. Experts say that a good predictor of future leadership lies in the past leadership behavior and skills. Mary Magdalene might have been a leader or a woman of significant standing in her community before meeting Jesus and may have put her leadership skills to use in the movement after the resurrection.

Moreover, as this information would contradict what she was previously engaged in – prostitution, Mary Magdalene was said to have provided for Jesus out of her own resources. Perhaps she had sold woolen items that she had woven or had a business concerned with fish or baked goods. She and her other women companions took care of what was needed. But more than her monetary resources, Mary Magdalene bore a great love for Jesus and freely gave of that as well.

Another important role to which Mary Magdalene was known for was that Jesus' resurrection depended upon the testimony of women. The Gospels reveal that Mary Magdalene, Salome, Joanna, Mary (the mother of James and Joses), and other women disciples escorted Jesus to death. Mary Magdalene witnessed his transcendent form, and gave her a message to carry to the others. Biblical scholars think this represents strong proof of the historical event of the resurrection because men would not have included women in a society that rejected women as legal witnesses. (Lester 2006)

Social Perspective

The fallen woman, as she was 'popularly' known. This title takes root from Pope Gregory the Great's homily within which he conflated three women identities:



“...she whom Luke calls the sinful woman, whom John calls Mary, we believe to be the Mary from who seven devils were ejected according to Mark.”

For more than millennia, Mary Magdalene has been commonly believed within Christianity to be a reformed prostitute, and idea that is now almost universally recognized as erroneous. But according to researches there are no direct or explicit accounts even from the Holy Texts which tells us of Mary Magdalene as a prostitute. By the Middle Ages, Mary Magdalene’s reputation as a repentant sinner, however she came by it, was solidified. She was honored nonetheless as a friend of Jesus, a faithful and honorable follower, and an apostle.

The only problem is that it turns out that she was not bad, just interpreted that way. Discrepancies notwithstanding the net impression of a woman of substance, brave and smart and devoted, who plays a crucial –perhaps irreplaceable- role in Christianity’s defining moment.

Mary Magdalene’s image became distorted when early church leaders bundled into her story those of several less distinguished women whom the Bible did not name or referred to without a last name. On the other hand, a sinning woman was appended simply to provide missing backstory for a figure of obvious importance. Whatever the motivation, the effect of the process was drastic and from a feminist perspective, tragic.

Physical Perspective

The frequently asked question on Mary Magdalene’s outer appearance was: Did she have long, red hair? Probably not, but the truth is, we really have no idea what she looked like. She was Jewish, so the odds are overwhelmingly strong that she looked like other Jewish women from Palestine, which means she probably was not fair-skinned European with red or blonde hair, as she appears in most paintings or images.

Mary Magdalene probably became associated with long hair through the assumption that she was the woman who performed the anointing on Jesus in the Gospels. That woman was said to have washed Jesus’ feet with her tears and to have wiped them dry with her long hair. Wearing her hair loose would have been considered scandalous at that time, so this particular characteristic was to follow Mary Magdalene throughout time. Even today Mary Magdalene is portrayed with long, uncovered hair in the movies (see Monica Bellucci’s Mary Magdalene in *The Passion of the Christ* compared to the Virgin Mary, who kept her hair



covered at all times).

The color red is another issue entirely. Red has long been associated with desire, the flesh, and sin, so perhaps it is only natural that Mary Magdalene would have been associated with that color given her shady reputation. Taking note of Isaiah 1:18: *Come now, and let us reason together, said the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

In this aspect, the hair has something to do with a woman's stature in the society. In Isaiah, a chapter which is entitled the *Doom for the Fine Ladies of Jerusalem*, states that an elegant hairdo was a sign of wealth and nobility. The ladies worked diligently at the art of hairdressing, an art probably imported from a foreign country. Such was their way of attracting men along side with their gait, wanton glances, and fine ankle bracelets. For in those times, spinsterhood and being without a child for women is considered a misfortune. Whereas in Luke, it tells that a respectable Jewish woman would hardly appear in public with her hair unbound.

Moral Perspective

The one thing that anchors Mary Magdalene's character to any thinker is that she was a fallen woman. What the norms and standards of society would set is way out of her character. The question on was she really a prostitute would probably fall as a cliché as it has been proved or either disproved by scholars. As she is the woman who was probably hiding in plain sight of controversy as to her status, well we do not know for sure and probably not. There is nothing in the Gospels, or anywhere else for that matter, that says that she was a prostitute, a fallen woman, a harlot, or a sinner.

Her reputation as a redeemed prostitute has two likely origins:

She was associated with Mary of Bethany, who performed the anointing of Jesus in the Gospel of John. The woman who performed the anointing in the Gospel of Luke was an anonymous "sinner" from the city. It is assumed that the sinner woman was a prostitute, but even that is an extrapolation. So if Mary Magdalene was Mary of Bethany, and Mary of Bethany was the anonymous sinner from Luke, and if the anonymous from Luke was a prostitute, well, there goes Mary Magdalene's good name.

Mary Magdalene was relieved of seven demons. In the Middle Ages, there were seven cardinal sins, and Mary Magdalene's seven demons were often thought to be related to



them. Primarily, Mary Magdalene was associated with the sins of lust and vanity, but the correspondence of seven demons with seven sins was just too good for the medieval mind to pass up. This contributed to Mary Magdalene's sinful reputation.

What significant perspective of Mary Magdalene contributed to the feminist theory?

All four perspectives shape the character of the subject, Mary Magdalene and are contributory to the shaping of the feminist point of view in this study and when shared consequently, will benefit a larger scale.

Mary Magdalene's character is shaped not only how she was known to be but how she was not known to be. Paradoxically laid, her character stood firm and stood the test of time that today, women all over the world has another thing to say about her. And notwithstanding the stigma, being a harlot, that is being slowly taken into another context not because there were texts like that of Dan Brown, Elaine Pagels, Ki Longfellow, Barbara Thiering, Lynn Picknett, Clive Prince and many others but because women take pride of her different kind of approach than to just being the person she was known to be. She transcended more than what was expected of her. It was not for sure, easy do to do so on her part, considering how her times would have affected her role as a woman. She lived in those days where women were only seen in the domestic threshold and regarded the weaker class or the weaker sex. Hailing her in this new advent means women have become more aware of their status in the society. It would have been a great struggle on Mary Magdalene to outdo what was least expected of her – just being plain woman during those times she was with Jesus. It might have taken on another context the friendship established with the Savior, who she was known to be his closest ally, as in the company of women. Far more than that, is the beacon she shed all through these years as women are being held on another view. No longer the weaker part of the humankind, but as an ally to the 'man.' How deep would have been her connection to the booming organization she herself has wrought for thousands of years being Jesus' companion.

It is indeed another spectacle to see when women saw and drew strength from this hilariously mistaken 'harlot'. Mary Magdalene is in the process of becoming something of a cult figure. She is being pressed into service to fill several needs and roles in today's charged atmosphere of religious evolution. The Christian Church is under increasing pressure to sweep out the cobwebs of orthodox tradition and prejudice, while its patriarchal and



misogynist history and continuing tendencies are under attack by both scholars and laity.

What is the psychosocial relevance of Mary Magdalene's character to the contemporary times?

It is an indubitable fact that Mary Magdalene shared a different kind of aura from among the many bible characters. She was set to be the most controversial, ravishing in that sense. Her appearance not only in the holy texts but in many other forms whether fiction or non-fiction only tells us of one thing – Mary Magdalene is a celebrity. Celebrity in a sense that, she is no longer pictured as she was pictured thousands of years ago. She is given a face lift in the mainstream. Like a promising actress who takes roles, so unpredictable of how she is to portray. Who would ever think that after all these years of being a 'renowned harlot' (although no direct accounts) she would be a vessel to what is called women empowerment. Not only because of her 'repentant' side but because she displayed more than what she is supposed to be repentant of.

If women of this milieu will only cage to her to that, then they are not actually getting into her system. More than that is Mary Magdalene. As she is a tower, a fortress, many other titles may be afforded in her behalf but none would ever be possible if she were not a woman. That makes her unique.

Women now take pride in the name Magdalene not because it is a saint's name but because it holds a promising title in history of Church.

Moreover, it can be cited that Mary Magdalene as evidenced both to her early importance, at least in some communities, and as a virtual play-by-play of a forgotten gender battle, in which church fathers eventually prevailed over the people who never got the chance to be known as church mothers. In this juncture, Mary Magdalene's strong attachment to the savior makes a case for a stronger role for women in the church.

Lastly, though Mary Magdalene's character being a wayward prostitute seem to have a hard time being unnoticed, she still made a different turn when she came back to Christ seeking remission for her sins. Her contrition and humility had brought her forgiveness and earned her the special attention and protection of the savior. With this, she has given us a clearer view of what hope means and what forgiveness may bring somebody. She is making women stronger individuals with this kind of resoluteness.

In this modern times, we can see the different faces of Mary Magdalene. They may not



actually take the same course as she did but her ways of transcending the patriarchal aggressiveness. Let us put in our list these women figures, Imelda Marcos for example, who not taking the doom of her husband, managed to instill the femininity of women through her love for the arts, music and other aesthetics. Not all women can be very expressive of such wanting. She remained to be a strong woman amidst the tension and controversy she and her family has gotten into. Famous for her shoes and lingerie, she remains not only a glamour queen but a woman of bold spirit. Another figure would be the late Jacqueline Lee Bouvier Kennedy (later known Jackie Onassis) was a woman of a bolder spirit. She stood by her husband's unnerving tantrums. Being the president's wife, she was expected of a gargantuan task, like being the president behind the president during the times wherein her husband, the late John F. Kennedy went on philandering. She practically took the grips in the White House. A wife to the president, and a mother to the American people, made her so much loved but all people knew of her turmoil.

Taking almost the same plight was Hillary Rodham Clinton. When her husband faced the Monica Lewinsky scandal, she stood beside him. Battled against the odds. A lawyer, a well-educated woman like her would not have considered her president's stature and left him with all the accusations being hurled. In here, a woman's strength is tested. She now occupies a public office and bent to be another man's ultimate foe in the political arena.

Evita Peron was a spiritual leader in Argentina. Like Imelda Marcos, she used her charm and elegance in advancing the regime of her husband. She gained international attention during her Rainbow Tour of Europe to promote Argentinean interests, and at home she was instrumental in the formation of the Perónist Women's Party, as well as The Eva Perón Foundation for charitable works among the nation's poor.

The dedication of these women gives us a wider perspective of how women have grown. They have carved their own personalities, styles in this world, where man is believed to be the raging rulers.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Summary of Findings

The following is a summary of what has been discussed in the analysis of Mary Magdalene's



character:

Mary Magdalene's character as a repentant whore is still within the mainstream of consciousness even though the Vatican did a revision in its missal and accorded her title "Apostle to the Apostles." Mary Magdalene is not widely known to be Jesus' faithful follower and who afforded Him freely all the services during the ministry.

Moreover, Mary Magdalene was Jesus' faithful companion and one of the witnesses during the resurrection. Mary Magdalene held an important role in the continuance of Jesus' public ministry. Mary Magdalene was Jesus' pre-eminent female disciple and the leader of a branch of the early movement of Christianity that promoted women's leadership. Finally, Catholics consider her as saint. Her feast is day is celebrated every 22nd of July in the Roman calendar and the message of resurrection was entrusted to her.

Conclusions

Mary Magdalene's life remains to be shrouded in myth, misconception, mystery and controversy. The holy texts reveal that Jesus had cast out of her seven demons. Depicted as a fallen woman and marginalized in the texts that were deemed to have been acceptable for inclusion in the bible.

Her role and reputation within the Christian context has left us a remarkable story. She is a figure who has been demeaned and discounted by patriarchy which led Christianity for more than two millennia. Her close connection to Jesus may have evoked jealousy from among the male disciples who at that were stiff of the rules as power were held by men and women were less participative of public affairs.

She also depicts a picture of complexity because no one really knew how sufficient she was in so providing for Jesus' needs during the ministry and alongside was her attraction to Jesus' teachings and follow him.

There are only a few enumerations about her in the Bible so that after the resurrection story, none of her was heard. But her story tries to illustrate that even a fallen woman may receive the mercy of God.

As Mary Magdalene's enjoys a unprecedented level of awareness and popularity, more women take pride in assigning their thoughts upon her. She stands to be one of the figures where women draw strength at these times where there are a lot of crises being encountered. She gave a new identity to women. She paved way for a greater expression of



femininity, where women can freely express and assert their rights. Now, Mary Magdalene creates a far more beautiful sight to behold. Just knowing how dedicated she was and how greatly she contributed to the success of Jesus' ministry. She was deeply attached not primarily to the 'man' behind the faith majority of us belong to, but her fascination to leadership and so leading many to the truth and light.

Recommendations

The researcher recognizes the opportunity given to her to study the character of Mary Magdalene. The time and effort being exerted in this endeavor has been paid off as she unraveled the many beautiful insights and truths.

In the light of the foregoing findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are suggested:

Studies such as this must be treated with caution because of the danger of giving wrong interpretations literature teachers, should also make an emphasis on the importance of women studies education administrators and policy makers should include strict implementation on studies uplifting women and sponsorship of activities towards the development of women

Furthermore, the researcher recommends that future researchers conduct studies focusing on the current issues regarding women and to make a follow-up study not only on Mary Magdalene but explore other women figures who have greatly contributed to the influx of feminist movement

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