

St Mary Magdalene

Isaiah 53, 7 - 9

He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He opened not His mouth;
He was led as a lamb to the slaughter,
And as a sheep before its shearers is silent,
So He opened not His mouth.

He was taken from prison and from judgment,
And who will declare His generation?
For He was cut off from the land of the living;
For the transgressions of My people He was stricken.

And they made His grave with the wicked—
But with the rich at His death,
Because He had done no violence,
Nor was any deceit in His mouth.

Mary Magdalene remembers

Judea is not an easy place for a woman to live, especially one like me. Men show little respect and expect a lot. Which is why this particular man made such an impression on me. He seemed unconcerned about my past and genuinely interested in me as a person. I remember his kindness to me - rescuing me out of my sordid lifestyle and showing me what real love could be.

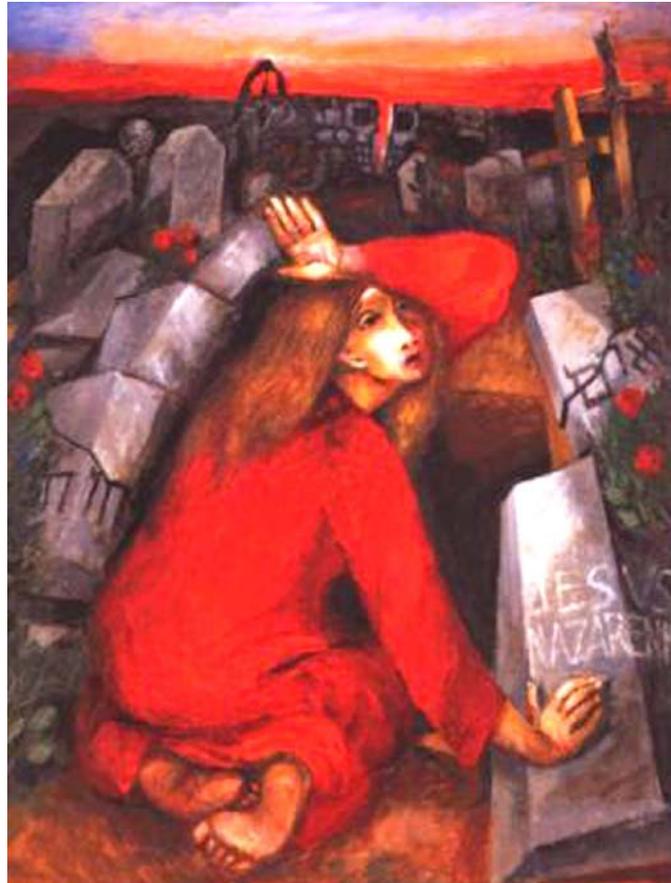
Because of him, I became friendly with Mary, his mother. We grew very close - we both shared a great love for him. Which is why I stood with her on that day as we watched him die like a criminal. Normally we would not go near an execution - the screams, the evident torment and the ridicule for the victims by those who go for the spectacle. But this time we had to be there - to be with him. We knew he had done nothing wrong. Quite the opposite - his life was spent serving others, healing the sick and showing how to live a life of love.

There was something strange about his birth. Mary was never completely forthcoming about it, but she did tell me once what happened when she and Joseph presented Jesus in the temple. A man came straight up to them, took the baby in his arms, blessed him and said some amazing words of prophecy. Her son was the



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Messiah, or as the man said "God's salvation". He also told Mary "A sword will pierce your soul". She had often wondered what he had meant by that. Standing on the hill outside Jerusalem - standing with her and watching her son die - we both understood what he meant.



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Prayer

God of such unwavering love, how do I "celebrate" the passion and death of Jesus? I often want to look the other way and not watch, not stay with Jesus in his suffering. Give me the strength to see his love with honesty and compassion and to feel deeply your own forgiveness and mercy for me. I want to bring my weaknesses and imperfections to Jesus as I journey with Him, so aware of his love for me.