

**Homily – Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene
Mass with Newly Arrived Clergy and Religious – July 22, 2024**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Saint Mary Magdalene's life and witness offer us profound insights into the journey of seeking and encountering God. Mary Magdalene is often considered the prototype of the seeker, driven by a deep desire inscribed in the heart of every human being – a desire for God, the love of our soul.

The imagery of a woman searching for her beloved, in the Song of Songs, resonates deeply with Mary Magdalene's experience. Even though she knew Jesus had died, she sought Him with a relentless passion, much like the bride seeking her beloved in the night. Her heart yearned to see Him, to feel His presence, and to hear His voice once more.

This yearning reflects the universal human experience. We all seek God, sometimes in places of emptiness and darkness. Our efforts may often seem fruitless, yet we must learn to hope against all hope. We yearn for that encounter with God, as the Psalmist cries out, *“For you my body yearns; for you my soul thirsts, in a land parched, lifeless, and without water.”*

In her search, Mary Magdalene did not initially find the Lord; rather, it was Jesus who came to her encounter. This reminds us that while we seek God, it is ultimately He who finds us. Jesus's questions to Mary – *“Why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for?”* – invite us to reflect deeply on the reasons for our own tears and the true object of our search.

Mary sought a dead body but encountered the Living God. She recognized Jesus only when He called her by name. This moment of recognition was a revelation. God was already in her

heart. Mary's experience reminds us that our search for God is ultimately fulfilled when we hear Him call us by name. The intimate, personal encounter, which once transformed us, must be constantly renewed. It is a grace for which we must pray.

Upon recognizing Jesus, Mary Magdalene is given a mission: *"Go to my brothers and tell them, 'I am going to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"* In this command, Mary is made the Apostle to the Apostles. Her encounter with the Risen Lord propels her into mission. We cannot keep the joy of the Resurrection to ourselves. *"The love of Christ impels us."* (2 Cor 5:14).

Pope Francis has invited us to *"allow this experience – which is inscribed in the Gospel – also to be imprinted in our hearts and shine forth from our lives."* The Church – in the Pope's voice – summons us to allow the joyous wonder of the Resurrection *"to shine forth in our thoughts, glances, behaviour, gestures and words... If only we were so luminous! But this is not just cosmetic! It comes from within, from a heart immersed in the source of this joy, like that of Mary Magdalene, who wept over the loss of her Lord and could hardly believe her eyes seeing him Risen."*

As I welcome you to the Archdiocese of San Antonio, allow me to echo the invitation from the Holy Spirit for your love to drive you to seek. May the love of God fulfill you ever more as you are once and again encountered by Him. And may you be once more sent out on mission by that love.

May the tender and constant protection of Our Lady of Guadalupe strengthen your determination to allow yourselves be loved by our Lord and be his faithful messengers.