

CMCC BSP#10

Group Sharing Questions

Question 1: Mary Magdalene was a devoted disciple of Jesus. According to Luke 8:2, she had a life-changing conversion. What happened to her? What did the gospels say about her? (Read Luke 7:36-50, Luke 10:38-42, John 12:1-3) Read CCC 641 below. What role did Jesus give to Mary Magdalene and the holy women with her?

CCC 641: Mary Magdalene and the holy women who came to finish anointing the body of Jesus, which had been buried in haste because the Sabbath began on the evening of Good Friday, were the first to encounter the Risen One. Thus the women were the first messengers of Christ's Resurrection for the apostles themselves.

Question 2: Read John 20:19-23. What is the significance of Jesus breathing on the disciples? What sacrament finds its origins in the words recorded in v.23? (Read CCC 976 & 1087 below.)

CCC 976: It was when he gave the Holy Spirit to his apostles that the risen Christ conferred on them his own divine power to forgive sins: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

CCC 1087: Thus the risen Christ, by giving the Holy Spirit to the apostles, entrusted to them his power of sanctifying (CCC makes reference to John 20:21-23 in support of this teaching); they became sacramental signs of Christ. By the power of the same Holy Spirit they entrusted this power to their successors. This "apostolic succession" structures the whole liturgical life of the Church and is itself sacramental, handed on by the sacrament of Holy Orders.

Question 3: Have you ever struggled with doubt like Thomas? Has God helped to resolve your doubts? If so, how?

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Answers for Group Sharing Questions

Question 1:

The answers can be found in the quoted bible passages.

Question 2:

The sacrament of reconciliation. CCC 1087 explains why the power of forgiving sins, given by Jesus to the apostles, is also handed down to Church and its clergy today.

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Notes

Note A: She, one and the same subject, is (in her temporal origins) black, but (henceforth) beautiful... She must remain “mindful” of the fact that she has been redeemed by pure grace and raised up from being a whore to being a bride.... The Fathers have no difficulty in calling the Church “defiled” with reference to the sinners who belong to her...One can reduce the Church’s immaculateness to that part of her institutional life that is outside the human sphere (in particular, the sacraments); the absolute purity of the bride, composed as she is of human beings, is then explained as an eschatological grandeur, toward which the Church strives.

Hans von Balthasar, *Explorations in Theology II: Spouse of the Word*, p.282-3

Note B: To raise and transform that corpse, which symbolized the climax of deliberate evil, was to announce what redemption finally comes to. It is not escape from a wicked world, but God’s willingness to transform this material world with all its history of sin and suffering.