

Keeping Our Marys Straight – Epiphany – 4/8/18

I. Preparation

- A. Check for markers
- B. O God, you have taken to yourself the blessed Virgin Mary, mother of your incarnate Son: Grant that we, who have been redeemed by his blood, may share with her the glory of your eternal kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

II. Talking today about all the people named Mary

- A. My suggestion. Often find myself getting confused.
- B. 58 references to “Mary” in the Old Testament. Referring to 7-9 individual women.
- C. Color-coded list.
- D. Take them in order of the frequency with which they get mentioned
- E. Show you everything I have to say. Two minutes.

III. St Mary the mother of Jesus

- A. She’s one of our saints.
- B. August 15.
- C. Collect is for her (BCP 243).
- D. Celebrate the Annunciation March 25. Why this day? (think 9 months)
- E. To Roman Catholics, special status:
 - 1. Appeared to believers over the centuries
 - 2. Immaculate conception
 - 3. Perpetual virginity (including Cranmer and John Wesley)
 - 4. Assumption

IV. St Mary Magdalene

- A. July 22
- B. Her Collect: Almighty God, whose blessed Son restored Mary Magdalene to health of body and of mind, and called her to be a witness of his resurrection: Mercifully grant that by your grace we may be healed from all our infirmities and know you in the power of his unending life; who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen.
- C. Probably should call her “Mary the witness.”
- D. Stayed with Jesus when the other apostles deserted him.
- E. Present for the crucifixion of Jesus, witness in all 4 gospels to the empty tomb. Present according to all 4 gospels 2 days later to testify to the resurrection John and Mark specifically name her as the first person to see Jesus after his resurrection.

- F. There is a “Gospel of Mary” that didn’t make it into the Canon. Widely thought to be produced by Mary of Magdala or her followers. Gnostic.
- G. She was said to be wealthy and prominent. Presented herself at the court of Tiberius Caesar to describe the resurrection. (story of the egg)
- H. So was she a prostitute?
- I. See Superstar last Sunday night?
- J. Lots written on the way we slowly converted a respected elder of the church to a repentant prostitute. [Here’s a great article.](#)
- K. The most prominent event was the sermons of Pope Gregory in 591. “The Composite Magdalene.” Conflated Mary Magdalene, Mary of Bethany, and the unnamed sinner who anoints Jesus’s feet in Luke 7. Her fate was settled after that.

V. Mary of Bethany

- A. What do we know of Mary and Martha?
- B. Mary was really into Jesus’s feet
 - 1. Listened at his feet when he taught
 - 2. Fell at his feet in grief
 - 3. Anoints Jesus’s feet in Luke 12
 - 4. Wiped his feet with her hair
- C. Extravagant generosity. The nard was said to be worth a year’s wages.
- D. Sensed what the apostles didn’t, that Jesus would die. Mark 14.
- E. Became an evangelist, describing the resurrection. John 11:45.

VI. Mary mother of James and Joseph

- A. Know relatively little about her
- B. One ancient source says with certainty that she was the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus.
- C. Relics in both France and Italy

VII. Mary of Clopus

- A. Know even less about her
- B. Only one reference, John 19:25
- C. Present at Jesus’s crucifixion
- D. Some speculation that she was the wife of Cleopas, the brother of Saint Joseph the father of Jesus

VIII. Close with prayer:

Heavenly Father, you have graced us with strong, perceptive, faithful women who have advanced your kingdom for thousands of years. Help women today to emulate them and carry on your work. Help men today to help them or get out of their way, so we all can be more like Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**