

Abstract

The Diploma thesis „Devotion and iconography of st. Mary Magdalen“ – Two biblical characters have been associated with Mary Magdalene since the time of Gregory the Great; the unnamed sinner and Mary of Bethany. According to the Bible Mary Magdalene was one of the women who accompanied Jesus during His ministry. She was the woman from whom Jesus had cast out seven demons. She washed Jesus' feet with her tears and ointment.

When Jesus was crucified she was there standing under the cross. She was present at His funeral. On Easter Sunday she went to the grave of the Lord to anoint His body. She discovered the empty tomb and saw the resurrected Jesus, who appeared to her as a gardener and sent her to announce His Resurrection to His disciples.

She is considered “the apostle of the Apostles”. According to an old French legend she was put in a boat without sails or oars and sailed to Marseilles, where she preached the gospel. Then she retreated to a cavern. There she lived as a recluse for thirty years. Every day she was lifted by angels up to heaven.

She was buried in Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume. Her main cult centers were the places where her relics had been preserved; Vezelay in Burgundy in the Romanesque period , and Saint-Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume since the 13th to 18th century. She is usually depicted as a penitent in a cave. Her attributes are a skull and a cross. She is a representative of the Vita Contemplativa.