

The ecstasies of Sr. Mary Magdalen continued. In some, Jesus was urging her to reform the Church and her community. Together with the spread of the Gospel and an anxiety for the salvation of souls, this theme of the renewal of the Church and of religious life in the Church, became her major focuses. She wrote a dozen letters which still exist today, dating from July 25 to September 4, 1586, dictated by the saint while in ecstasy. Each of the twelve letters deals with the same topic: the urgent need for the renewal of the Church and in particular of religious.

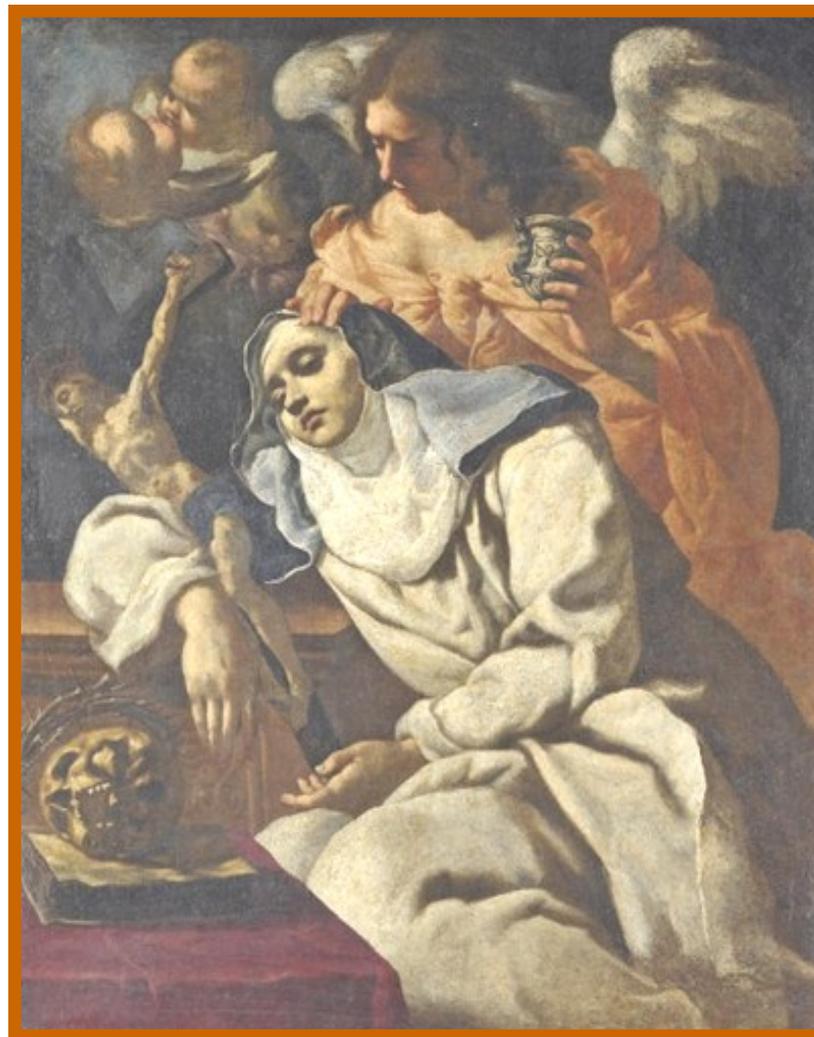
On the feast of Pentecost, June 10, 1590, in a vision of the saints, Mary Magdalen was freed from "the lion's den." Her ecstasies began occurring less frequently but then only ceased with her last illness, beginning in 1604. It was in this year that she took to her bed. For some time she had been suffering hemorrhages, fever, and coughing spells. Violent headaches were part of her suffering to the point she could not eat. This was a perfect expression of her motto to suffer and not to die. She received the Anointing of the sick on May 13, 1607 and died 12 days later on May 25, 1607. The nuns were present reciting the "Symbol" of St. Anastasius a prayer which was very dear to her. Her last words were recorded to be "Benedictus Deus" (Blessed be God). Following her death, various miracles occurred when people visited her grave. After her death her body was found to be intact and remains incorrupt to this day. She was beatified in August 1626 by Pope Urban VIII and canonized by Pope Clement IX on April 28, 1669. It was not because of her experience of ecstasy that she was canonized but for her perfection of love, manifested in fidelity to daily duty and sincere dedication to the needs of others. *(excerpted from: [//Carmelites.info](http://Carmelites.info);

www.magnificat.ca; www.catholicfire.blogspot.com)

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Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi

Feast Day: May 29



Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi

in Ecstasy

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*Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi was born in Florence, Italy on 2 April 1566 and baptized at the "beautiful Saint John" fount with the name Catherine. She was the only daughter of the illustrious Camille de Pazzi, related to the Medicis of Florence. She showed a particular sensitivity to the supernatural from childhood and was attracted by intimate colloquy with God. As was the custom for children of noble families, her education was entrusted to the Dames of Malta, in whose monastery she received her First Holy Communion on 25 March 1576. Several years later she vowed to consecrate her life to God. She took great pleasure in teaching Christian doctrine to poor children.

Her father, not knowing of her vow, wished to give her in marriage, but she persuaded him to allow her to become a religious, and chose the Carmelites, because there the nuns received Communion frequently. She entered in the year of the death of Saint Teresa of Avila, 1582, at the age of sixteen. It had been more difficult to obtain her mother's consent; while still a novice, her mother sent a portrait artist to the convent, with instructions that her daughter be portrayed in lay clothing. The Sisters complied with her request, and the portrait can still be seen in the Convent. She became professed at eighteen years of age in the Carmelite monastery of Santa Maria degli Angeli in Florence, May 17, 1584, on the Feast of the Holy Trinity. She changed her name to that of Mary Magdalene on becoming a nun, and took as her motto, "To suffer and not to die."

The Florentine monastery was frequently a gathering place for women of the court of Florence-- among them the future wife of Henry IV of France. Others more familiar with the lives of the religious leaders and

members of the religious orders came calling, giving the saint an opportunity to become very familiar with the shortcomings of life in the Church.

Shortly after her profession, Mary Magdalen went into a state of ecstasy which lasted for forty days. Every morning after Mass, the young sister fell into an ecstasy lasting two hours. At other times she experienced "excess of love." These ecstasies continued into the year 1585 often with such frequency that one other nun recorded, "We can hardly find a free moment to speak to her, as she is constantly in a state of elevation of mind." Often these ecstasies involved colloquy (discussion with Jesus).

This time of spiritual consolation was followed by "the lion's den," a five-year period of "the greatest trial and affliction of spirit," beginning on Trinity Sunday, June 16, 1585. Gone was the sense of joy in God's presence. Her whole life seemed a mistake. She was severely tested against chastity. She underwent doubts about her vocation. Ecstasies were still experienced but they brought little comfort. She was tempted to run away from the monastery.

The Church in the second half of the 1500's was struggling with its interior difficulties as well as forces for change from the outside. The Council of Trent had concluded in 1563, three years before Catherine was born. The people and the hierarchy were still struggling to implement the doctrinal statements and the reforms called for by the Council years after Pope Paul IV confirmed all the Council's decrees on January 26, 1564. Within the lengthy list of the Council's reforms was that of religious life.