

The Testament of Mary

by Colm Tóibín

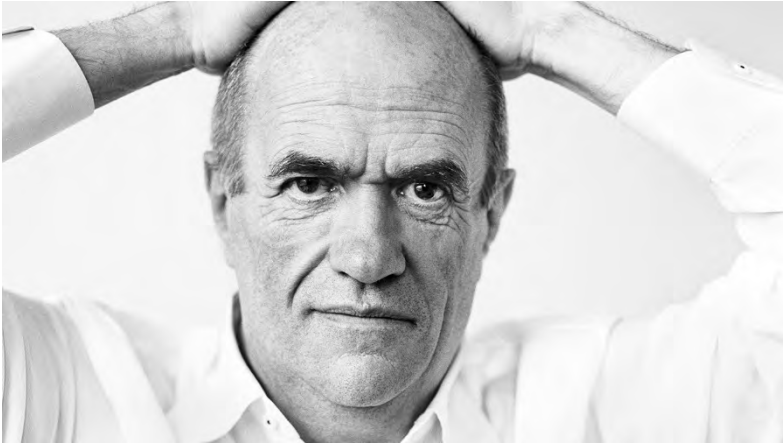
Audience Resource Guide

**LOUDMOUTH
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Colm Tóibín Biography



Colm Tóibín was born in 1955 in Enniscorthy, County Wexford, Ireland, the fourth of five children. He began writing poetry and stories at the age of 12, soon after the death of his father. In boarding school, he became a voracious reader, and he went on to graduate from University College Dublin. Immediately after college, he moved to Barcelona and taught English for three years before returning to Ireland to begin a career in journalism.

He worked as a journalist, columnist and editor for several Irish papers and magazines from the late 1970s to the early 1980s, gaining an audience through his regular columns in papers like the *Dublin Sunday Independent*, and ultimately becoming the editor of *Magill*, Ireland's leading current affairs magazine, during its heyday from 1982 to 1985. After leaving the magazine, Tóibín moved to South America. He settled for a while in Argentina, writing about the trial of President Galtieri and other authorities accused of human rights violations. His best journalism from this period is collected in *The Trial of the General*, which includes sections on South America, Africa, Ireland and more.

In 1987, he published *Walking Along the Border*, an account of a journey by foot along the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, the first of many travelogues he would publish between novels. His first novel, *The South*, was completed in 1986, but not published until 1990, when it was met with widespread acclaim.

Colm Tóibín is the author of seven novels: *The South*, *The Heather Blazing*, *The Story of the Night*, *The Blackwater Lightship*, *The Master*, which won the *Los Angeles Times* Book Prize for fiction; *Brooklyn*, which won the Costa Fiction Award; and *The Testament of Mary*, as well as *Mothers and Sons*, a book of short stories. He has given workshops and master classes at Listowel Writers Week, The Arvon Foundation and The American University at Washington, D.C., and has also taught at the New School, Princeton University, Stanford University and the University of Texas at Austin. Tóibín's books have been translated into 28 languages. He is a regular contributor to the *London Review of Books* and *The New York Review of Books*.

A Note from Director Jessica Rose McVay



I was first given Colm Tóibín's novella in the winter of 2013. My friend handed it to me and said, "It finally gives her a voice." And it did. I read the truth of loss, the pain and anger of a mother whose son died, and what for? The Bible tells us it was to save us all. We read about the Savior, and his mother, the icon, the vessel which brought him into the world to save us. She is a statue, a monument to the role of the silent, stoic woman who gave her son to die. Colm Tóibín gives us a human Mary, a woman dealing with her loss, and also her complicated, often difficult, painful relationship with her son.

Particularly under our current president who has made it clear that the voices of artists, the voices of women and the voices of non-white people will not be heard, I wanted our *The Testament of Mary* to give voice to a woman who has been silenced, and spoken for too long, to give artistic license and expression to an all-female creative team, and to remember that the Mary, Queen of Heaven, was a refugee.

While this story belongs to the past, it reflects the unforgiving world in which we live. The systematic murder of young Black and Brown men in our country has led to a groundswell in movements, movements that have the possibility to change our world. Still we have to ask, are their deaths worth it?

This script has given me hope in the last year. It gives female voice to a story which has been told by men for the last two thousand years. It is a small change, and it is still change. I hope that Mary's final words will call us to action, spurring us not to accept the stories we are told as truth, but to speak truth to power.

***Our Lady of the Fragile Humanity* by Colm Tóibín**

Every night from as early as I can remember the family knelt in the evening and said the rosary. Each mystery, as they were called, had 10 Hail Marys; the first part of each Hail Mary was recited by a single voice, and then the second part — “Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen” — by the rest of the family in unison. At the end my mother would recite some extra prayers, including the “Memorare,” which began, “Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who sought thy aid or implored thy intercession was left unaided.”



*From left, Fiona Shaw, Colm Toibin and Deborah Warner, in the Walter Kerr Theater.
Joshua Bright for The New York Times*

The spirit of the language of some of those prayers have made their way into the tone and texture of my new play “The Testament of Mary.”

I was trained as an altar boy in my town in the southeast of Ireland, where I learned how to assist with the rituals of the Mass. I learned to kneel, genuflect, serve the priest, ring the bells. The Roman Catholic Church and its rituals were so much part of life that, although my parents would often question a small matter of dogma and none of us seemed more religious than anyone else, no one ever questioned the rituals or the basic tenets of belief.

Our Lady, in all her glory, was as much Queen of Ireland as she was Queen of Heaven. The partition of Ireland had created a Roman Catholic state in the south, and most people seemed content with that. The dutiful Mother of God inspired the dutiful mother, who stayed at home and was meant to remain meek. One clause of Article 41.2 of the Irish Constitution of 1937, which is still in place to this day, reads, “The State recognizes that by her life within the home, woman gives to the state a support without which the common good cannot be achieved.”

In my 20s, as I began to travel in Europe, I found comfort in religious paintings. Even though my own belief in Catholic dogma had been shaken and weakened, I found that the beauty and the richness of the art still held me.

One day in a secular space close to the Frari in Venice I found Tintoretto’s painting of the Crucifixion. It was filled with untidy life; Tintoretto made the scene chaotic rather than redemptive or noble. It made me wonder what it might have been like to have been there on Calvary that day and to have witnessed the death of Jesus on the cross; it made me wonder how different it might have actually been from the account in the Gospels.

In those years, as I came into my 30s, I needed as much Catholic art as I could get to keep the anger at bay about what was happening in Ireland and indeed in Catholicism. Divorce was still banned under the Irish Constitution. Efforts to make contraception easily available were proving immensely difficult.



Fiona Shaw with Pinhead, the vulture who appears with her in The Testament of Mary.
Joshua Bright for The New York Times

As the AIDS crisis became apparent, access to condoms was restricted. Even though abortion was illegal, in 1983 a clause was inserted into the Constitution copper-fastening the ban. The old Victorian laws against homosexuality were still on the statute books until the early 1990s. As a gay man living in Ireland I and people like me found it easy to feel less than citizens.

The church I was brought up in seemed not a place of comfort as much as an institution frozen in its own rules and rituals. Its position was not helped by the revelations about priests sexually abusing children,

some of which happened in the very school I attended.

As a writer I had an easy time ignoring this and finding other stories to tell. If I needed to attack the church, I could write an article or a pamphlet. I had, in any case, my own private demons, and I was busy finding forms in fiction for them. I left other people to try to reform Ireland.

But nothing is ever as simple as that. The line between the private and the public, under uneasy pressures, can become blurred. In Ireland novels and plays still have a strange force. The writing of fiction and the creation of theatrical images can affect life there more powerfully and stealthily than speeches, or even legislation. Imagined worlds can lodge deeply in the private sphere, dislodging much else, especially when the public sphere is fragile.

Toward the end of 2008, there appeared almost a vacuum of faith in Ireland. Revelations about the sexual abuse of children put pressure on the Catholic church, and the gradual waning of religious practice, especially among younger people, took hold. I thought of writing a play in which the Virgin Mary, the silent woman we prayed to, would speak. But the impulse to write the play was not political, was not to intervene in a debate about the church, but rather to work with a voice that had mattered to me personally, a voice that was iconic as well as human.

I realized that I was playing with fire. Some neighbors, and indeed some friends, despite their views on the Catholic church itself, still had a deep devotion to Mary as the grieving mother of God, all the more to be worshiped with intensity and prayed to in time of need.

Slowly, as I began to work, it was clear to me how much persistent power those views of Mary have. Even in my pages Mary indeed remained an icon. I wished to give her a voice, let her speak, but I had no interest in reducing her or bringing her down to size.

I wanted to create a mortal woman, someone who has lived in the world. Her suffering would have to be real, her memory exact, her tone urgent. But she would also have to live at some distance from the rest of us.

She would inhabit a real house, but it could not be the house next door. She would have to have grandeur in her tone as well as a deep fragility. There could be nothing, however, in between. I realized how hard and challenging this would be for a director and an actress.

I worked in short sharp bursts, as though there would not be much time. The best images came at night. The sources for Mary's life — the four Gospels — were often no help. I needed to create her version of the story. I needed to find her voice and follow it, respect it, but also wield and shape it.



*Colm Toibin, the Irish playwright of *The Testament of Mary*, at the Walter Kerr Theater.
Joshua Bright for *The New York Times**

Having seen great performances in the Irish theater by actresses like Siobhan McKenna, Fiona Shaw and Marie Mullen made an enormous difference to me as I worked. In their performances the act of utterance itself took on a sort of soaring nervous power. I wrote the play and had a workshop of the text with Ms. Mullen and the director Garry Hynes for a production at the Dublin Theater Festival. I will never forget the silence in the theater there as it became clear to the audience that Ms. Mullen, the figure on the stage, was Mary in all her humanity.

Afterward I rewrote the text, extended it and published it as a novel. And then for the Broadway production, I rewrote the original play, with the images starker, the voice even more urgent and filled with human pain.

I was aware, as I worked on this production with Ms. Shaw and the director Deborah Warner, of the work they had done before. I was aware of the fierce level of commitment they had offered to every single word or nuance in those plays, in which women turned vulnerability into a kind of strength by the use of voice, plays in which a woman's anger, her power, her politics, her wit, could be made flesh. I had seen Ms. Shaw play Hedda Gabler, Medea and Winnie in Beckett's "Happy Days" in Dublin. I had been part of the awed and transformed audiences there.

I knew, however, that "The Testament of Mary" was going to take even more work; it carried greater risks because there is no one but Mary on the stage. Thus there is no casual conversation. Every word had to pay its

way, stand alone, hit its mark. I sat with director and actress as they parsed and studied and tested every single word. They were looking for a real figure within the icon so that every image would be a display of single, suffering woman without losing sight of the spiritual and the iconic. As I worked on the text, I had had in mind something that could not be taken lightly by an audience.

Now, as I watched Ms. Shaw preparing to do the part, I realized that she was an interpreter whose commitment to theater at its most pure and risky and dangerous and public was even more developed than mine, and even more exacting. But in the end I realized that we were both working out of the self at its most secret and dark and private.

Both of us had Irish Catholic childhoods. We knew the same prayers. We had arrived too at a time in our lives when we could forget about anger and allow something else to emerge from all that beauty and all that faith.

We could imagine what it might have been like in a time of turmoil for a woman to go through immense suffering, a woman who was human and mortal before she became the exalted figure to whom we prayed.

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Bible Stories Retold in *The Testament of Mary* and Other Religious Influences

Book of Luke, Chapter 1 (KJV)

1 Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eyewitnesses, and ministers of the word;

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus,

4 That thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

5 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

6 And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years.

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense.

11 And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.



17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

20 And, behold, thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple: for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that, as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying,

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.

29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda;
40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.
41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost:
42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.
43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?
44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.
45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.
46 And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,
47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.
48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.
49 For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.
50 And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation.
51 He hath shewed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.
53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.
54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;
55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.
56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.
57 Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.
58 And her neighbours and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her; and they rejoiced with her.
59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.
60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.
61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.
62 And they made signs to his father, how he would have him called.
63 And he asked for a writing table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.
64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.
65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judaea.
66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

67 And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,
68 Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,
69 And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;
70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began:
71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;
72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant;
73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,
74 That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear,
75 In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life.
76 And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;
77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins,
78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,
79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.
80 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

Book of John, Chapter 2 (KJV)

1 And the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there:

2 And both Jesus was called, and his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, They have no wine.



4 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

6 And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples: and they continued there not many days.

13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

18 Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But he spake of the temple of his body.

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man.

Book of John, Chapter 11, Verses 1-44

1 Now a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha.

2 (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

5 Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us go into Judaea again.

8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11 These things said he: and after that he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep.

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well.

13 Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him.

16 Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellowdisciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.

17 Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.



18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off:
19 And many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.
20 Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house.
21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.
22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.
23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.
24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.
25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:
26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?
27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.
28 And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee.
29 As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.
30 Now Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.
31 The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary, that she rose up hastily and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth unto the grave to weep there.
32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.
33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,
34 And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.
35 Jesus wept.
36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!
37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?
38 Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.
39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.
40 Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?
41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.
42 And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.
43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

44 And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

Book of John, Chapter 19

1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.



14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.
35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.
36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.
37 And again another scripture saith, They shall look on him whom they pierced.
38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.
39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.
40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.
41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.
42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

Book of John, Chapter 20

1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.
2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.
3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.
4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.
5 And he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.
6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,
7 And the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.
8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.
9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.
10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.
11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,
12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.
13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

19 Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.



Hail, Holy Queen Prayer

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.

The Gospel of Mary Magdalene

In this gnostic gospel, Mary Magdalene appears as a disciple, singled out by Jesus for special teachings. In this excerpt, the other disciples are discouraged and grieving Jesus' death. Mary stands up and attempts to comfort them, reminding them that Jesus' presence remains with them. Peter asks her to tell them the words of Jesus which she remembers. To his surprise, she does not reminisce about past conversations with Jesus, but claims that Jesus spoke to her that very day in a vision.

From The Nag Hammadi Library in English, J M Robinson, Harper Collins

But they were grieved. They wept greatly, saying, "How shall we go to the gentiles and preach the gospel of the kingdom of the Son of Man? If they did not spare him, how will they spare us?" Then Mary stood up, greeted them all, and said to her brethren, "Do not weep and do not grieve nor be irresolute, for His grace will be entirely with you and will protect you. But rather let us praise His greatness, for He has prepared us and made us into men." When Mary said this, she turned their hearts to the Good, and they began to discuss the words of the [Saviour].

Peter said to Mary, "Sister, we know that the Saviour loved you more than the rest of women. Tell us the words of the Saviour which you remember - which you know (but) we do not, nor have we heard them." Mary answered and said, "What is hidden from you I will proclaim to you." And she began to speak to them these words: "I," she said, "I saw the Lord in a vision and I said to him, 'Lord, I saw you today in a vision.' He answered and said to me, 'Blessed are you that you did not waver at the sight of me. For where the mind is, there is the treasure.' I said to him, 'Lord, how does he who sees the vision see it through the soul or through the spirit?' The Saviour answered and said, 'He does not see through the soul nor through the spirit, but the mind which [is] between the two - that is [what] sees the vision...'

(the mid-section of the original text is missing)

"[S] it. And desire that, 'I did not see you descending, but now I see you ascending. Why do you lie, since you belong to me?' The soul answered and said, 'I saw you. You did not see me nor recognise me. I served you as a garment, and you did not know me.' When it had said this, it went away rejoicing greatly.

"Again it came to the third power, which is called ignorance. It (the power) questioned the soul saying, 'Where are you going? In wickedness are you bound. But you are bound; do not judge!' And the soul said, 'Why do you judge me although I have not judged? I was bound though I have not bound. I was not recognised. But I have recognised that the All is being dissolved, both the earthly (things) and the heavenly'.

When the soul had overcome the third power, it went upwards and saw the fourth power, (which) took seven forms. The first form is darkness, the second desire, the third ignorance, the fourth is the excitement of death, the

fifth is the kingdom of the flesh, the sixth is the foolish wisdom of flesh, the seventh is the wrathful wisdom. These are the seven [powers] of wrath. They ask the soul, "Whence do you come, slayer of men, or where are you going, conqueror of space?" The soul answered and said, "What binds me has been slain, and what surrounds me has been overcome, and my desire has been ended and ignorance has died. In a [world] I was released from a world, [and] in a type from a heavenly type, and (from) the fetter of oblivion which is transient. From this time on will I attain to the rest of the time, of the season, of the aeon, in silence."

When Mary had said this, she fell silent, since it was to this point that the Saviour had spoken with her. But Andrew answered and said to the brethren, "Say what you (wish to) say about what she has said. I at least do not believe that the Saviour said this. For certainly these teachings are strange ideas." Peter answered and spoke concerning these same things. He questioned them about the Saviour: "Did He really speak with a woman without our knowledge (and) not openly? Are we to turn about and all listen to her? Did He prefer her to us?"

Then Mary wept and said to Peter, "My brother Peter, what do you think? Do you think that I thought this up myself in my heart, or that I am lying about the Saviour? Levi answered and said to Peter, "Peter, you have always been hot - tempered. Now I see you contending against the woman like the adversaries. But if the Saviour made her worthy, who are you indeed to reject her? Surely the Saviour knows her very well. That is why He loved her more than us. Rather let us be ashamed and put on the perfect man and acquire him for ourselves as He commanded us, and preach the gospel, not laying down any other rule or other law beyond what the Saviour said." ... and they began to go forth [to] proclaim and to preach.

Representations of Mary through History

