

2013 U.S. TOUR OF THE RELIC OF SAINT MARY MAGDALENE

February 20 — March 22, 2013

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St. Joseph Catholic Church in Downers Grove Will Host the Relic of Saint Mary Magdalene on Saturday, March 9th

DOWNERS GROVE—Bishop R. Daniel Conlon and other bishops of Illinois sent letters of invitation to Bishop Dominique Rey, of Fréjus-Toulon in Southern France, to carry Saint Mary Magdalene's relic, a major piece of her tibia, in a reliquary to Illinois for a one-month tour.



A portion of the tibia of Saint Mary Magdalene is enclosed in a glass tube and then placed in the reliquary

Father Henri-Dominique de Spéville, OP, a French Dominican priest, will carry the relic in a reliquary to Chicago for its debut on February 20th at St. Vincent Ferrer Church in River Forest. For two weeks the relic will visit churches in the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Diocese of Joliet for 21 days. Then the relic will visit churches in the Diocese of Peoria, Springfield and the Archdiocese of St. Louis, Missouri, where the final day of the tour will take place at St. Dominic Priory in St. Louis.

The purpose of the tour, which continues through March 22nd, is to share the holiness of the relic and to tell the story of the saint who is recorded as the first witness to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. She is often referred to as *Apostle to the Apostles*. Tradition has it that some years after the Crucifixion, Mary Magdalene was imprisoned. On release she and other close followers of Jesus were cast out to sea on the shores of Palestine in a boat without sails or oars or supplies. The boat miraculously came to shore on the coast of Gaul (France) in a town near Marseille. After preaching with her companions and converting the whole of Provence, Mary Magdalene retired to a mountain cave, known as *La Sainte-Baume* (which means holy cave), and spent the last thirty years of her life in solitude.

A letter of authenticity from Bishop Dominique Rey reports that the relics were hidden at the time of the Saracen invasions and rediscovered in 1279, and have been venerated without interruption ever since.

For centuries the relics were missing—disappearing from about 710 A.D. when the Saracens pillaged the South of France and the Church hid sacred objects to safeguard

St. Joseph Catholic Church

4824 Highland Avenue

Downers Grove, Illinois 60515 630-964-0216

Saturday, March 9th

7:50 am—candlelight procession

carrying the relic to the foot of the altar,

8 am Holy Mass

9 - 9:45 am—Spiritual Talk

"Mary Magdalene and the Most Holy Eucharist,"

by Deacon James Devine from the Basilique

Sainte-Marie-Madeleine in Provence,

9:45 am—Chaplet & Litany to Saint Mary Magdalene,

10 am—relic departs.



them. Then in 1279, they were discovered by Charles II of Anjou, the Count of Provence. In a crypt of a chapel in the town of *St. Maximin-la-Sainte-Baume* was found a sarcophagus. Upon opening, the air was filled with an aromatic fragrance. The sarcophagus contained a piece of old parchment wrapped in wax dated 710 A.D. and a wooden tablet with the words, *"Here lies the body of Mary Magdalene."*

Shortly after this discovery Pope Boniface VIII published the pontifical bull for the establishment of the Dominicans at *La Sainte-Baume* (the cave) and St. Maximin, (town of the Basilica of Saint Mary Magdalene—20 miles from the cave). The Dominicans have remained guards of the relic ever since. The home of Father Henri-Dominique de Spéville is *La Sainte-Baume*, where hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, including many kings and popes and saints, have continued to journey to pray and to give thanks for the intercession of Saint Mary Magdalene.