

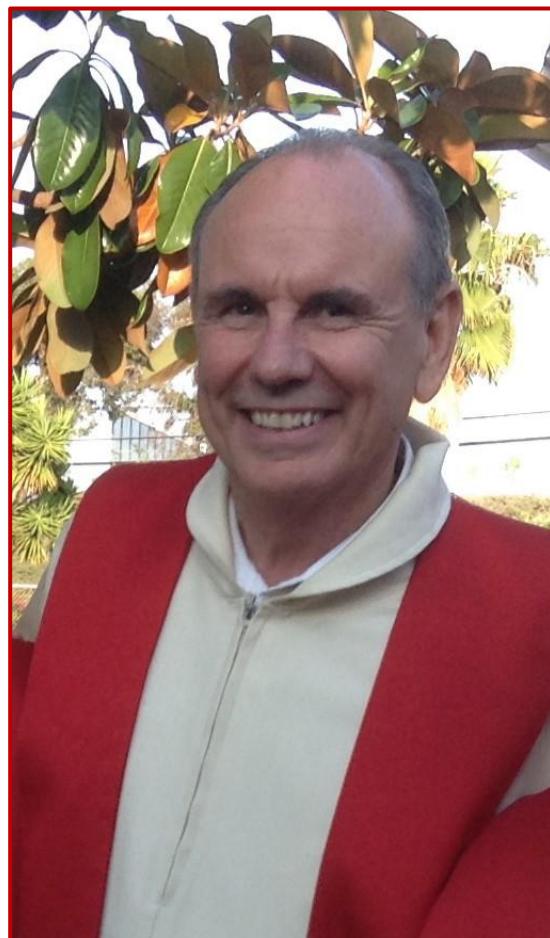
Mary Magdalene the Apostle Catholic Community



“A new way to be Roman Catholic”

- Making Catholicism relevant*
- Restoring women's ordination*
- Living the change we envision*

Celebration of Life



Rod Allen Teissere Stephens
November 1, 1948 ~ December 3, 2025

Mary Magdalene Introductory Welcome**GONG**

Good afternoon. Whether you are joining us online or in person, welcome to Mary Magdalene the Apostle Catholic Community based in San Diego, CA, on the unceded territories of the many tribes and bands of the Kumeyaay nation, our neighbors. Today, we celebrate the life of Rod Stephens, co-founder and dear friend of this community.

My name is Esther LaPorta, one of your lectors today. Ray Trybus is our other lector. Jane Via is our in-person homilist and presider. Nancy Corran is our online presider.

Know that wherever you are and whoever you are, you are welcome here, just as you are. We are glad you are joining us as, together, we remember Rod.

At Mary Magdalene, we have an open Eucharistic table; communion is open to all. As we remember our communion with Rod, all who wish to come forward to partake of the gluten free bread and red wine or white grape juice are welcome to do so during our communion rite.

For those of you joining us online, the worship aid is available on our website and is posted in the chat. You may wish to have bread and wine or something similar with you to share in our communion.

You will find a restroom across the courtyard. Please do not use the restroom reserved for preschool students.

At the conclusion of our liturgy, you are invited to a simple reception in the Garden Room, in the building to your left as you exit the chapel.

Please now stand and face the narthex as we begin our celebration of Rod's life.

GONG**OPENING RITES****Processional** (*instrumental music*)**Sprinkling of the Assembly**

Nancy to introduce Sprinkling Rite

Presider:

In the waters of baptism,
 Rod died with Christ and rose with Christ to new life.
 May he now share in cosmic splendor.

Greeting

We have gathered. And we begin...
 +In the name of God who is love, Jesus who lived love, and the Holy Spirit who breathes love into human hearts... ***Amen.***

The grace of Jesus, the Risen Christ;
 the love of God, who raises us from the dead;
 and the surpassing peace of the Holy Spirit, be with you...

R: And also with you.

WELCOMES:

Howard Seller (Rod's spouse, Howard, will offer words of welcome)

MMACC:

Welcome to this MMACC celebration of Rod Stephen's life. As members of Mary Magdalene the Apostle Catholic Community, we especially welcome Rod's family: his beloved spouse Howard Seller; his nephew, Broc Stephens, Broc's wife, Jasmine and their two sons, Hunter and Prescott. We welcome and thank friend Matt Knowlton, who accompanied Howard here today. MMACC members also welcome Rod's friends who are with us online. We come together this afternoon to remember the gift of Rod in our lives and to minister to one another in our loss.

This gathering constitutes a unique assembly, one never before gathered, one likely never to gather again. What brings us together is not geography, nor a shared faith tradition, nor the manner in which we practice a religious denomination. Rather, we are called by Rod, whose life we celebrate and whose loss we share. We come in a ministry of comfort to Howard, Rod's extended family and friends and one another. In shared loss and shared comfort, we find strength and hope.

Howard selected our eulogists for today.

EULOGIES, written by:

1. **Phil Faker**
2. **Nancy Corran**
3. **Broc Stephens**

Opening Song

“God of Wonders”

Hindalong & Byrd

God of all creation, of water, earth, and sky;
The cosmos is Your tabernacle, glory to You, God on high.

***God of wonders, You fill the galaxies, You are holy, holy.
The universe declares Your majesty; You are holy, holy.
God of heaven and earth. God of heaven and earth.***

Early in the morning, we will celebrate the light.
When we stumble in the darkness,
we will call Your name by night. **(R)**

Holy, holy, holy! Oh! Holy Myst'ry! On this day and always,
our song shall rise to Thee. Holy, holy, holy! Infinite Compassion, God still revealing,
we sing our praise to Thee! **(R)**

Opening Prayer:

Consoling One, You have prepared a place for Rod and called him home. Today, we celebrate that Rod is born anew unto You, embraced by Holy Love. We acknowledge his lifelong journey to You. May this celebration speed him on his way and support his new life among the angels and saints. Welcome him into the fullness of Your cosmic splendor. We pray in Jesus' name....

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First Reading:

“Everything Becomes a Door”
by Fr. Francis Dorff, O. PRAEM., Norbertine

We'll know we have been raised from the dead
when everything becomes a door -
every brick wall,
every dead end,
every Judas friend,
everything we see and smell and taste,
everything we think and feel and are,
every mountain top and valley bottom,
every birth and every death,
every joy and every pain,
every ecstasy and infidelity,

when every single thing becomes a door
that opens to eternity
and we pass through
as we could never do before.
And then we'll wonder why
we've spent so many years
just stopping at these doors;
why we've always pulled up short,
and turned around,
and walked away,
instead of passing through.

The Word of a holy poet
[R] Thanks be to God.

Psalm*Sung response by Clarence Rivers**Psalm 1:1-2, 3, 6 (Nan Merrill, with minor adaptation)*

The Psalm response is sung:

R: God is love, and they who abide in Love, abide in God, and God in them.

Blessed are those
 who walk hand in hand with goodness,
 who stand beside virtue,
 who sit in the seat of truth.

Their delight is in the Spirit of Love,
 and in Love's heart they dwell day and night.

R: God is love, and they who abide in Love, abide in God, and God in them.

They are like trees planted by streams of water,
 that yield fruit in due season,
 and their leaves flourish.

In all that they do, they give life.

R: God is love, and they who abide in Love, abide in God, and God in them.*[Moment of Silence]***Gospel Acclamation [Sung]***Tompkins***Alleluia, alleluia! We listen to the word of God.****Alleluia, alleluia! We proclaim the gospel of our God!****Gospel:** *Matthew 5:1-12, The Beatitudes as rendered by Rod Stephens*

God is with you. [

R: And also with you.

A Reading from the Gospel attributed to Matthew.

R: Glory to you, O God.

Jesus sat down with the people and began to teach them:

Blessed are all who have poverty of spirit,
 Who proclaim heaven in their need.

Blessed are all who mourn,
 And those who offer hope and comfort to the mournful.

Blessed are all who live in meekness
 it is their strength and the inheritance of peace.

Blessed are all who hunger and thirst for what is good and just.
 It is our hunger and thirst that will call the world in peace.

Blessed are all who live in compassion.
 It grows and nourishes all.
 Blessed are all whose hearts are untarnished by fear.
 God is revealed in them.

Blessed are all who live in peace;
 they are servants of the Holy One.
 Blessed are all who, when encountering fear and hate,
 proclaim heaven with a response of love.
 Blessed are all who stand facing pain, loss, and war;
 They are recognized as whole and holy.
 Let us rejoice! Be glad! Have hope and peace.
 These are all the rewards we need!

The Good News of God's Love.

Praise to You, Jesus the Christ.

Homily

Jane Via

P **rayers of the Faithful**

*From *And Morning Came: Scriptures of the Resurrection*, by Megan McKenna, Sheed & Ward, 2003

"This is our vocation, our life-long mission, to make resurrection music out of what remains for us and for the world."* With that calling in our minds and hearts, let us ask God for all that we need in this time of loss and sadness, as well as rich remembrance.

Our response: Into your hands we commend our spirits.

All: Into your hands we commend our spirits.

In memory eternal of our beloved Rod, whose home-going we honor today, that we also may live with his commitment to social justice, beauty in Liturgy and prayer, and prophetic stance in support of women's ministry ... we pray ...

All: Into your hands we commend our spirits.

For Howard, Broc, Broc's Family, Matt and all who mourn the loss of Rod's physical presence, may they find comfort and peace knowing we mourn with them and support them in their love and loss... we pray ...

All: Into your hands we commend our spirits.

O Risen One, splendor of Cosmic Light and Sun of righteousness, come and enlighten with new life and hope all of us who have known and loved and learned from Rod ... we pray ...

All: Into your hands we commend our spirits.

Even with heavy hearts we still sing Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!! Blessed is Rod and all who dwell with You in Your house of many rooms ... we pray ...

All: Into your hands we commend our spirits.

The Earth contains the dust of countless generations of our ancestors, as well as the blood of Jesus and of our contemporaries killed in war. May this God-beloved Earth become for them and for us the garden of resurrection and new life ... we pray ...

All: Into your hands we commend our spirits.

For those who find themselves unable to share our trust in Resurrection and new life ... we pray as Jesus said we should ...

All: Into your hands we commend our spirits.

Let us now take a moment of silence to bring to mind all our personal prayers ...

[Brief pause]

For all these prayers from the depths of our hearts ... we pray ...

All: Into your hands we commend our spirits.

Presider's Prayer concluding the POF:

Holy Mystery, we offer these prayers from the depths of our loss and our love for Rod. May they bring us consolation and remind us to seek always to live in harmony with God's desires for the world, as Rod did. We pray...

LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Offertory Song: "From the Many, Make us One"

Alonso

Cantor: Jesus prayed before he died,

All: To this table now we come

Cantor: "Make them one this whole world-wide.

All: From the many, make us one.

Cantor: Every shade and tribe and tongue

All: To this table now we come

Cantor: every gender, old and young."

All: From the many, make us one.

When we sing, and when we cry, as we live and as we die:

To this table now we come. From the many, make us one.

Cantor: Jesus washed their feet and cried,

All: To this table now we come

Cantor: grieved the deeds that would divide.

All: From the many, make us one.

Cantor: Bow us down, now, each to all;

All: To this table now we come

Cantor: Make this world a banquet hall.

All: From the many, make us one.

When we sing, and when we cry, as we live and as we die:

To this table now we come. From the many, make us one.

Cantor: All alike at table share:

All: To this table now we come

Cantor: God and world are wedded here.

All: From the many, make us one.

Cantor: No more borders, prisons, walls.

All: To this table now we come

Cantor: Open wide our banquet hall.

All: From the many, make us one.

When we sing, and when we cry, as we live and as we die:

To this table now we come. From the many, make us one.

Preparation of the Gifts

Blessed are you, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this bread to offer, which earth has given, and human hands have made.

It will become for us the bread of life.

R: Blessed be God forever.

Blessed are you, God of all creation. Through your goodness we have this wine to offer, fruit of the vine, and work of human hands. It will become our spiritual drink.

R: Blessed be God forever

The gifts are ready. All are welcome at this table.

R: Holy Love, may these gifts nourish us on our life journeys.

Prayer with Our Gifts

In life and in death, O God, we belong to You. In this bread, broken and shared, and in this cup, poured out and shared, we remember also that we belong to one another. We give thanks for Rod who partook of this meal at this table, who is now with us in the communion of saints, we pray...

Eucharistic Prayer

God dwells in you. **And also in you.**

Lift up your hearts to the One who is Love. **We open our hearts.**

Let us give God thanks and praise. **We give our thanks and praise!**

Presider: At your word, all creation came to be: the vast expanse of interstellar space, galaxies, stars, the planets in their courses and this fragile earth, our island home. From the primal elements, You brought forth human beings and blessed us to participate in Your cosmic life, Your cosmic dance.

Voice 1 (online): From the beginning, You shaped us to live in community. Our individual well-being is bound to the well-being of all. And so, with all your people through time and space, with all creation, we join our voices in singing Your unending praise:

Sanctus

Tompkins

**Wholly, wholly, holy God. God of wonder, God of awe.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory!
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed are all who come in the name of God.
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!
Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!**

Voice 2

In Jesus, we learn how to serve others, even strangers and enemies. Jesus worked for the common good, sought out those in need of community, and befriended those who were isolated. He challenged structures that divide and separate people.

Voice 3

The Spirit that worked through Jesus works through us. The Spirit of courage that kept Jesus proclaiming love, even in the face of death, can live in us.

(Please extend your hand, palm up, toward the bread and wine.)

Presider: Pour out your Spirit on us and on these gifts of bread and wine. May they be for us the Body of Christ, that we might be the body of Christ in the world. We remember that...

All:

**On the night of his betrayal, Jesus shared a meal with his friends.
He took bread, blessed it, broke it, gave it to them, saying:
"This is my body. Do this in memory of me."**

[Pause]

In the same way, Jesus took the cup filled with wine. He gave You thanks, and gave the cup to his friends, saying: "Take this all of you and drink. This is my life-blood; the cup of Love. Do this in memory of me."

Presider: Let us proclaim the mystery of faith: [Sung]

Tompkins

We remember You. We remember You.

Jesus who loved, lived and died; Rising in our hearts.

Voice 4: Empower us to bring about a world where justice reigns and love flourishes. May we hold our leaders, secular and religious, accountable to this difficult work.

Presider: We remember everyone who has touched our lives, especially Rod. Be with all who are sick and all who suffer, especially those who mourn. Be with Rod and all who have gone before us into the fullness of cosmic splendor. Gather people of all ways of life to share in Your one unending banquet. In Your presence, we give You glory with all creation and with Jesus through whom Your goodness flows.

**Through Christ, With Christ, In Christ
In the unity of the Holy Spirit,
may all glory and honor be Yours, forever and ever:**

The Great Amen [Sung]

Tompkins

*We eat this bread; we drink this cup.**We share as one body of Christ.**We give our thanks; we give our thanks. Amen, amen, amen!***Communion Rite****Prayer of Jesus** [Sung]

Kosits

The prayer often called the "Our Father" has been translated and rendered in many ways over the last 2,000 years. Please feel free to pray using the language most comfortable to you. We offer this contemporary sung version.

*Loving God, in Whom is Heaven,
 May Your name be honored everywhere.
 May Your kin-dom come,
 May your heart's desire be done
 in us, by us, and through us.
 Give us the bread we need for each day.
 Forgive us. Enable us to forgive others.
 And keep us from... all anxiety and fear.
 For You reign in the pow'r of Love, which is Your glory,
 forever and ever. Amen.*

Sign of Peace

May the peace of God be with you always.

[R] And also with you.

Let us offer a gesture of peace to those seated around us.

Lamb of God [Sung]

Tompkins

*Bread of Life, you call us to live in expectant hope.
 Cup of Love, you call us to witness to your love.
 Jesus the Christ, you call us to work,
 For peace and justice in our world.
 Grant us peace. Grant us peace. Grant us peace.*

This is the Bread of the Resurrection, the Wine of New Life.

[R] When we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim love stronger than death.

These are the gifts of God for the people of God. At Mary Magdalene, the Apostle, all are welcome at the table, for this is God's table. Whoever you are and wherever you are on your journey, know that you are invited to partake of the gluten free Eucharistic bread, and the consecrated red wine or white grape juice. Come! God's table is ready! Amen...

Communion Songs:

"I Am the Bread of Life"*Suzanne Toolan, RSM*

I am the bread of life. You who come to me shall not hunger;
 You who believe in me shall not thirst.
 All you who follow me, come when the Holy beckons.

***And I will raise you up, and I will raise you up,
 And I will raise you up on the last day.***

The bread that I will give is my life for the life of the world,
 And if you eat of this bread, you shall live forever,
 you shall live forever. **(R)**

When you eat of this living and holy bread, and drink of this cup,
 and drink of this cup, you shall have life within you. **(R)**

I am the Resurrection. I am the life. If you believe in me,
 even though you die, you shall have life within you. **(R)**

Yes, I believe, that you are the Christ, the Holy One of God,
 Who has come into the world. **(R)**

"Eagle's Wings"*Joncas*

You who dwell in the shelter of our God,
 who abide in God's shadow for life,
 Say to your God: "My refuge, my rock in whom I trust."

***And I will raise you up on eagle's wings,
 bear you on the breath of dawn,
 Make you to shine like the sun,
 and hold you in the palm of My hand.***

Temptation and pride will never capture you,
 and famine will bring you no fear.
 Under God's wings your refuge,
 God's faithfulness your shield. **[R]**

You need not fear the terror of the night,
 nor the arrow that flies by day;
 Though thousands fall about you, near you it shall not come. **[R]**

For to the angels God's given a command
 to guard you in all of your ways.
 With all their strength, they will bear you up,
 lest you dash your foot against a stone. **[R]**

Closing Prayer: "The Thing is"*Eileen Bass**This poem captures Howard's experience of loss and commitment to Life.*

to love life, to love it even
 when you have no stomach for it
 and everything you've held dear
 crumbles like burnt paper in your hands,
 your throat filled with the silt of it.
 When grief sits with you, its tropical heat
 thickening the air, heavy as water
 more fit for gills than lungs;
 when grief weights you down like your own flesh
 only more of it, an obesity of grief,
 you think, *How can a body withstand this?*
 Then you hold life like a face
 between your palms, a plain face,
 no charming smile, no violet eyes,
 and you say, yes, I will take you
 I will love you, again.

CLOSING RITES**COMMENDATION RITE****Introduction:**

*Before we go our separate ways, let us take leave of our co-founder and friend, Rod.
 May our farewell express our love and affection for him. May it ease our sadness and
 strengthen our hope. One day, may we joyfully greet him again when the love of Christ, which
 conquers all things, destroys even death itself. Amen.*

Commendation:

Into Your hands, Sacred Spirit, we entrust our brother, Rod. In life, You embraced him with tender love and sealed him as Your own. In the life which transcends death, may he rest in the peace of Christ, absorbed into the very womb of Love Itself.

May the saints come to greet him, and the angels come to meet him, as You welcome him to the Table of Divine Love, where there is no sorrow nor weeping, and no pain, but only the fullness of joy and peace. As Rod's faith united him to Your people in this life, may it unite him with You in life everlasting.

Closing Blessing

*Rod believed in the God who is Love.
May our hearts be strengthened with Holy Love.*

*Rod radiated authenticity and joy in life.
May we be gifted with authenticity and joy in our lives.*

*With creativity, enthusiasm and reverence for Beauty,
Rod lived in service to family, friends and people in need.
May we be blessed with the energy to serve others.*

*Rod remains with us in the communion of saints. May he, with God, bless us now and forever...
Let the church say, **Amen.***

Sending Forth

This Mass is ended. The celebration continues.

We go in peace to serve Holy Love.

Thanks be to God.

Closing Song

“We shall Rise Again” *J. Young*

1. Come to me all you weary, with your burdens and pain
Take my yoke on your shoulders and learn from me.
I am gentle and humble, and your soul will find rest,
For my yoke is easy and my burden light.

*We shall rise again on the last day
with the faithful, rich and poor.
Coming to the house of our God in love,
We will find an open door; yes, we will find an open door.*

2. From the tomb, I have been raised; life renewed, God's acclaim.
Allelu, alleluia, I live, I walk again.
I call you to walk with me, send you on ahead.
Spread the news, I am living, and death is now dead. **(R)**

3. (optional)

Hymns of praise let us sing now; with our song, we rejoice.
I the Christ, I am with you, God's Messiah, God's choice.
I am with you always; 'til the end of time.
You shall be my disciples, sharing God's life divine. **(R)**

4. At the door there to greet us, martyrs, angels and saints,
And our fam'ly and loved ones, everyone freed from their chains.
We shall feel their warm welcome, and the joy of new life,
We shall join the gathering, reunited in God's love. **(R)**

You may stay online for some social time in remembrance of Rod.

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