

## FutureChurch celebrations to honor women religious

Alice Popovici | Jul. 20, 2012

More than 300 celebrations in honor of St. Mary of Magdala will be held in the U.S. and in at least 10 other countries during July and August, according to [FutureChurch](#) [1], an Ohio-based organization of progressive Catholics. This year, organization leaders say many of the celebrations will also honor U.S. women religious.

"This year's celebrations have a special power and poignancy in light of recent Vatican attempts to discredit U.S. women religious," said Liz England, FutureChurch program coordinator, [in a press release](#) [2]. "Like St. Mary of Magdala, U.S. sisters have also been maligned by male church leaders. We are really happy that over one-third of all celebrations will honor U.S. women religious."

Sister of St. Joseph Christine Schenk, executive director of the organization, said St. Mary of Magdala, or Mary Magdalene, "was misunderstood," until recently referred to as a prostitute when, in fact, she was an early leader of communities of faith. She said the annual celebrations, which began in 1997, have become central to the organization's work to advance women in church leadership.

"It's a day of celebrating a preeminent woman leader, celebrating that God calls both women and men to lead in the church," Schenk told *NCR*.

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### Links:

[1] <http://www.futurechurch.org/>

[2]

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