

The Legend of Paschal Eggs

...A pious legend among followers of Eastern Christianity says that Mary Magdalene was bringing cooked eggs to share with the other women at the tomb of Jesus, and the eggs in her basket miraculously turned brilliant red when she saw the risen Christ.

A different, but not necessarily conflicting legend concerns Mary Magdalene's efforts to spread the Gospel. According to this tradition, after the Ascension of Jesus, Mary went to the Emperor of Rome and greeted him with "Christ has risen," whereupon he pointed to an egg on his table and stated, "Christ has no more risen than that egg is red." After making this statement it is said the egg immediately turned blood red.

The First Pascha Egg

According to tradition, Saint Mary Magdalene, who had patrician rank, gained an audience in Rome with the emperor after the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. She denounced Pilate for his handling of Jesus' trial and then began to talk with Caesar about Jesus' resurrection. She picked up a hen's egg from the dinner table to illustrate her point about resurrection. Caesar was unmoved and replied that there was as much chance of a human being returning to life as there was for the egg to turn red. Immediately, the egg miraculously turned red in her hand! It is because of this tradition that Orthodox Christians exchange red eggs at Easter.

One legend concerns the Virgin Mary. It tells of the time the Blessed Virgin gave eggs to the soldiers at the cross. She entreated them to be less cruel and she wept. Her tears fell upon the eggs, spotting them with dots of brilliant color.

