

Magdalen Community at Rothko Chapel

Sunday, December 31, 2006, 10:00 a.m.

The Magdalen Community is a connective community seeking conversation and dialogue with other spiritualities and religious traditions. This Community takes its inspiration from The Gospel of Mary, where Jesus encourages the assembled community to find the divine nature within.

Call to Silence and Opening Meditation

The Questions of Ethne Alba, an Irish Mythological Figure, in her debate with Saint Patrick:

Who is God
and where is God
of whom is God
and where is his dwelling?

Has he sons and daughters,
gold and silver, this God of yours?

Is he ever-living,
Is he beautiful,
was his son
fostered by many?

Are his daughters
dear and beautiful
to the men of the world?

Is He in heaven,
Or on the earth?
In the sea,
In the rivers,
in the mountains,
in the valleys?

Speak to us
Tidings of Him:
How will he be seen,

how is He loved.
How is He found?

Is it in youth
or is it in old age
He is found?

--quoted in Mary Condren, *The Serpent and the Goddess*

Readings and Call to Conversation

Four Readings from The Gospel of Thomas: Sayings 94, 95, 96, and 97.

94 Jesus [said], "One who seeks will find, and for [one who knocks] it will be opened."

95 [Jesus said], "If you have money, don't lend it at interest. Rather, give [it] to someone from whom you won't get it back."

96 Jesus [said], The Father's imperial rule is like [a] woman who took a little leaven, [hid] it in dough, and made it into large loaves of bread. Anyone here with two ears had better listen!

97 Jesus said, The [Father's] imperial rule is like a woman who was carrying a [jar] full of meal. While she was walking along [a] distant road, the handle of the jar broke and the meal spilled behind her [along] the road. She didn't know it; she hadn't noticed a problem. When she reached her house, she put the jar down and discovered that it was empty.

--Trans. Stephen Patterson and Marvin Meyer

<http://www.westarinstitute.org/Polebridge/Title/Complete/Thomas/thomas.html>

A Reading from Rabi'a (Persian Sufi, 717—801 CE)

O my Lord,
The stars glitter
and the eyes of men are closed,
Kings have locked their doors
and each lover is alone with his love.

Here, I am alone with You.

--from *Women in Praise of the Sacred*, ed. Jane Hirshfield

A Reading from The Gospel of Mary Magdalen (trans. Karen King)

When the Blessed One had said these things, he greeted them all. "Peace be with you!" he said. "Acquire my peace within yourselves!

"Be on your guard so that no one deceives you by saying, 'Look over here!' or 'Look over there!' For the child of true Humanity exists within you. Follow it! Those who search for it will find it.

'Go then, preac[h] the good news about the Realm. [Do] not lay down any rule beyond what I determined for you, nor promulgate law like the lawgiver, or else you might be dominated by it.'" After he had said these things, he departed from them.

But they were distressed and wept greatly. "How are we going to go out to the rest of the world to announce the good news about the Realm of the child of true Humanity?" they said. "If they did not spare him, how will they spare us?"

Then Mary stood up. She greeted them all, addressing her brothers and sisters, "Do not weep and be distressed nor let your hearts be irresolute. For his grace will be with you all and will shelter you. Rather we should praise his greatness, for he has prepared us and made us true Human beings."

When Mary had said these things, she turned their heart [to]ward the Good, and they began to deba[t]e about the wor[d]s of [the Savior].

Peter said to Mary, "Sister, we know that the Savior loved you more than all other women. Tell us the words of the Savior that you remember, the things which you know that we don't because we haven't heard them."

Mary responded, "I will teach you about what is hidden from you." And she began to speak these words to them.

She said, "I saw the Lord in a vision and I said to him, 'Lord, I saw you today in a vision.' He answered me, 'How wonderful you are for not wavering at seeing me! For where the mind is, there is the treasure.'

from The Gospel of Mary of Magdala: Jesus and the First Woman Apostle
http://www.maryofmagdala.com/GMary_Text/gmary_text.html

A Reading from Hafiz

You have been invited to meet
The Friend.
No one can resist a Divine Invitation.
That narrows down all our choices
To just two.

We can come to God
Dressed for Dancing,
Or
Be carried on a stretcher
To God's Ward.

--quoted in Jeanie Miley, *Sitting Strong: Wrestling with the Ornery God*

Closing Dialogue

Solo: *In the freshness of the New Year, let us rush to dance with God.*

Unison: *In the crispness of the New Year, we put on our dancing shoes!*

Solo: *Let us know the joy of new beginnings.*

Unison: *Bearing emptiness and fullness in equal measure:
sorrows, losses, lessons, in tender balance with anticipation's joy.*

Solo: *Let the dance spin unexpected visions.*

Unison: *We will turn our senses on: sight and sound, taste and touch, minds and hearts
and bodies, all pregnant with surprises waiting in the New Year's time.*

Solo: *Don't hold back, don't be afraid.*

Unison: *We know the Child is with us, in us, leads us in the Spirit's dance.
Let us dance together. We become the shared Peace as we become ourselves:
refreshed, renewed, and ready for the work ahead.*

Solo: *Let us move together in the fiery light of God.*

Unison: *Let us dance together in the power of the Spirit.*

*As an expression of appreciation to The Rothko Chapel for use of this sacred space,
your love offering in the box marked "Magdalen Community"
will be gratefully received.*

*For more information about the Magdalen Community, please contact Bridgitt Ayers,
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