

# MAGDALEN COMMUNITY AT ROTHKO CHAPEL

SUNDAY, MAY 14, 2006, 10:00 A.M.

*The Magdalen Community is a connective community seeking conversation and dialogue with other spiritualities and religious traditions.*

## CALL TO SILENCE AND OPENING MEDITATION

### OPENING GREETING

*Solo:* Peace Be With You.

*Unison:* **Acquire My Peace within you.**

*Solo:* Today we honor all mothers as well as our Creator by honoring our mother Earth. We recall the most ancient of religions, the religions that worshipped the creative Mother. To the ancients, who saw that it was woman who gave birth, so too the Earth was the Mother of all. Caves were her womb, and all dark places were sacred. In this place of darkness, let us now seek, in silence, the light within ourselves.

## CALL TO TEACHING – THE ANCIENT GODDESSES

*Solo:* Just as the masculine aspect of God has many names, so, too, does the feminine. The Mayan Moon Goddess of childbirth, healing and weaving was Ix Chel. The Mother Goddess of the Earth and the soul is Gaia. In Egypt, the Sphinx was the Goddess of birth, death, and wisdom. For the Toltecs, Tlazolteotl was the Goddess of love, desire, and forgiveness. The Samaritans revered the Goddess, Asherah. In the Greek, Hebrew, Christian, and Gnostic traditions, she is Sophia, Goddess of wisdom. In classic Jewish thought, the Shekhina, an English translation of a Hebrew word form that is feminine, refers to extraordinary manifestation of divine spirituality. In Gnostic teachings, the oldest group that believes in the duality of the omnipotent, Azna is the emotional infinite Mother God. "In the beginning, people prayed to the Creatress of Life, the Mistress of Heaven. At the very dawn of religion, God was a woman. Do you remember?"\*

*\*When God Was a Woman, Merlin Stone*

## READINGS

### **A Reading from *Laughter of Aphrodite*, by Carol Christ**

One of the earliest and most enduring images of the Goddess is the Goddess Creatress, the Lady of the Animals. She is known to readers of the classics as Aphrodite with her dove, Athene with her owl, Artemis with her deer. But the image of Lady of the Animals goes back much further than the classical age of Greece (fifth and fourth centuries B.C.E.), much further back than Homer (before 700

B.C.E.). She goes back to prehistory, certainly to the Neolithic era (began c. 9000 B.C.E. in the Near East), if not to the Paleolithic (32,000-10,000 B.C.E.). *The Lady of the Animals* is found in almost all cultures.

We cannot know if she was known to her earliest worshipers as “Mother of All the Living” (a term used to refer to Eve in Gen. 3:20), as “Creatress,” as “Goddess,” as “Clan Mother,” as “Priestess,” or simply as “Ma” or “Nana.” Whatever she was called, the *Lady of the Animals* is an image of the awesome creative power of woman and nature.

*The Lady of the Animals* is cosmic power; she is mother of all... *The Lady of the Animals* is also earth: she is the firm foundation undergirding all life.

### ***A Reading from *Rebirth of the Goddess*, by Carol Christ***

Paleolithic people understood the cave to be the womb of the Creatress, the Great Mother, the Earth. Rituals performed in her center would have reflected people’s desire to participate in the creativity of the Mother of the Living and the Dead and to align themselves with the power of the great beasts that emerged from her womb.

The idea that the cave is the womb of the Earth Mother, the place of transformation, and that the darkness within the cave is the site of mysteries, the place of deep nonverbal communication with her, is also found in Neolithic and Bronze Age Crete, where rituals were celebrated in caves. Echoes of this understanding are found in cave shrines to the Goddesses and to Pan and the Nymphs in Greek and Hellenistic religion. It was carried over into Christianity in the traditional Orthodox icon that shows Mary giving birth to Jesus in a cave.

The journey into a cave is a journey into the great womb of life and death. In the darkness, the mystery is revealed. We are reborn.

### ***A Reading from “The Gospel of Philip” in *The Gospels of Mary*, by Marvin Meyer***

Light and darkness, life and death, right and left, are siblings of one another, and inseparable. For this reason the good are not good, the bad are not bad, life is not life, death is not death. Each will dissolve into its original nature, but what is superior to the world cannot be dissolved, for it is eternal.

### ***A Reading from *The Gospel of Philip*, translation by Jean-Yves Leloup***

If someone experiences Trust and Consciousness in the heart of the embrace, they become a child of light. If someone does not receive these, it is because they remain attached to what they know; when they cease to be attached, they will be able to receive them. Whoever receives this light in nakedness will no longer be recognizable; none will be able to grasp them, none will be able to make them sad or

miserable, whether they are in this world, or have left it. They already know the truth in images. For them, this world has become another world, and this Temple Space is fullness. They are who they are. They are one. Neither shadow nor night can hide them.

## CALL TO CONVERSATION

### CLOSING DIALOGUE (Prayers in bold - Soror Lucia, [www.magdalene.org](http://www.magdalene.org))

*Solo:* As we have honored our mothers, our mother Earth, and the mother goddesses of the ancients, so we gather to seek a new meaning, an ancient path, and a forgotten truth. We search for the Magdalene as we pray,

*Unison:* **Our Lady Magdalene, holy and complete,  
Your mysteries are many,  
Apostle of the Apostles,  
blessed among women,  
kindle in me the spark of wisdom  
which guides from darkness into light.**

*Solo:* We share gifts of the earth and milk of the mother from an earthen bowl. Fruits, grains, and nuts are basic nourishment; milk is the first food from our mothers. We share in love.

*Unison:* **Love is the key to unlock the secrets  
of compassion, empathy and life.  
I live to transcend this mortal coil  
through the power of perfect love.**

*Solo:* We seek to honor the feminine within our souls, bodies and selves, and for our past, present, and future.

*Unison:* **From the past, let me learn  
for the present, let me live,  
and for the future, let me strive.  
May today be the holy benefactor of tomorrow.**

*Solo:* As we move together from this place of sacred darkness, we seek our deepest truth.

*Unison:* **For so long as the truth burns  
in my secret heart of hearts,  
may I walk the path of faithfulness  
toward the limitless light.**

[Please delay opening the gift until we have moved outside]



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