

Magdalen Community at Rothko Chapel

Sunday, October 29, 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

Opening Dialog

Solo: Where are you from?

Unison: We have come from the place where light is produced from itself.

Solo: Where is that place?

Unison: It's a mystery.

Solo: But can you say you image the light?

Unison: Yes, indeed. We carry the light within.

Solo: And the peace?

Unison: Yes, also the peace.

Solo: How do you know of such light and such peace?

Unison: The sign is the feeling.

The sign is the movement from within.

The sign is the passion for the well-being of all.

Solo: What are your other signs?

Unison: Our recognitions of injustice and hatred and oppression throughout the globe, of power struggles and violence that seem unending.

Solo: Can we turn those around?

Unison: We must seek to do so.

Solo: Are you willing to spread your light and your peace?

Unison: We are eager to spread them.

They spread just as love spreads.

Solo: *The kingdom spreads out on the earth, just as love spreads.*

Unison: *But some people are not aware of it.*

Solo: *Yet you are aware.*

Unison: *Yes, indeed.*

We are aware of the light and the movement and the peace.

And we cannot stand back.

We will step forward.

*We will overcome the violence, the domination, the hatred,
and spread love.*

Readings

A Reading from the Gospel of Mary

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.

*Text from the Papyrus Berolinensis, translation by Karen King
http://www.maryofmagdala.com/GMary_Text/gmary_text.html*

A Reading From The Science of Mind, by Ernest Shurtleff Holmes, 1926

PEACE BE UNTO THEE, STRANGER

Peace be unto thee, stranger, enter and be not afraid.

I have left the gate open and thou art welcome to my home.

There is room in my house for all.

I have swept the hearth and lighted the fire.

The room is warm and cheerful and you will find comfort and rest within.

The table is laid and the fruits of Life are spread before thee.

The wine is here also, it sparkles in the light.

I have set a chair for you where the sunbeams dance through the shade.

*Sit and rest and refresh your soul.
Eat of the fruit and drink the wine.
All, all is yours, and you are welcome.*

<http://www.sacred-texts.com/eso/som/somo1.htm>

Investiture Sermon and Call to Conversation

Investiture

4 November 2006

National Cathedral

Where is home for you? How would you define your home? A friend in Nevada said to me just before I left that he had thought I would only leave Nevada to go home, and in his mind, that meant Oregon. But in the six years I spent there, Nevada became home. The state song is even called, "Home means Nevada." And for a place filled with folk who have come from elsewhere, that is quite remarkable - all sorts and conditions of rootless people trying to grow new roots in the desert.

So where is home for you? Des Moines or Anchorage or Taipei or San Salvador or Port au Prince?

What makes it home? Familiar landscape, a quality of life, or the presence of particular people?...

In Death of the Hired Man, Robert Frost said that "home is the place where, when you go there, they have to take you in." We all ache for a community that will take us in, with all our warts and quirks and petty meannesses - and yet they still celebrate when they see us coming! That vision of homegoing and homecoming that underlies our deepest spiritual yearnings is also the job assignment each one of us gets in baptism - go home, and while you're at it, help to build a home for everyone else on earth. For none of us can truly find our rest in God until all of our brothers and sisters have also been welcomed home like the prodigal.

There's a wonderful Hebrew word for that vision and work - shalom. It doesn't just mean the sort of peace that comes when we're no longer at war. It's that rich and multihued vision of a world where no one goes hungry because everyone is invited to a seat at the groaning board, it's a vision of a world where no one is sick or in prison because all sorts of disease have been healed, it's a vision of a world where every human being has the capacity to use every good gift that God has given, it is a vision of a world where no one enjoys abundance at the expense of another, it's a vision of a world where all enjoy Sabbath rest in the conscious presence of God. Shalom means that all human beings live together as siblings, at peace with one another and with God, and in right relationship with all of the rest of creation. It is that vision of the lion lying down with the lamb and the small child playing over the den of the adder, where the specter of death no longer holds sway. It is that

vision to which Jesus points when he says, "today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." To say "shalom" is to know our own place and to invite and affirm the place of all of the rest of creation, once more at home in God.

You and I have been invited into that ministry of global peace-making that makes a place and affirms a welcome for all of God's creatures. But more than welcome, that ministry invites all to feast until they are filled with God's abundance. God has spoken that dream in our hearts - through the prophets, through the patriarchs and the mystics, in human flesh in Jesus, and in each one of us at baptism. All are welcome, all are fed, all are satisfied, all are healed of the wounds and lessening that are part of the not-yet-ness of creation.

That homecoming of shalom is both destination and journey. We cannot embark on the journey without some vision of where we are going, even though we may not reach it this side of the grave. We are really charged with seeing everyplace and all places as home, and living in a way that makes that true for every other creature on the planet. None of us can be fully at home, at rest, enjoying shalom, unless all the world is as well. Shalom is the fruit of living that dream. We live in a day where there is a concrete possibility of making that dream reality for the most destitute, forgotten, and ignored of our fellow travelers - for the castaways, for those in peril or just barely afloat on life's restless sea.

This church has said that our larger vision will be framed and shaped in the coming years by the vision of shalom embedded in the Millennium Development Goals - a world where the hungry are fed, the ill are healed, the young educated, women and men treated equally, and where all have access to clean water and adequate sanitation, basic health care, and the promise of development that does not endanger the rest of creation. That vision of abundant life is achievable in our own day, but only with the passionate commitment of each and every one of us. It is God's vision of homecoming for all humanity.

The ability of any of us to enjoy shalom depends on the health of our neighbors. If some do not have the opportunity for health or wholeness, then none of us can enjoy true and perfect holiness. The writer of Ephesians implores us to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace - to be at one in God's shalom. That is our baptismal task and hope, and unless each of the members of the body enjoys shalom we shall not live as one. That dream of God, that word of God spoken in each one of us at baptism also speaks hope of its realization.

The health of our neighbors, in its broadest understanding, is the mission that God has given us. We cannot love God if we fail to love our neighbors into a more whole and holy state of life. If some in this church feel wounded by recent decisions, then our salvation, our health as a body is at some hazard, and it becomes the duty of all of us to seek healing and wholeness. As long as children live exposed on the streets, while seniors go

without food to pay for life-sustaining drugs, wherever peoples are sickened by industrial waste, the body suffers, and none of us can say we have finally come home.

What keeps us from the tireless search for that vision of shalom? There are probably only two answers, and they are connected - apathy and fear. One is the unwillingness to acknowledge the pain of other people, the other is an unwillingness to acknowledge that pain with enough courage to act. The cure for each is a deep and abiding hope. If God in Jesus has made captivity captive, has taken fear hostage, it is for the liberation and flourishing of hope. Augustine said that as Christians, we are prisoners of hope - a ridiculously assertive hope, a hope that unflinchingly assails the doors of heaven, a hope that will not cease until that dream of God has swallowed up death forever, a hope that has the audacity to join Jesus in saying, "today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."

And how shall that scripture be fulfilled in our hearing? In the will to make peace with one who disdains our theological position - for his has merit, too, as the fruit of faithfulness. In the courage to challenge our legislators to make poverty history, to fund AIDS work in Africa, and the distribution of anti-malarial mosquito nets, and primary schools where all children are welcomed. In the will to look within our own hearts and confront the shadows that darken the dream that God has planted there.

That scripture is fulfilled each time we reach beyond our narrow self-interest to call another home.

That scripture is fulfilled in ways both small and large, in acts of individuals and of nations, whenever we seek the good of the other, for our own good and final homecoming is wrapped up in that.

God has spoken that dream in us, let us rejoice! Let us join the raucous throngs in creation, the sea creatures and the geological features who leap for joy at the vision of all creation restored, restored to proper relationship, to all creation come home at last. May that scripture be fulfilled in our hearing and in our doing.

Shalom, chaverim, shalom, my friends, shalom.

*The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church*



Closing Dialogue

Solo: Peace be with you.

Unison: Acquire my peace within you.

Solo: My Peace I leave with you.

Unison: My Peace I give to you.

Solo: Let us go forth rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

Unison: Thanks be to God.

*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,
<bdickey@rice.edu>. Please include "Magdalen Community" in the subject line.*