

Magdalen Community at Rothko Chapel

Sunday, September 3, 2006, 10:00 a.m.

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

Opening Creation Story from Ancient Egypt: Akhenaten in Egypt, 1550-1305 BC

*Beautiful you rise, O eternal living god! You are radiant, lovely, powerful,
Your love is great, all-encompassing,
Your rays make all radiant,
Your brightness gives life to hearts,
When you fill the Two Lands with your love.*

(Passage found in Matthew Fox, One River, Many Wells, 77)

Two Parables for Meditation and Conversation

A Reading from Luke 14: 16-23

But he said to him, "A man once gave a great banquet, and invited many; and at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come; for all is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them; I pray you, have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported this to his master. Then the householder in anger said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and maimed and blind and lame.' And the servant said, 'Sir, what you commanded has been done, and still there is room.' And the master said to the servant, 'Go out to the highways and hedges, and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'

A Reading from the Gospel of Thomas

Mary said to Jesus, "What are your disciples like?" He said, "They are like children living in a field that is not theirs."

A Dialogue Between Science and Religion for Meditation and Conversation:

What is faith? Physicist Fritjof Capra asked Thomas Matus, a member of the Benedictine Community.

Matus answered:

It's hard to define faith in a few words. In a general sense, religious faith is a kind of knowledge and a kind of experience. Faith includes an element of surprise as well; it is an experience of reality that is surprising, yet it also rings true to our nature. In the biblical tradition and in Christianity, it's emphasized that faith as knowledge of God is a gift of God. However, faith is more than mere intellectual assent to information fed into our minds from outside, even if it comes from God. Faith includes God's self-disclosure within us and our response to God, which is fulfilled in love.

Another Benedictine, David Steindl-Rast chimes in:

"Faith, I would say, is a matter of trust. Courageous trust in that ultimate belonging which you experience in your religious moments, in your peak moments. Faith is that inner gesture by which you entrust yourself to that belonging. The element of trust is primary. Faith is courageous trust in belonging. In our great moments, we experience that belonging. But it seems too good to be true, and so we cannot quite entrust ourselves to it. But when we do entrust ourselves to life, to the world, then our attitude is faith in the deepest sense.

Physicist Capra responds:

This exists also in science, interestingly enough. You know that every leap into novelty, every discovery, is an intuitive leap. But there are some scientists who are more intuitive than others. And the most highly intuitive scientists have this kind of faith. It's very typical of them that they somehow know it in their bones that this will lead them somewhere, and they can trust this intuition. Heisenberg, for instance, said that in the early 1920's, people slowly got "into the spirit" of quantum mechanics before they were able to formulate it, and that was a highly intuitive thing... They have insight, but they cannot talk about it yet, they cannot formulate it. So there is something like faith in science, too.

David responds:

Well, the Eucharist could be understood as a celebration of our ultimate belonging, and as such it has to be all-inclusive. That would, of course, mean that everybody is welcome at the table, because that's what belonging is all about. Understood in this way, the Eucharist would be a celebration of our belonging to the tradition of Jesus Christ, but it would, by its very symbolism explode this tradition to include all traditions. It would be a celebration for belonging to the whole of creation, a celebration of our ultimate belonging to God.

A Closing in Silence from the Gospel of Mary

*"I go now into Silence."
Having said this, Mary became silent,
for it was in silence that the Teacher spoke to her.*

*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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