

“I Don’t Think Anyone Knows”

Growing up in a Presbyterian household, I remember overhearing my parents speaking about La Magdalena.

I also remember asking my father, who was a devoted Bible reader who Mary was and I can still hear him saying, “Margie, I don’t think anyone knows”.

As the years went by and being led by my church leader’s authority on everything concerning the Bible, Mary had become my sinner too. Surely there were others; however, Mary Magdalene must have been the best since her story was frequently told from the pulpit!

In my 40s, after a very long day at work, I found myself rushing to supply the church pantry at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church before an Easter Lenten Dinner was to begin. I was tired and had no intention of staying. As the congregation was entering, I was almost at the exit when Dorothy Gibbons, grabbed my arm and with her beaming blue eyes insisted I should stay and listen to our speaker. I was caught and so I did. I ate and made polite small talk with my church family. Dr. Betty Adam, the Episcopal Priest at Christ Church Cathedral of Houston was our speaker. Dr. Betty was probably into her third sentence when I met the REAL Mary Magdalene! The Mary Jesus loved and taught equally with the others—the Mary who never left, the Mary who never abandoned, the Mary who understood completely, the Mary who continued in Jesus’ footsteps throughout Greece and France and most importantly, the Mary the early Christian Church edited out. Dr. Betty explained how we all would be better off if the truth were known. I adored Mary immediately.

All the while, as I was sitting at the edge of my chair straining to hear every word about Mary, I heard snickering and comments ridiculing the idea of a woman taking the leadership role in the formation of the early Christian church, coming from behind me: Those voices could not possibly conceive that a woman (Mary Magdalene) had also been confirmed as Apostle to the Apostles! That only in North America was she still mislabeled as a prostitute. And those chuckles I heard were coming from the males of my church family!

As soon as the lecture was finished, I rushed over to introduce myself to Dr. Betty and asked where I could learn more about the omitted Mary. She was leading a book study at the time on The Gospel of Mary Magdalene at Christchurch Cathedral and I started attending. Even though it was in the middle of the workday I happily used my vacation time.

Now, this group at the book study spoke of subjects I had never heard of: such as conflicts between the disciples, recently discovered sacred gospels and the malicious rewritten life of Mary Magdalene! Where had these women come from? Where did they get this information? And where did they get such boldness!!! I desperately needed to know. I desperately needed to catch up. And I knew that deep down everything I was hearing was true, it resonated with me.

Back to the night I met Mary Magdalene, I remember racing home at about 9 in the evening and telling my husband everything I heard about Mary Magdalene (and at that time it was very little). I was so excited and just couldn't stop talking about her that my children got out of bed and started listening to me also, probably because they might not have ever seen their mother so enthused late at night!

And in all of my new discovered joyfulness I was also very angry and deeply hurt that the Church, who preached to "love one another as Jesus

did”, “for the Glory of God”, had allowed Mary to be erroneously labeled a prostitute and knowingly did nothing about it for 2000 years. Which to me meant, that the church was an uncaring, patriarchal run business--- my daughters/myself/my girlfriends/women were of minor importance.

Mary Magdalene had entered by life and my life had changed.

Several days later when I told my father about the real Mary Magdalene and what the church had done to this woman who was Jesus’ equal and the reason for Easter, he said, “Margie, yes, you could be right about her.”

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2019