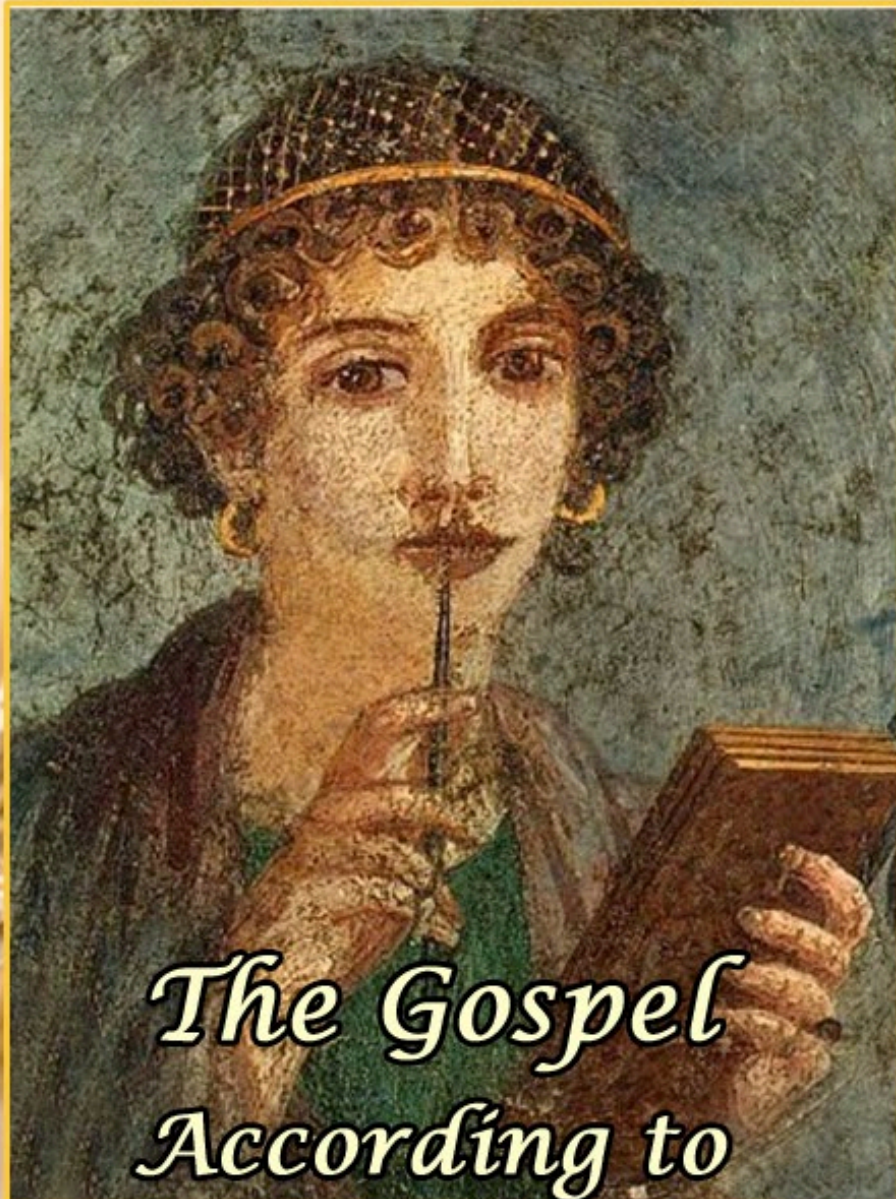


MAGDALENE CHRISTIANITY

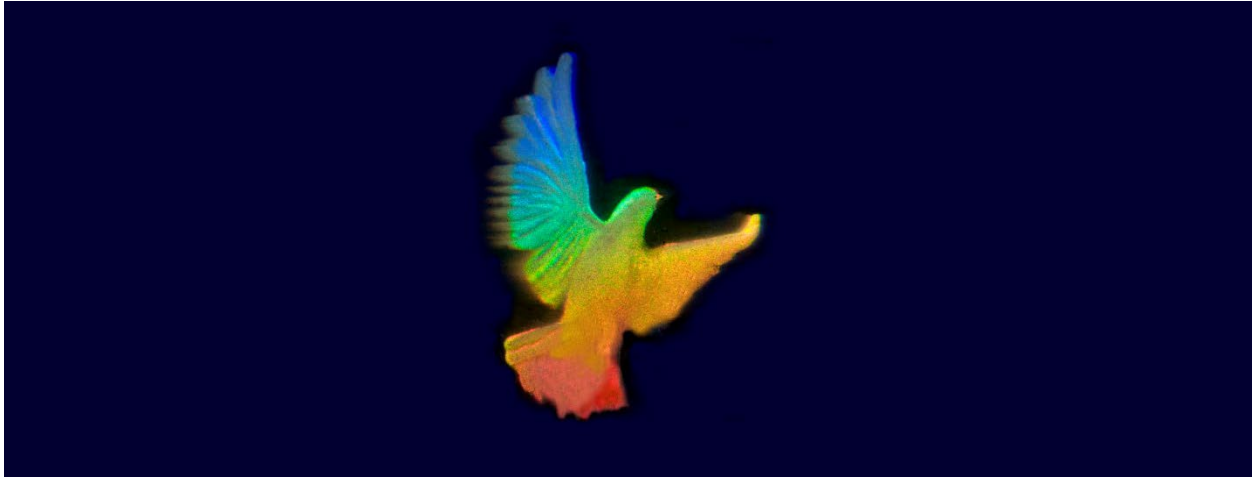


*The Gospel
According to
Mary Magdalene*

HELEN MARTINEAU

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARY MAGDALENE

Lived experiences with Jesus the Christ



In the beginning was Wisdom and wisdom was in the heart of the Divine,
and Wisdom was the heart.
She was there when all things came into being,
and nothing that was to come into being could do so without her.
She is the wisdom of Life that is with the Light shining in the darkness.
With the Light of the Logos, Wisdom descended through the nine heavenly realms.
And she was with the True Light when the light came into the world.
The Light was in the world, but the world could not receive the Light.
Nor could the world hear Wisdom's voice.
But to those who can hear and listen she will open their hearts so love can pour in.



I look back to the wedding feast and remember how it began there, with a stranger called Jesus who changed everything. A power was in him. I could sense it even though I was not near. And then there was the woman, his mother. I did not know her then in the way I would know her. But I can see certain things invisible to other eyes. And I saw a soft lightness surrounding her, like the finest spider webs with the morning dew still upon them. And I felt that Mother Wisdom was with this woman.

He, Jesus, walked over to speak with some servants. He asked them to fill the empty jars set aside for purification. They filled them with fresh water from the spring – we call it living water because it has emerged free flowing from our mother earth, and not from storage. A guest filled his cup and drank some. ‘It’s wine!’ he exclaimed. Others drank and what they tasted was indeed wine, the best wine. Did water really turn into wine? I do not know. What I did see was that somehow, Jesus had transformed the mood at that feast. Joy flowed between us all on the scented breeze and hearts began to open. ‘I think we have drunk too much of that wine,’ someone said laughing. But what we tasted and breathed in was the fullness of the spirit and it lovingly united us. And is that not the real reason for the bounties at a wedding feast?



I dwelt within the echoes of that wedding when commonplace things were transfigured. I thought often of Jesus who had gained a reputation as a wonderful healer. But I did not anticipate seeing him again. Men rarely meet women outside of family. And certainly, I could never have envisaged what happened when I went to collect water. I walked to the well when the sun was high. I was alone, for this was outside the usual time when women go for water. I saw Jesus sitting by the well and the brightness caused the air to waver in a haze around him. He spoke my name. And compassion was in his voice.

‘Mary,’ he said. ‘You are an outsider; you feel it in your heart.’ He did not know me. How was he seeing my soul’s secret unrest? Often, I felt as distanced as a Samaritan among Jews. Not that any Law devised by men convinced me. I followed the Law of nature’s living and growing things, yet it had not brought me peace.

‘What I bring is living water,’ he said then. ‘If you drink of it you will never thirst again.’

Living water comes clear and pure from underground streams to the deep well of Wisdom that purifies the soul. I understood this much. But how can thirst cease for ever?

‘The water I give will become a spring of eternal life,’ he responded as if I had asked him. My heart ached for this water even though I found his meaning elusive.

‘There are daemons that live in the senses.’ he said then. ‘But they are not like a husband you divorce or family you leave yet are never quite free from them. You can be free.’

I declared, ‘I have worked so hard to raise my vision, to always turn my ability to see the spirits into good works. I long for this so much. I long for an unbiased heart.’

He smiled then. ‘Ah, your sixth sense. That too can be limiting when your sense of self is tied to desire. Desire is the daemon that holds your higher perceptions back. One more thing you need, Mary. Freedom will come through a divine gift. This gift is your spiritual I, and I have come to reveal the way.’

Suddenly he was no longer there. Who are you? What is the way? My questions echoed in empty space. Then a response came on a gust of wind. I am the way, the truth and the life.



In those days I had not heard about Jesus’s baptism in the Jordan by the prophet John, or the dove-like spirit alighting upon him. But I longed for understanding.

I followed Jesus about the land when I could. Those senses governed by desire and impulse; would he reveal the way to transform them into higher senses attuned to the spiritual self?

Other women had also become his disciples and opened their homes to him. We formed a separate group around the teacher – the other Mary wife of Clopas, Joanna wife of Herod’s official, Salome, Susannah and others. Jesus didn’t

encourage the separate grouping. He treated every one of us as an individual. It was the men, or some of them. They remained tied to convention even though Jesus was never so limited.

Jesus spoke to people in riddles. 'Why do you hunger for bread for your bellies? I am the bread of life,' he said. And I remembered the wedding feast where the good spirit flowed between us. My best deeds fell short of this spiritual food. What more could I do?

And one day he answered. Look within; there you will find the kingdom of heaven. And you must be like a merchant who discovers a priceless pearl, and to purchase it he sells everything he has. Nothing less will give you life.

As I walked home that evening contemplating the nature of that pearl beyond earthly price a sweet song emerged. I arrived home singing.

I am a pearl of rare beauty,
incandescent dewdrop of light,
or moon glow, dispelling the darkness.
My price, beyond all earthly might.

Search for me not in the kingdoms
that hard men of power have wrought.
Search for me not in the markets
all shouting with things to be bought.

I am close, like your heartbeat, yet distant,
on your quest you will need to go far.
Where I am you discover through loving,
Spirit speaks then: I am who you are.

My home was in Bethany near Jerusalem in the house of Simon the Pharisee. I lived with Martha and Lazarus who had also become disciples. Jesus called us siblings of the spirit because this was a disciples' house. We were blessed because he visited us often, sometimes with other disciples, sometimes alone. And my love for him and my awe of his purity of purpose grew.

We women offered what wealth we had to support Jesus and the male disciples who had left their trades to follow him. Jesus chose twelve of them and Lazarus, who had been a scholar since boyhood, said that it had to be this number because it echoed the zodiacal constellations around the sun. They were not always the same twelve, although certain men predominated. The sun was Jesus.

I didn't have knowledge like that, but I prayed that I could walk the path Jesus called the Way by learning from the signs that are available to any whose hearts are open.

A woman had been haemorrhaging for years, spending all she had on fruitless remedies. Our harsh Law dictates that menstruating women are unclean. That meant she was unclean, continually. She should have remained apart. But she crept up behind Jesus and touched his clothes. Just a secret touch, light as a feather, straight from her knowing heart. He felt the healing power go out from him and turned and looked straight at her. She was accustomed to being driven away. But Jesus reached out in affirmation and gently grasped her hands. This woman, Nessa, became part of our female company, and I heard the story from her mouth.

I thought of all the healers with their laying on of hands, their ostentatious sighing and mumbling. But here Nessa's courage and inner surety had led her healing. And touch became a gesture of love and compassion between two people. That way touch is raised to become a true blessing.

Jesus often told simple parables, especially if there were many people gathered around him. He said, 'A sower went out to sow his seed. He scattered the seeds widely. Some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Some fell on rocky ground, where the soil was shallow. They sprang up quickly there. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no roots. Other seeds fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. Still other seeds fell on good soil, where they produced a crop, a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. Whoever has ears, let them hear.'



Whoever has ears let them hear – listeners had to work out meaning for themselves. That was Jesus's way, yet he always left clues. What farmer would be so extravagant with his precious seed? None but the divine sower. And this heavenly being had sent us a prophet to bring us to our right senses – if we are ready to hear.

This is listening to the need of your soul and it is the beginning of Wisdom. She offers insight and brings understanding. And does not the Book of Proverbs say that Wisdom is the Tree of Life. Life emerges through her.

One day when I visited Mary wife of Clopas, who lived over on Jerusalem's Upper City, the mother of Jesus was there. She was the gentlest soul I had ever met. We three bonded through more than our names, as if we were three parts of one whole, and that was how it would be. Two Marys looked up to the third, Mother Mary, as an exemplar of wisdom and grace.

Jesus had become suspect by this time for ignoring traditions and, especially in Jerusalem, offending the officials who heard blasphemy in his words. 'Who do you think you are?' they demanded. He said to them, 'Sheep hear the voice of their own shepherd and know that only this voice will lead them into the fold. I am the door through which the sheep enter. But not all are fit to go in.'

Because of such statements a crowd would gather around him, hoping for more controversy, but also to see his latest healing. So it was when he stopped by a man blind from birth who was often to be seen begging near the healing Pool of Siloam.

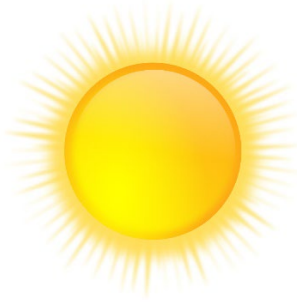
'Who sinned, the man or his parents?' someone asked Jesus. It was believed that a parent's sins could manifest in their child. But in reference to the blind man himself it would mean that sins from a previous life had been carried to this one. Many Pharisees followed that teaching of the soul's pre-existence.

But Jesus declared, 'Neither. It is so that the works of God might be made manifest in him. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.'

Jesus squatted beside the blind man and spat on the ground, mixing his saliva with dust to make clay. He anointed the man's eyes with it and then sent him to the pool with the instruction to wash all the clay off there. I followed with the other curious people and watched as the man splashed and patted his eyes until they felt clear to him. And it was as if thick scales had been flushed from those poor blind eyes. For the first time in his life the light of day entered his vision. The watchers cheered although some needed convincing that he could now see, and the Jerusalem rulers were furious at Jesus's presumption.

There is a mystery to this healing. The body is different from life to life. The soul although always the same soul shifts and progresses in connection with the changing personality. The part that passes unchanging from incarnation to incarnation is the human spirit, the eternal I, which is the handiwork of the divine creator beings. I understood at last about the eternal spring of living, purifying

water. This is the spirit, and it is the priceless pearl. It is the I born in eternity and we must enable this I to penetrate deeper into the soul.



Jesus said, 'I am the light of the world.' And my eyes were opening. He was the light sent from the divine realms. He was the light directing us to what we can be. Yet the divine light, called I Am in the days of Moses, is also to be discovered in us – our I Am, our spirit, our light. Jesus meant both. The reality was unfolding before my eyes as a beautiful picture, the very first he gave to me, the spring water from heaven filled with the eternal spirit of the cosmos now welling up to overflowing. He was the source.

And then I recalled Jesus saying, 'I am the good shepherd who will lay down his life for his sheep.' I tried to set that hard thought aside, but the implication settled in.

Lazarus became ill. Yet he had no fever. He fell into a sleep and we kept vigil through the night as a cloud of spirits filled the room and the life fled from him. We sent for Jesus who was away at another Bethany east of the Jordan. 'Jesus must know. He must come,' Martha cried. But he already knew. He watched over our spirit brother and waited. The little village of Bethany spanned two places, one on the slopes of the Mount of Olives where Lazarus lay and one beyond the Jordan.

By first light Lazarus was dead. There was much to do to prepare for the burial. Martha and I wept over him enough to drench him with tears as we washed and anointed the body. Neighbours began to congregate in the courtyards, women stepped in to help, and by early afternoon men from Jerusalem came for the funeral rites. Although it was not hot, interment took place as usual within one day. Lazarus's body was placed in the family tomb.

Jesus had not come hurrying up from the Jordan. Instead, three days after the first burial rites word came that he was near. Martha hurried along the road to the end of the village to wait for him while the shadows lengthened. When Jesus came into view alone, she dropped on her knees. When he reached her, she grabbed onto his hem as if it was a lifeline. Jesus freed her hand and held it. He knelt on one knee to be at her height and there he spoke with her, so very softly and privately. I know

now that she begged for an impossible miracle, and that he spoke of who he was and what was taking place. 'I am the resurrection and the life,' Jesus said. 'Whoever believes in me, though they die, yet they shall live.' And Martha believed him.

She returned to fetch me, and I came weeping to where Jesus waited. I said, 'Lazarus would be alive now if you had come.' He placed his finger on my lips, then like a father with his injured child he took my hands and raised me up.

The mourners and musicians had followed, and the lamenting was so loud it drowned out the sad pipe music. Jesus's whole body shuddered, although the air had only the faintest chill. He called through the din, 'Where have you laid Lazarus?' 'Come and we'll show you,' the chief mourner moaned. Everyone increased their wailing as the procession headed for the tomb. Jesus followed, his shoulders shaking with silent weeping. Was it for us? In part. Yet it also felt like frustration or disappointment and that bewildered me.

Then from the cloud of spirits, which had never left since that night vigil, I received an answer: Oh, that humans would know death for what it is, they whispered, and see its meaning. If they would know it as touching again the love of the Father who is the ground of all being, only then will we be glad. If they do not know what death is, how then can they know this sleep?

A heavy stone had been set in front of the cave to keep out wild animals. 'Move it away,' Jesus commanded. Everyone was so shocked that they ceased their wailing.

'Rabbi, he has been dead four days. The body will be decaying already.' Martha said in consternation as a few men moved to obey Jesus.

'Have you already stopped believing, Martha?' he said. He shook his head and began to pray, 'Father, I know you always hear me and I thank you. I am saying this on account of these people so they may believe you have sent me.'

While men heaved the stone away there was some murmuring at this odd prayer. But the rest focused on what Jesus might do. He raised his hands. The spirits around the tomb rolled over and over like stormy waves. Then Jesus cried out, 'Lazarus! Come forth!'



It is known in the mysteries how sound can move rocks and trees and cause the spirits to do your will. Only the highest initiates know how to use this power and in

what tones to speak and which words to say. Compared with Jesus's shout, the blare of the ram's horn *shofarot* from the Temple towers would sound like piping. All the mourners and even those rolling beings froze and the very music of the heavens fell silent. Nothing moved in heaven and on earth, not trees or birds or the sun on high, so it seemed to me.

Through that awful silence a human figure shuffled forth from the cave, still wrapped head to foot in burial cloths.

'Unbind him and let him go,' Jesus said. Tentatively a few crept up and began to unwind those sheets from around Lazarus. He stood there as they worked and then, naked, he looked at the world with the wide-eyed surprise of a newborn baby whose soul is still half nestling in the womb. Jesus took off his own girdle and outer garment and handed them to Martha to clothe him. Through it all I could not move, and my feelings were too deep and strange for smiles or tears.

The rulers in Jerusalem with their occult knowledge understood what Jesus had done. This sleep – it was not death but the death-like sleep of initiation, only ever before performed in secret. He had exposed it to the world at the very gates of Jerusalem and its mighty temple, bringing an end to the old ritual and affronting the High Priest and the rulers who held the religion's power in their hands, but who lived in fear that the Romans could snatch away their earthly control. Those men wanted Jesus dead, and Lazarus as well. And they began to plot how to bring this about without dirtying their consecrated hands.

For safety Jesus departed the city with his remaining disciples and stayed in the wilderness of Judea. Lazarus had been in touch with the eternal during his death-like sleep, and in Bethany we lived in a consciousness somewhere other than this physical world, even the servants. It was a realm beyond human knowing, yet much was being given.



A vision came to me of a mighty power moving down the aeons, through layer after layer of beings in the vast heavens; in each passing casting off a garment of stars, it seemed to me, yet losing nothing of its brilliant quintessence. Rainbow-hued Wisdom, who was always present, whispered, 'This is the power of the Word sent from the Divine throne to enter the world we created, and which needs to be redeemed. Long have I waited.'

The picture changed. I saw a man step down into the Jordan river. The prophet John led him deep into the river where the current ran swiftly and baptized him there. The man, yes it was Jesus, arose from the water. The boundary between heaven and earth was so thin in that place a spirit passed through. John the Baptizer stepped back in awe as the radiant spirit took an appearance like a dove and alighted on Jesus. It stayed there as he climbed back onto the bank.

And Wisdom said to me, 'See, Mary, I was there. I was with the *elohim* that sacrificed its heavenly status to be an offering for all on earth. And the chosen one, who has been prepared through the ages, will in turn be the holy sacrifice. Now is the time.'

'What does this mean? What sacrifice?' I asked, and I felt my heart turn.

'Beloved Mary, do I not dwell in your senses now? Have you not experienced the perfume, the lustre and music? It is given to you to prepare him for his burial. Love will show you how.'

And Wisdom held my heart in her hands.



It was the Law that all Jews should come to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover. The city was always filled to overflowing with pilgrims. But a watch had been set for Jesus. We didn't expect him to come, yet six days before the feast he arrived in Bethany with his disciples.

I left Martha and the servants to prepare a meal while I hurried up to the city. I found a purveyor of oils and chose spikenard. Only the most precious oil would suffice.

They were still dining when I walked through the door and into the room. I felt a sudden shifting as I knelt before Jesus; it was some of the men pulling back. I undid the lid of my alabaster jar and scent from the oil filled the room. The invisible beings on watch there whispered in delight. I smoothed the oil over my teacher's feet, and love flowed in my touch. Love had to be my offering because I was anointing his feet for the sacrificial road he was about to walk. I wiped off both the excess oil and my tears with my hair – my loosened hair, which had been my pleasure and indulgence, now of use in simple and singular service. As it should be.

Jesus had watched without speaking, until Judas blurted out, 'This is wrong. She should have sold the oil and given the money to the poor.' Then Jesus said, 'No; the poor you will always have with you. She has done a beautiful thing and she will need the remaining oil for my burial.'

Ignoring the bewildered murmurs, he bent down and whispered to me, 'I know what you have done for me here, Mary.' He looked closely at me then and kissed me, my beloved teacher, now with a power beyond my perceiving weaving through his being. What I did see were the ravages of that power on his body.

I was not among those people waving palm branches who followed the promised Sun Being into the city. I was in Bethany at the foot of the Mount of Olives. But my soul was linked to his, as were the souls of the others who loved him truly. And a strange blending of acceptance and pain drew us all to one another as we waited for something momentous although we did not know what this would be.



We met again to eat supper on the eve of Passover in the house of Clopas and his wife Mary, in their large upper room. Twelve reclined around Jesus, and this time Lazarus was one of the twelve. The women and the other disciples were at other tables. Jesus rose and removed his outer clothes and washed the street dust from the feet of the twelve – as a servant would do, the holy man we called our master. He declared that we were his friends if we loved one another as he as he had loved us. He said many things and taught us, but such was his teaching we could not comprehend it at that time. 'I am the vine and my father is the vine-dresser,' he said. 'You are the branches. Abide in me and I in you that you may bear abundant

fruit.' He said that he would not leave us desolate when he went away. And none knew where he was going, except for Judas in part who had already betrayed him and knew the Temple police would come for him.

Humans persecute their prophets and destroy those whose words threaten the familiar. Jesus spoke truth and his words were like illuminating fire. But people would not hear. His deeds of power were always offered through love. But people saw only magic. And soon the hour came when the rulers of the world closed in on their prey and in ignorance the soldiers mocked him, and the fickle crowd cried out for blood.

In deepest anguish I followed the cruel procession towards Golgotha. And I heard Wisdom cry, 'Must truth be denied that humans may find truth? Must wisdom be crucified that humans may find wisdom?' And the angels sighed together, yes, it must.

Some of the Essenes, comprehending that a mystery was being enacted, meditated until an invisible barrier formed around the hill with its three crosses. Only those destined to be there entered. Among the few were three women all named Mary. And we were one, joined in grief but more than that. Holy mother Wisdom folded her glorious wings about us and in that dark womb space we were joined as one soul.

The body of Jesus was the vessel for the Christ. At the very hour when priests in the Temple slaughtered the lambs without blemish and the world darkened, through the blood that flowed from the lamb of God, the mighty spirit began to permeate the earth who opened her broad arms to receive him.



There is not much more to tell of Jesus in this material world. I was the first to see him in his finer resurrected body. For death had been overcome. The encounter is embedded in my heart as a dance remembered from former days, when we women danced and sang and clapped the rhythm at a forgotten sacred site. It is the round dance of my soul that even now circling angels sing out in the heavens.

By the open tomb, Mary, your tears
have watered love's sweet-scented flower.
In the cool dew, remembering, your heart
now impels you to rise and look in.
Two angels there, waiting, for you,
Reach out to the pearl in your soul.
'Why are you still weeping?' they say.
'Search not for him here in death's realm.'
Hope fills you and, wondering, you turn,
on the threshold, you turn from the tomb.
To see someone standing, who may
be a gardener, you cannot be sure.
In pale new light dawning, you hear
his voice, on the cool breath of dawn.
'Woman, why are you weeping?' he asks
and strangely, your heart starts to sing.
Then he calls you by name, and you know
the risen one, Gardener of Souls.

That song had an extra message. I know now and rejoice that the neglected mysteries of the goddess are welcome in the new Christ mystery. I know that my soul is imbued with her Wisdom, and through Wisdom my soul is inwardly wed with the Christ, the eternal I AM. Christ in me is my I AM, my true self that reveals the way, the truth and the ever-renewing fountain of life.

For many days disciples encountered the Christ spirit as Jesus in the form they knew him in life, until the spirit called Christ spread throughout the invisible layers of mother earth.

The path has continued. For Jesus said, 'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.' Dying and rebirth are

the transmuting laws of nature's living things and Jesus opened that fruitful path for our living souls.

This is the way of Christ, the inner way of the cross. This is firstly to strive to express the real nature of love that is giving of self rather than taking for self, for the higher self always bends in service to the world. This is to surrender your investment in the things of this world and yet to be active in the world while enduring life's blows with grace. This is to carry your cross, the physical body, as Jesus bore his cross to Golgotha, knowing that the body is not who you are. This is to have the courage to face the darkness in the soul and bravely pass through that terrifying portal. This is to experience mystical death to your old life so that the eternal self can be born. This is to see the curtain lifted to reveal the vast and majestic realms of spirit and to abide in that eternity.

Unlike the Christ, our journey takes place in the physical world life after life, and in every life, we learn again to walk and to fly and to live again in harmony with the spiritual self. Divine Wisdom softly beckons us onward as the Christ teaches all disciples this inner way, from earth's spiritual breath-realm that is now his home.

And it will ever be so.

