

## Mary Magdalene's Legacy

by Donald Schmidt

Scripture reference: John 20:11–18

*One of the most liberating, life-giving stories for me is the encounter of Mary Magdalene and the risen Christ in the garden of the empty tomb. I think it is for many others as well, given the enormous popularity—at least in North America—of the hymn “In the Garden” that retells this story. In complete and utter despair, Mary finds her life, her hopes, and her dreams in tatters and insults. And then Christ appears to her again...*

You have called me a whore  
from the very beginning,  
for two thousand years now  
and Eve before me:  
called us all whores  
and witches  
and worse.

Never bothered  
to get to know me;  
never wanted to ask me:  
    why are you alone?  
    what is your story?  
    who are you, really?  
    how are you feeling?

The other disciples  
from the twelve  
through countless thousands  
have discredited me  
discredited us  
called me a liar  
a trouble-maker  
a disruption  
a nuisance  
and worse.

I frustrate you.  
I confound you.  
For two thousand years  
you have quietly  
(and not so quietly)  
wished I would go away.

When the others turned and fled  
the cross,  
and the tomb,  
did you think I would flee, too?  
Did you think I would give up?  
How could I?

My life was too entangled with his.  
(Oh no, I won't satisfy your cheap curiosity  
with titillating gossip  
and spill the beans here)  
No details

except to say that  
had you not been so afraid of other's stories  
you might have learned a little more about not only me  
but other disciples who ministered along-side Jesus,  
learned of the work of so many more:  
the women, the children, the also-rans.

But all that aside,  
I never could have fled.  
Despite all I endured  
for three days,  
for two thousand years,  
I had to stay.

And in the silence,  
in the waiting,  
Christ came.  
And louder than all of the scorn  
    and the ridicule  
    and the fear  
    and the hatred,  
louder than all of the lies  
    and the misunderstandings  
    and the abuse  
    and the mistrust

Christ spoke my name:

“Mary.”

And I experienced resurrection.

It is that same Christ who commissioned me  
to go and tell.

So I am here –  
I have not gone away,  
I *will* not go away.  
As long as anyone, anywhere, is  
    rejected  
    cast aside  
    spat upon  
by the world—or,  
worse still,  
    by the church –  
I am here  
to proclaim the same truth  
once told to me:  
Christ Jesus is risen for you,  
and calls you by name.

Let no one  
    no one  
ever tell you otherwise.

