

St. Mary Magdalene , Response.

July 22, 2019

Ladies & gentlemen:

When Sharon invited me to assist this significant event I was delighted, and then Sharon also asked if I could do a response to Dr. Velma Bourgeois Richmond's presentation, I of course said WHAT!! To this she then explained that a copy of her work was on its way and that I would have time to see it before the actual presentation. The work arrived I read it and said WHAT! So please dear friends please bear with me a few minutes while I gather my thoughts on this ultimately fascinating subject of St. Mary Magdalene.

I think it would be quite futile for me, to state my beliefs on the life of St. Mary Magdalene, given that there are so many versions of it, and that they have been continuing to inspire artists and scholars to research just that. It would probably take a nice 4-hour round table with Dr. Bourgeois, and Fray Michael to only just begin the discernment.

I can only contribute today to this story by pointing out a couple of ideas that I think might mean to some women like me in the 21st. century and what message it might be sending. The part of the story where this Non Santa woman, was about to be stoned to death, and Jesus says "He who is without sin, cast the first stone" has been a powerful tool in teaching us to see ourselves first before judging others, and in this we have continued to believe it was Mary Magdalene. Even though now we are told, she is not a repentant prostitute, today, we are not very sure. And when Jesus says, "Go and sin no more, "we supposed she did just that, and that's how she got to be a saint. So the power of forgiveness becomes very strong, and can take you, the forgiven, to higher levels of spirituality as it did her, and that we can only just begun to grasp.

The second and most remarkable discovery that I did in this study, was the fact that she was inherently part of the apostles, that it was not just a man thing but that many women were involved with the teachings with Jesus, to the point of where she is called the apostle to the apostles by St. Thomas Aquinas, when she gives them the news of his resurrection and that she has

seen him. I feel humbly overwhelmed by this fact, because I had not realized the magnitude of this. The feminine component was there all the time! There were not just men! Like we were led to believe!

In this very extensive presentation, of how St. Mary Magdalene has been conceived since the New Testament, and passing throughout the dark ages, the middle ages, the enlightenment, plus modern and postmodern times, we are seeing so many versions, beliefs and ideas of the Saint, that I in particular cannot actually decide which is which without feeling unsure of my ideas.

But what I really see and admire is the fact that his remarkable woman, against all odds, struggling against the established church, the established government, the cultural bias for women, the apostles who did not really like her, how did she manage to capture the Holy Spirit, and make him work for her.?

Because I firmly believe, that all the good ideas that came to her to continue her teachings, all the healing that she is reportedly was able to do, plus her own strength to continue on that very difficult journey, had to come from the Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity. We cannot do any of this alone.

In short: Lets recapitulate: These two ideas:

Knowing ourselves, plays a very important role in elevating our spiritual levels, and also, feeling loved and included, has thus a powerful impact on our actions.

And so, we women were there when it was all happening, we have always been there, we NEED to be in all the decision making, surroundings our lives, from family, to community to Nation to Planet! Even today, her story continues to inspire all sorts of artists, and religious alike and as Dr. Verna Bourgeois so states in her ending remarks, "One wonders what Mary Magdalene's next manifestation will be!

SHE WAS IN FACT A VERY BLESSED WOMAN.

Maria Teresa Bastidas