
Mary Magdalene and the Risen Christ

An article for the *Cathedral Times* by Dean Sam Candler

My Easter continues whenever I discover new expressions of the encounter of Mary Magdalene at the empty tomb of Jesus. Most of you know the story of how she visited the empty tomb and wept, because the body of Jesus was not there. Standing there, however, was a man who looked like the gardener; and she asked him whether or not he had taken away the body of Jesus. When the man said, simply, "Mary," she knew immediately that the unknown man was Jesus. She had mistaken him for the gardener (John 20:11-18).



I have enjoyed, over the years in previous classes and sermons, using so many artistic representations of that beautiful event. But, this past Sunday, I discovered still another way to interpret that famous Bible story! Below is a reproduction of "Saint Mary Magdalene at the Sepulchre," by the 16th century artist, Savoldo.

In his daily meditation for 4 April 2016, the modern Franciscan Richard Rohr (a mystic and a hero!) speaks about how each of us seeks reality in Christ; yet, what the true risen Christ really shows us is our true self, a truth that is already deep inside us. Says Rohr, "This is the new self that can say with Paul, 'I live no longer, not "I" but it is Christ now living in me' (Galatians 2:20)." Rohr concludes, "*In the truest sense, I am that which I am seeking.*"

Here, in this 16th century painting, the artist Savoldo has expressed that instant, that moment, when Mary Magdalene looks straight at Jesus and realizes who he is. But, in the painting, she is looking at...us! The viewers! You and me! Christ is in us! Christ in us, the hope of glory. May the risen Christ be in you today. May the risen Christ be you!

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