

MAGDALEN

As we remember Catherine Damen and her choice of the name "Magdalen" as her added identity for her life in Christ, I invite you to contemplate the following poem/reflection about Magdalene of the gospels and her depth of experience of Christ. Ponder our Mother Magdalene's own experience of knowing Christ in similar depths and intimacy. And let the poem take you to your own depths.

Blessed Feast Day
July 22, 2021
Sr. Patty Podhaisky



A Rememberance of Magdalene's Day

Ken Phillips

I can still remember the morning:

*There has never been such a darkness
as if night would not relinquish my soul to day;
as if every shadow had made its home
in the hollow of my womb;
as if all my loss
had turned to stone
and this stone
was rolled over the core of being.*

It was the end of light.

*I cannot remember how I came to the garden.
I cannot recall what moved my feet
to a place that was barren
despite the springtime
because you, my Beloved,
were no more.*

*I did not know what I would find,
I remembered your promise—
those words that infuriated so many,
"In three days..."
I believed.
I could believe anything you said.*

*But I was also there
for the insanity of the cross—
How many times can a body be shattered?
How many ways can flesh be shred?
How much wrong can men wreak upon other men
and call it justice?*

*I watched your mother
wordless, beyond tears,
cradling you for a last time,
wiping those carpenter hands
limp, lifeless—
clearing fingers of grime
blotting the last drops of blood.
Taking away that parody of a crown.
Searching your face for some trace of
the child that was still in the man.*

*But we few women there
only inches away
circled her
whose flesh encircled you.*

*Then
the dark, sour Sabbath:
bread that tasted not of joy*

*but of oblivion;
candles at sunset
that could not illuminate the room,
could not warm the chill
that held us in fierce suspension.*

*Then
the night:
terrible sleepless wonder
that would not yield;
shards of dreams that repeated
only the horrors
of the street, the court, the hill*

*Could hope really die in so brief a turn of days?
Could so great a love lose its way and vanish?*

*Dawn was no relief.
The first blushing of the sky seemed wrong:
in the face of this loss,
night should be forever.
Still,
in the quiet light I found my way to
that place
where I would make my last goodbye,
where words and sense would
meet their utter end.
Ah, but for that parting who would roll away the
stone?*

*Then
with the fire of the East behind your face
in a body free from death's cave
in flesh strong,
un-bruised,
new as the day—
how could I know you?*

I can taste the panic

*"Where have you taken him?"
To lose again what had been lost—*

*my brain was going to explode
and then
in the midst of acid madness setting in—
my name.*

You knew my name.

You knew me.

*And suddenly
my unbirthed heart was cradled in your voice,
and all of me ached to hold you
to be held by you,
to erase the parade of loss.*

"Do not cling to me..."

*I was stunned.
You were the watery depths
for whose baptism I longed
and now
these words keep my away.
But Beloved
did you not see?
My only thirst was for you.*

*How I came to the room I am not certain.
Peter stared at me, breathless, incredulous,
shaking off the words I spoke.
His look said it: "a woman in love in grief"
that is all.
But he came to know what I knew.
And they all came to know what I know.*

*So now
at table again
I taste you living in me still.
And before the closing of my day
I breathe in again
the sweet wine of your voice
calling my name
naming me
beloved.*