

## Who is Risen? Jesus or Christ?

John 6:36 - 40, 48 – 51; 20:1 - 18

At the beginning of the day Mary Magdalene came to the familiar place for the all too familiar reason. She came to the cemetery expecting the Jesus she loved in terms of how she last saw him. But she found a tomb with no dead body in it and a stranger standing nearby. There was nothing there that she recognized from her life experience up to that moment. We may have come this morning expecting the familiar Easter service and story. For Mary Magdalene, however, the first sign of resurrection was emptiness – of expectations, the tomb, her perception and understanding.

Maybe we are standing with her at the tombs of our own experience wondering what happened. Where there was life, there is now dead space. Could it be a home across which a heavy stone has been rolled, a relationship that has become a limp body, a dream now buried, a church experience that has died and what is now emerging is strange and unrecognizable? The tomb is bought and paid for, carved out of rock, set in stone and well stewarded with a lovely garden surrounding. But this tomb is so much more than a beautiful setting for a beautiful friend to lie. It is the sanctuary of transformation from the static taken-for-granted bound up familiarity lying flat out, to the wholly ecstatic (εκστασις, outside the normal, an altered state of consciousness) and unfamiliar, from the ordinary to the extraordinary, from Jesus of Nazareth to the cosmic Christ. The tomb is the womb for a new kind of birth, and who recognizes their new born baby at all at the moment of birth?

What one expects at the tomb is not what one gets when the risen Christ is there. Do not assume death even when we have been taught to expect it. Mary knew Jesus intimately, but could not put him together with the risen Christ until he calls her name. In the evening of that day Cleopas and a friend, both of whom knew Jesus thoroughly, did not recognize him either while he walked behind them on the way to Emmaus, listening in on their conversation (Luke 24:13 – 35). They had supper together and still could not put him together with the risen Christ until he passed the bread. What could these resurrection day encounters be telling us?

Mary Magdalene reached to hold Jesus ... again. But mysteriously he eludes her grasp. Jesus can be nailed down on a cross. The Christ cannot. The Christ will not be held as a private possession or by a religion. **The mystery of the risen Christ is far bigger and more inclusive than Christianity itself.**

Today, Christian churches of all expressions proclaim that this is the core story of faith and life, the truth and credibility are on the line at Easter, that we must focus on proving that Jesus *is* God, and at the same time that God raised the corpse of Jesus of Nazareth back to human life, just as he was last Thursday, so our Christian tribe will be out front because our Jesus is on top. In this Easter competition of conviction, our *Jesusology*, we wall off other religions and continue to divide Christianity into smaller tribes, from our egoic need to be winners, still unconscious with Mary Magdalene and the rest of the *Christology* of Easter, of the emergence of “the Christ that holds all things together” (Colossians 1:17), the Α (alpha), the “Christ [who] was the first idea in the mind of God” (13<sup>th</sup> century Celtic theologian and philosopher John Duns Scotus), and the Ω (omega) point of cosmic history (20<sup>th</sup> century theologian and paleontologist Pierre Teilhard de Chardin). In the evolutionary process of unfolding and manifesting the universe over 14 billion years in human time, the Christ invested organically, immersed in the heart of matter, unifying the world. This was the primordial *Christifying* or anointing of the universe. The universe is *bydysawd* (Welsh Gaelic, all that is baptised).

The three dimensional limited human appearing of Jesus was the personification of the infinitely dimensional Christ. To not recognize that the Christ mystery is universal - God present in, infusing and binding all of creation, then our religious egos go back to walling off and dividing up Jesus. The we choose to respect one thing and despise another, to love these people and hate those, to decide that God is here and not there ... . The power of resurrection is that it takes away any power to discriminate. Every living being from the beginning has been possessed by the eternal Christ. It is the deep reason why Jesus said early on, "Do not judge."

We are all too aware in 2017 that the church of our ancestors brought far more Jesusology than Christology to the so-called "New World." Witness our treatment of indigenous peoples, slaves, our abuse of the planet and ourselves. Imagine if they had brought the Christ risen? They would have sat with curiosity and wonder with their indigenous hosts listening, hearing, learning and understanding a depth, breadth and richness of the Christ never known in their European experience (Ephesians 3, 4). The need for Residential Schools would never have entered their heads.

Humanity has had a cosmological conversion. With the new millennial awakening and accelerating evolution of the nature of the church and Christian spirituality, there is a cosmological crisis in the church manifesting, in people moving on and out in the Spirit, and among those who remain in hope of a revitalized continuing unchanging Christendom. Witness the crisis in worship, in our language of faith, in our core understanding of Jesus Christ, our very identity and purpose.

"The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh" (John 6:51). This is not Jesus' shock-talk so we would worship bread and wine, but the Christ, as Paul taught, pointing us to *perceive* the risen Christ in creation itself (Romans 8:19 - 23), to *see* the Christ in all human beings of earth (1Corinthians 12:12, 13. Galatians 3:28), to *recognize* the Christ in the nurturing primal elements of earth, represented by and symbolized in the bread and wine of communion (1Corinthians 11:23 - 26).

*All* is "Real Presence." This is the millennium of The Christ! That we could only see ...

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#### **John 6:36 - 40, 48 - 51**

Jesus said to his friends, "**I am the bread of life.** Whoever comes to me will never be hungry. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. **I am the bread of life.** Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness and died. **I am the living bread** that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever. The bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh. Whoever eats me will live b/c of me. This is the will of God, that all who *see* the Son and *believe* in him may have eternal life. And I will raise them up on the last day."

#### **John 20:1 - 18**

Early on the first day of the week while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed. So she ran to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved, and told them. "They have taken him out of the tomb and we do not know where they laid him!" Peter and the other disciple set out and went toward the tomb. The two were running together, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent down to look in and saw the linen wrappings lying there. But he did not go in. Then Simon Peter came and went into the tomb. He saw the linen wrappings lying there and the cloth that had been on Jesus' head, not lying with the linen wrappings but rolled up in a place by itself. Then the other disciple who reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed. For **as yet they did not understand the scripture** that Jesus must rise from the dead. Then the disciples returned to their homes. But Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. As she wept she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had been lying, one at the head and the other at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" They have taken Jesus and I do not know where they have laid him. When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there,

but **she did not know that it was him**. He said to her, “Woman, why are you weeping? For whom are you looking? Supposing him to be the gardener, she said, “If you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away. He said, “Mary.” She replied, “Rabbouni.” (meaning Teacher). He said to her, “Do not hold on to me because I have not yet ascended to the Father. But go to my brothers and say to them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ ” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord.” She told them that Jesus had said these things to her.

### **Paul points to The Cosmic Christ:**

#### **Colossians 1: 13 – 20**

Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.  
In him all things, visible and invisible, in heaven and on earth (ie. the universe) were created through him and for him.  
He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might have first place in everything.  
In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.

#### **Ephesians 3, 4**

May you have the power to comprehend what is the breadth and length, height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.  
Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility, gentleness and patience.  
Bear with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.  
There is one body and one Spirit, just as we are called to the one hope of our calling  
- one God, one faith, one baptism - one God of all, who is *above* all, *through* all and *in* all.

#### **Romans 8:19 – 23 The panentheistic God in Christ**

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us.  
Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.  
The whole creation has been groaning in labour pains until now, and we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for the redemption of our bodies.

#### **1Corinthians 12:12, 13**

The body is one and has many members. All the members of the body, though many, are one body.  
So with Christ. In the one Spirit we are all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free.  
We are all made to drink of one Spirit.

#### **Galatians 3:28**

There is no longer Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female, for all are one in Christ Jesus.