

THE MYSTERY OF MARY MAGDALENE

ROBERT POWELL



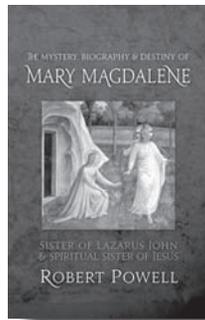
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The following excerpt is from Robert Powell's latest book, *The Mystery, Biography, and Destiny of Mary Magdalene: Sister of Lazarus John & Spiritual Sister of Jesus* (see page 7).



In the last thirty or forty years, interest in Mary Magdalene has grown enormously, particularly with the idea—first presented through the 1971 rock opera (later a Broadway show), *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and the Oscar-nominated film adaptation thereof—that there was a love relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene. This fired people's imaginations. In 1982, this was brought into literary form by three journalists in England who wrote a book entitled *The Holy Blood, and the Holy Grail*, in which they put forward a theory that Jesus and Mary Magdalene had been married, had children, and that the descendants of this lineage were the bearers of the mystery of the Holy Grail. This idea became popular-

ized on a large scale by Dan Brown's book *The Da Vinci Code*, published in 2003, in which the theory that had been presented in *The Holy Blood, and the Holy Grail* was put forward in a modified form. Since then, there have been further publications in which people's imaginations have found fertile ground. A recent book by Lynn Picknett, called *Mary Magdalene: Christianity's Hidden Goddess*, speculates that Mary Magdalene may have been an Egyptian priestess who practiced ritual sex or that perhaps she was from Africa and was black, and she goes so far as to suggest that there may be ancient documents that prove that Jesus and Mary Magdalene were sexual partners (married or otherwise) that the church has acquired and suppressed.¹ Various ideas of this kind are floating around, which have come about mainly, as noted, in the last thirty years.



The question may be asked: Why live with speculations if it is possible to know the truth? I believe it is possible to know the truth about Mary Magdalene, and to know her biography. To give an indication of this, I will briefly refer to the research in my book *Chronicle of the Living Christ*, published in 1996, which contains a day-by-day biography of the life of Christ. This book was the result of ten years of research that

I undertook into the works of a German nun, who was a contemporary of Beethoven and Goethe, named Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774–1824). At the age of thirty-eight she received the stigmata. She then lived for another twelve years without eating any solid food, except for taking the host at communion once a day. Occasionally she would also drink small amounts of water. Already from her earliest childhood, she lived continually in visions from the life of Christ. This was quite natural for her. Her visions were so alive that it was for her as if she were physically present at the events she saw. She was able to describe in great detail much about the life of Christ and about the people around him.

After she had received the stigmata, there were many from all over Europe who came to visit her because they wanted to witness this miracle. One of those was a German poet, Clemens Brentano, who on meeting her was so struck and impressed by the purity of her being that he decided to stay and become her scribe. Interestingly, Sister Emmerich had previously had a vision that her guardian angel had told her that someone was coming and would be her scribe. In the vision this person was referred to as “the pilgrim.” When Brentano came, Sister Emmerich recognized immediately that he was the one whom she had seen in the vision. Over several years he visited her every day and wrote down what she had seen, as she dictated

1. Lynn Picknett, *Mary Magdalene: Christianity's Hidden Goddess*, New York: Carroll & Graf, 2003.

the content of her visions to him, describing the events in the life of Christ day by day. The resulting transcription of her visions was eventually compiled in a book published in four volumes, *The Life of Jesus Christ*.¹

The fourth volume is mainly concerned with the events of Christ's Passion, which took place between the Last Supper and the Crucifixion. Many have heard of—or perhaps even seen—the film by Mel Gibson, *The Passion of the Christ*, which is based on this fourth volume, although Gibson did take some liberties in the way in which he dealt with the content of Sister Emmerich's work. When you read Sister Emmerich's account of the life of Christ you do get a sense of authenticity. However, as a scientist

When we read the account by Sister Emmerich of the life of Jesus Christ, we are on a secure foundation for understanding the truth.

I could not be content simply with this sense of truth. I needed a way to *know for sure* whether her visions were true or not. I studied her book *The Life of Jesus Christ* line by line and found that she made references to places, days of the week, and dates in the Hebrew calendar, particularly relating to festivals. Without a background in astronomical chronology, one might not necessarily notice these details. For example, on one occasion she said, “Jesus taught in the synagogue at Aion.... That evening, after the close of the Sabbath... it was the commencement of the Feast of Tabernacles.”²

With a background in astronomical chronology, one can know that the Feast of Tabernacles commences on the fifteenth day of the month of Tishri in the Hebrew Calendar. This is a lunar calendar so that the fifteenth day—falling in the middle of a lunar month containing twenty-nine or thirty days—coincides with the Full Moon. (The month starts with the first appearance at dusk of the thin crescent of the New Moon.) Moreover, since the Hebrew Sabbath extends from dusk on Friday evening to dusk on Saturday evening, it must have been Saturday evening “after the close of the Sabbath.” So this event happened on a Saturday evening at Full Moon. I collected all references of this kind made by Sister Emmerich and found to my astonishment that they all fit exactly in the period from the year 29 to the year 33 in the Hebrew lunar cal-

endar. And since I have a masters degree in statistics and probability theory, I worked out the probability of these very specific indications and found that the probability that the dates were random was *one in four-hundred-and-thirty-five billion*. Anyone with any understanding of probability theory will know, therefore, that the dates quoted by Sister Emmerich are authentic. To be doubly sure, I had my work checked by two other mathematicians, who came to the same result.

Therefore, I feel very secure in saying that for the first time in history it has been possible to find the true and exact dates of the life of Christ, primarily from the Baptism in the Jordan onward (but also from shortly before the Baptism), up until the Crucifixion and Resurrection and shortly thereafter. Moreover, even though she was bedridden in the little town of Dülmen in Germany and read no books—she could hardly read and write—Sister Emmerich gave accurate and detailed descriptions of local customs at the time of Christ, and also of the exact topography of Palestine, as later I was able to witness on pilgrimages to the Holy Land in 1993 and 1997. For example, the description of the location of the house of the Virgin Mary in Ephesus (present-day Turkey) was so detailed and precise that two priests in the year 1891 explored the region around Ephesus and found a place that corresponded to her description. An archeological investigation showed that what they had found were the remains of a building that dated from the first century and that the arrangement of the rooms fitted exactly Sister Emmerich's description of the structure. The house was subsequently rebuilt according to this description and is now an important place of pilgrimage.

Thus, when we read the account by Sister Emmerich of the life of Jesus Christ, we are on a secure foundation for understanding the truth. Even though one cannot say that every single word is absolutely accurate, certainly from what I have been able to investigate, there is no way she could have made it all up. Her work is a demonstration of the power and ability of a certain kind of clairvoyance to determine historical dates and geographical locations of long-past events—with nearly one hundred percent certainty, as the application of probability theory to Sister Emmerich's calendar indications verifies.

The Life of Jesus Christ, stemming from the clairvoyance of Sister Emmerich, is also a source for understanding the life of Mary Magdalene. It presents something very different from what the three English journalists and Dan Brown describe in their books. (Some readers might now wish to consult the last chapter, entitled “The John Mystery,” where I have described Mary Magdalene's biography in some detail, in the context of the biography of her brother Lazarus, based on the

1. Anne Catherine Emmerich, *The Life of Jesus Christ* (4 vols.) Rockford, IL: TAN Books, 2004.

2. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 374–375.

clairvoyant descriptions of Emmerich.) In this chapter, I briefly develop a few aspects concerning the life of Mary Magdalene. In what follows, I am drawing upon Sister Emmerich's descriptions.

Mary Magdalene was the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and grew up in the family castle in Bethany, just northeast of Jerusalem. This is also where Lazarus was later raised from the dead by Jesus Christ. Mary Magdalene was the youngest of four children and was very beautiful. Her family was considered to be quite wealthy. Lazarus had inherited from his father and shared his wealth with his three sisters. The third sister was referred to as Silent Mary who, in modern terminology, would be called developmentally delayed or mentally ill. She did not speak but had profound inner visions. She died at a relatively early age on April 8 in C.E. 30, about six months after the ministry of Christ began on September 23 in 29 C.E., the day of the Baptism in the Jordan.

Already by that time, Mary Magdalene was living in her own castle on the southwest shore of the Sea of Galilee in the town of Magdala, referred to by Sister Emmerich as Magdalum, located a few miles north of Tiberius. Being wealthy and beautiful she enjoyed life and, correspondingly, lived the "high life." This was a great source of concern for her brother Lazarus and sister Martha, both of whom had in the meantime become disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. There had been links between the family of Lazarus and the Holy Family for a long time, even before Jesus was born, as the woman (her name was Noemi) who had looked after the Virgin Mary when she was a Temple virgin was an aunt of Lazarus (she was the sister of Lazarus's mother).

Lazarus and Martha recognized Jesus as the Messiah, and did everything that they could to support him.

In fact, Lazarus played an extraordinarily important role in the life of Christ. He was effectively the "patron" of Christ. It is well known that Jesus did a lot to help the poor by often distributing bread and other food—and sometimes money—to the poor when he went somewhere. Where did this abundance come from? Jesus himself had nothing. It was made possible through the support of Lazarus and Martha, who took care of the needs not only of Jesus but also of his disciples.

As we can see from the fact that he was raised from the dead later, Lazarus was what we would nowadays call *an initiate*, someone who had attained an extraordinary level of spiritual development, endowed with remarkable suprasensory gifts. It is not too farfetched to call him the spiritual brother of Jesus. Reading between the lines, this is what is indirectly stated in chapter II of the Gospel of John with the words: "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." The use of the word *loved* points to a special bond that Jesus had with this family, which I have elaborated upon in further detail in the last chapter, "The John Mystery." This bond offers us a key to understanding the relationship that Jesus had with Lazarus and also with Mary Magdalene.

Mary Magdalene's wild life was a source of great concern to Lazarus and Martha. They were praying for guidance as to how to go about introducing their sister to Jesus. Then one day Martha received guidance to go to Mary because she knew that Jesus was going to be teaching in the area of Magdala, in a place called Gabara—northwest of Tiberius—not far from the Sea of Galilee. Martha managed to persuade her sister to come and hear Jesus preach on a hill near Gabara on November 8, 30 C.E. Mary came with an attitude of curiosity to see the new prophet, but not with any sense of belief. She came dressed

in her finest clothes and she brought some friends who enjoyed living it up with her. However, while Jesus was speaking she had an extraordinary experience. We have to remember that when he spoke, his words had great power, possessing a strength that would move people, affecting them even down into their physical body. Mary became riveted by everything Jesus said, to the point that—and this is an event that is difficult for us to understand—Jesus cast a demon out from Mary Magdalene. In modern terminology we would probably call it some kind of psychological complex, but in those days it was said that the person was possessed by a demon.

It is very interesting to look at what was taking place in the heavens at the time of this event of Jesus casting out a demon from Mary Magdalene. As the research I have presented in various publications shows, every event in the life of Christ had a perfect correspondence with what was taking place in the cosmos. At that time, the Sun and Venus were in conjunction. Venus, of course, is known as the planet of love and Christ was known as the Sun Spirit. They were close together—in conjunction—in the constellation of Scorpio, the Sun at 17 degrees Scorpio, only two degrees away from Antares at fifteen degrees, the star in the center of Scorpio, known as the heart of the Scorpion. According to ancient star mythology, this position of the Sun tells us a lot. In the works of Plutarch, an initiate who gathered information from many ancient mystery centers and who was also a priest at Delphi, the great oracle center of the god Apollo, we find a myth concerning the death of Osiris, which according to this account took place when the Sun was at 17 degrees of Scorpio. That was the exact degree at which the Sun was located when Jesus cast out a demon from Mary Magdalene. From a cosmic viewpoint, evidently Jesus brought to manifesta-

tion something of the myth of Osiris in enacting this deed. Furthermore, the number of correspondences between Christ and Osiris is striking, the primary one being that Christ died and rose again from the dead, as is related in the myth of Osiris. At this position of the Sun, located at 17 degrees Scorpio, where it was said to be at the death of Osiris, Jesus cast out a demon from Mary Magdalene, bringing about a chance for new life and restoring her to wholeness.

There is yet another interesting cosmic correspondence concerning this event, which is that Mercury was located at the beginning of Sagittarius in conjunction with the galactic center at 2 degrees Sagittarius. This is a very significant place in the zodiac that has much to do with the divine power of Christ—the galactic center being a location of enormous power.¹

This event in the life of Mary Magdalene on November 8, 30 C.E., occurred a little more than a year after the Baptism of Jesus in the River Jordan, which had taken place on September 23, 29 C.E. Five days later, on November 13, 30 C.E., Jesus came to the town of Nain and raised a twelve-year-old boy from the dead. This event of the raising from the dead of the youth of Nain is described in the Gospel of Luke. There were many other miracles Jesus performed around the time of his encounter with Mary Magdalene, when he cast out a demon from her. The following words spoken by Christ apply to her: “When the unclean spirit has gone out of a man, he passes through waterless places seeking rest; and finding none, he says: ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and

the last state becomes worse than the first” (Luke 11:24). In fact, this is exactly what happened. Mary Magdalene did have a relapse; for she returned to her former lifestyle and become possessed again, this time by seven demons. Martha and Lazarus, who witnessed this, were of course now deeply concerned and kept praying for guidance as to what to do. This new condition lasted for almost exactly seven weeks. (Again and again we find this period of seven weeks in the life of Christ. For instance, Pentecost came seven weeks after the Resurrection.)

Just as Jesus himself had a circle of disciples who were all men, so the Virgin Mary had a circle of women around her.

Seven weeks after the encounter with Jesus at Gabara, on December 26, 30 C.E., Martha again managed to persuade Mary Magdalene to come and hear Jesus speak, this time in a place called Azanoth, a few miles northwest of Gabara. On this occasion Jesus cast out all seven demons, as described in great detail by Sister Emmerich, and as is referred to briefly also in the Gospel: “Mary, called Magdalene, from whom *seven demons* had gone out” (Luke 8:2). This was a kind of initiation. It was a freeing and opening of all seven of Mary Magdalene’s chakras. Through this initiation, she became the first fully redeemed soul.

This was, of course, an event of great importance in the life of Mary Magdalene. Something truly extraordinary had taken place through which she was able more and more to find her true calling. Just as her brother, Lazarus, was a high initiate, so was

Mary Magdalene in her own right a great initiate, having received her initiation from Christ, who opened her seven chakras.

After he had cast out the demons, Jesus advised Mary Magdalene to stay in the company of the Virgin Mary. Just as Jesus himself had a circle of disciples, who were all men—remembering that it was a patriarchal culture—so the Virgin Mary had a circle of women around her, which Sister Emmerich refers to as the holy women. Mary Magdalene joined this circle of holy women and played an important role there.

This was all preparation for the great event, later, when she was the one who, on the morning of the Resurrection, came to the empty tomb. There, in the Garden of the Holy Sepulcher, she turned around and saw someone whom she thought was the gardener—until she heard him speak. Then she knew: This is the Risen One. He has risen from the dead. Christ spoke with her and said that she should go to the disciples and tell them that he would be ascending to the Father. He gave her the task of being a messenger. One of the Greek words for messenger is *Apostle*. Because it was Mary Magdalene who brought the news of the Resurrection to the Apostles, particularly to Peter and John, she is called the Apostle to the Apostles. The initiation she received from Jesus was a preparation for this great event of being charged with Jesus’ message of his resurrection from the dead, thereby bearing witness to the Resurrection and becoming the Apostle to the Apostles.

The rest of Mary Magdalene’s life is shrouded in mystery. Nevertheless, with the help of Sister Emmerich it is possible to begin to understand what took place. After the events of the Resurrection and the Ascension she withdrew to live the life of a hermit in the desert, rather like John the Baptist had done before he began to

1. Lacquanna Paul & Robert Powell, *Cosmic Dances of the Planets*, San Rafael, CA: Sophia Foundation Press, 2007, p. 193.

baptize people in the River Jordan. However, when she was visiting her brother and sister in Bethany, about three years after Pentecost, because a persecution of Christians by the Jews had started, she was arrested. On this occasion Lazarus, Martha, and Mary Magdalene were all taken into custody, as well as the sisters' maidservants, Marcella and Sara, and two other people who were visiting Lazarus at the time: one of the seventy-two disciples, named Maximin, and the man who had been born blind and was healed by Jesus, Chelitonius, also sometimes known as Sidonius. These seven were taken to the Mediterranean coast, somewhere close to present-day Tel Aviv. They were put into a little boat, towed out far into the sea, and cut loose. The idea was that they would perish, but that did not happen. Through divine providence, this little boat made it across the Mediterranean so that the family with the servants and companions came ashore at a place in the South of France now called St. Maries-de-la-Mer.

On the Sophia Foundation pilgrimage to the South of France in 1998, I traveled to St. Maries-de-la-Mer and visited a Romanesque church that has a crypt with a black Madonna. It is not dedicated to Mary, but represents an image of Sara, the Egyptian maidservant of Mary Magdalene. Sara is the patron saint of the Gypsies. Each year on May 24, as the Gypsies converge upon St. Maries-de-la-Mer, they are welcomed to the ninth-century fortified Romanesque church and the St. Sara Crypt. Their purpose is to pay respect to Sara-la-Kali, or Sara the Black. They come by the thousands from around the world to this little town for baptisms, family reunions, and other events. Everywhere, the bejeweled Gypsy women are in long, colorful skirts, full white blouses, and kerchiefs. The statue of Sara is carried by specially chosen men in a solemn procession,

accompanied by Camargue guards on horseback, to the Mediterranean Sea for prayers and veneration. The narrow streets of St. Maries-de-la-Mer overflow as the Gypsies honor the escort, singing hymns untiringly and shouting again and again, "Vive Saint Sara!" There are many traditions of this kind relating to the coming to the Provence region of Lazarus and his sisters and companions, who were the bearers of Christianity to Europe just three years after the Resurrection of Christ.

Right now, in our age of television, computers, cell phones, and iPods, such communion with nature is difficult to imagine. But it will come again in the future.

Now we can imagine that Lazarus, having been raised from the dead, had an extraordinary power, as had Mary Magdalene, and Martha, too, after having spent so much time in the presence of Jesus Christ. When Lazarus spoke, it was a powerful experience. While Sara stayed behind in St. Maries-de-la-Mer, the rest of the group went to the town of Massilia (present-day Marseilles), farther eastward along the coast. They lived there, and because of Lazarus's presence and the power of his speaking, very soon a community of people became converted to this new religion of Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who had died and risen from the dead. Lazarus became the bishop of this first community of Christians in Europe. He kept a "spiritual eye" on Martha and Mary Magdalene, his two sisters, who each had their own

calling. Mary Magdalene went even farther eastward from Marseilles, to a cave in the Provence region that is called Sainte-Baume, where she lived the life of a hermit for about thirty years. This cave is halfway up a sheer rock face, a very imposing place. The path leading up to it goes through an ancient, sacred forest. Before Mary Magdalene came there, the place was sacred to the Druids.

What was she doing there all that time? She led the life of a mystic, in continual communion with the angelic realm and with Christ, who was at this time on his path of ascent through the heavenly realms. She was living with the words the angels had spoken at the Ascension: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11). The angels were proclaiming his second coming, what is referred to in the Book of Revelation as his "coming in the clouds" (Rev. 1:7). One of the things Mary Magdalene did at Sainte-Baume was to spend a lot of time contemplating the clouds. She lived in communion with nature. She was in effect role-modeling something for humanity of the future. Right now, in our age of television, computers, cell phones, and iPods, such communion with nature is difficult to imagine. But it will come again in the future.

She did not have any concern about her physical well-being since she lived in perfect harmony and oneness with nature. Everything was taken care of in a quite natural way. When she needed water, she would find it. When she needed to eat, she would find plants to eat. It was a condition we can hardly imagine nowadays, a condition of oneness with the whole of nature.

