

Invoking Mary Magdalene's Book

By Siobhán Houston

As I thought back to the process of writing my book, *Invoking Mary Magdalene: Invoking the Wisdom of the Divine Feminine* (Sounds True Publishing), I remembered a “prayer drawing” that I crafted after a meditation session a couple of years ago. At the time, in April 2004, I struggled with a lingering exhaustion that had no discernable cause. Hoping to receive some healing guidance, I emerged from my meditation, picked up my big box of 64 Crayola crayons, and began sketching. I still have the picture I drew that day. In the center of the drawing is a large ornate apple-green goblet. Blue and orange flames burst from the goblet's opening, as do sweetly undulating leafy vines festooned with pink hearts. Suspended over this grail-like cup is an imposing indigo-blue rendering of the Sanskrit symbol for “om.” When I finished the picture, I turned over the paper and quickly wrote on the back of the sketch; the words seemed to emanate from my deep self, even though the writing came out in the third person form.

Part of the long message I received that day was, “You will write a book very fast and the energy that it generates will carry you for a long time . . . You will have many adventures and meet more of your tribe, which will nourish you greatly . . . You must do this if you are to be well. Have I ever let you down?” The prayer drawing seemed significant, its encouraging message pointing me toward a new creative endeavor that would help in the healing process. And it followed on the heels of another meditation experience in which Bridget, the fiery Celtic goddess of creativity and learning, handed me a book with a blank cover—I was to pen a book. A book seemed to be “in the ether,” certainly, but what would I write about?

Since I was (and still am) a doctoral student in religious studies at the time, much of my time was spent reading about my dissertation topic: modern esoteric/alternative Christian groups. In my research, I often came across people connecting with Mary Magdalene in fascinating ways, including channeling, ritual, prayer and study groups, sacred partnership workshops, and pilgrimages to her sacred places. These modern-day Magdalene acolytes depicted her variously as priestess of Isis, Tantric adept, Grail-bearer, Jungian archetype, Black Madonna, Gnostic teacher, and of course, the consort of Jesus.

As I continued my research, I noticed that while many tomes about the Magdalene had appeared on bookstore shelves, none of these showed readers how to integrate the energies of this mysterious woman/goddess/archetype/priestess into their spiritual practices. I felt it was important that this new wave of Mary Magdalene spirituality be made more widely available. Of course, I also hoped that such a book might offset my grad school tuition! I took a few weeks off from my dissertation and wrote a

proposal limning out my ideas for a book on contemporary Magdalene practices.

After putting together the proposal, however, it languished in my file cabinet--I didn't try very hard to get it published. Although magazines and anthologies had published much of my work over the years, it seemed to me that the book industry was a different world altogether, one that was almost impossible to navigate through successfully.

My fascination with Mary Magdalene persisted, however, even though the book proposal lay dormant at the time. In February 2005, I taught a Naropa class on "Mary Magdalene Spirituality Today." The students and I had a great time exploring the Magdalene's history, legends, and controversies as well as practicing meditations and rituals together. (Some of us continued to meet on a monthly basis after the class finished, even holding a Mary Magdalene feast day celebration that July.)

During that same semester, I received a call from the acquisitions editor of a local publishing company. Jennifer had seen my class listing in the Naropa catalog and hoped I could point her to someone who was qualified to write a book on Mary Magdalene practices. I offered her a couple of names and off-handedly mentioned I'd written a book proposal *on that very topic*. Long story short, I signed a book contract with Sounds True Publishing a couple of meetings and a few weeks later. And it looked like my meditation muse wasn't kidding about having to write a book quickly—I was given three months to complete the manuscript.

From July to October 2005, I wrote like a madwoman while simultaneously maintaining my full-time work and teaching schedule. Mary Magdalene's grace and lots of human help from the Sounds True staff and my family enabled me to survive that intense and trying time. And other elements of my meditation "prediction" of April 2004 came true, including the part about gathering more of my tribe! I've been privileged to meet a number of inspiring Magdalene devotees in the course of penning the book, not to mention the many students who have deepened my own appreciation for Mary Magdalene as we've journeyed into her realm together.

Aspiring book authors often query me about how *Invoking Mary Magdalene* came to be published. They are astonished to learn that I never got an agent and never approached even one publisher. I believe that some being(s) in the unseen world had a hand in this mysterious and serendipitous project and that its creation was foretold in my meditations years ago. Of course, I had to heed the messages and hit the keyboard, but that is often the easier part of the publishing process!

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Invoking Mary Magdalene: Accessing the Wisdom of the Divine Feminine
by Siobhán Houston (hardbound book and accompanying 70-minute meditation
CD), \$19.95, published 2006. Available in hardback or Kindle editions.