



# The Meaning of Mary Magdalene: Discovering the Woman at the Heart of Christianity

*Cynthia Bourgeault*

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Mary Magdalene is one of the most influential symbols in the history of Christianity—yet, if you look in the Bible, you'll find only a handful of verses that speak of her. How did she become such a compelling saint in the face of such paltry evidence? In her effort to answer that question, Cynthia Bourgeault examines the Bible, church tradition, art, legend, and newly discovered texts to see what's there. She then applies her own reasoning and intuition, informed by the wisdom of the ages-old Christian contemplative tradition. What emerges is a radical view of Mary Magdalene as Jesus's most important disciple, the one he considered to understand his teaching best. That teaching was characterized by a nondualistic approach to the world and by a deep understanding of the value of the feminine. Cynthia shows how an understanding of Mary Magdalene can revitalize contemporary Christianity, how Christians and others can, through her, find their way to Jesus's original teachings and apply them to their modern lives.



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