

# Birthed from the Side of Jesus

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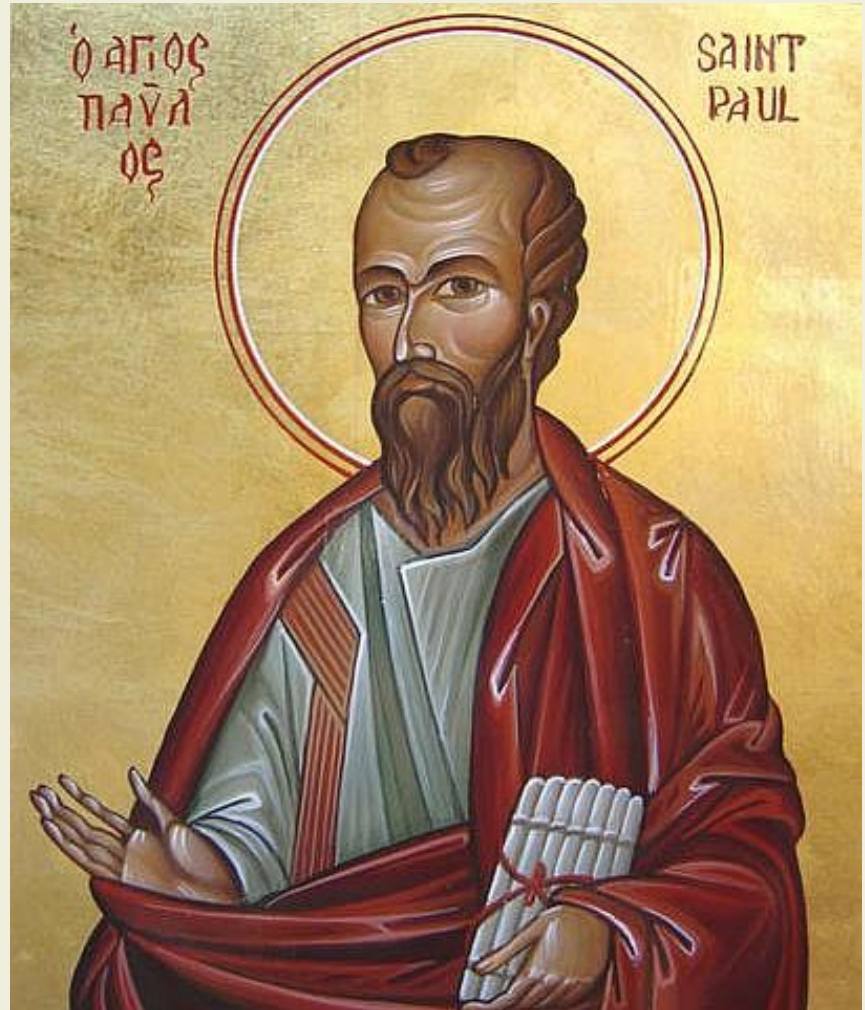


“If any want to become my followers,  
let them deny themselves  
and take up their cross  
and follow me.”  
(Mark 8:34)



*Woman Offered, Janet McKenzie*

- “Christ died for our sins”  
(1 Cor 15:3)
- “Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a **sacrifice of atonement** by his blood, effective through faith”  
(Rom 3:25)



## St. Anselm (1033-1109)



Human sin was so great that only the death of God's Son could make satisfaction/atonement

# Problematic aspects:



- Glorifying abuse & suffering
- Subverting protests & struggles against human suffering & violence
- Idealizing sacrificial love, submission, surrender, reinforces women's role as scapegoat---most pernicious when freely chosen (M. Daly)

# Taking Up the Cross and Those Crosses that Should not be Taken Up

## Specific kind of suffering:

- Consequence of proclaiming/living the gospel
- Freely Chosen discipleship & its consequences
- Deny self – from a place of self-possession and self-esteem, to take oneself out of the center & place Christ and the gospel at the center



*Woman Offered, Janet McKenzie*



GOD'S  
LOVE

*Annex*

# Johannine Metaphors for self-surrender to costly Love

- Uplifting of bronze serpent (3:15-16)
- Giving of his flesh for the life of the world (6:51)
- Outpouring of water at Tabernacles (7:38-39)
- Good Shepherd who lays down his life for his sheep (10:11)
- Seed that must die before it can bring forth fruit (12:24)
- Footwashing: friend laying down life for friends (13:1-20)
- **Birthing New Life (16:21-22)**



# Johannine Metaphors: Self-Surrender to Love



Friend who lays down his life  
for his friends out of love

- 10:11-18 Jesus freely lays  
down his life; no one takes it  
from him
- 15:13-17 no greater love;  
I call you friends

# John 11-12

- “Master, the one you love is ill.” (11:3)
- Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus (11:5)
- “See how he loved him.” (11:36)





# Footwashing 13:1-20

13:1 “Having loved  
(*agapēsas*) his own  
who were in the world,  
he loved (*ēgapēsen*)  
them to the end  
(*telos*)”

19:30 “It is finished”  
(*tetelestai*)



# John 13:12-20

- V. 15 model (*hypodeigma*)
- v. 16 “servants” (*doulos*)
- Models of service:
  - 1) obligatory: slave to master
  - 2) altruistic: parent to child
- >>*Inequality & Obligation*
  - **3) friend to friend**
    - inequities are superseded
    - self-donation evokes the same response





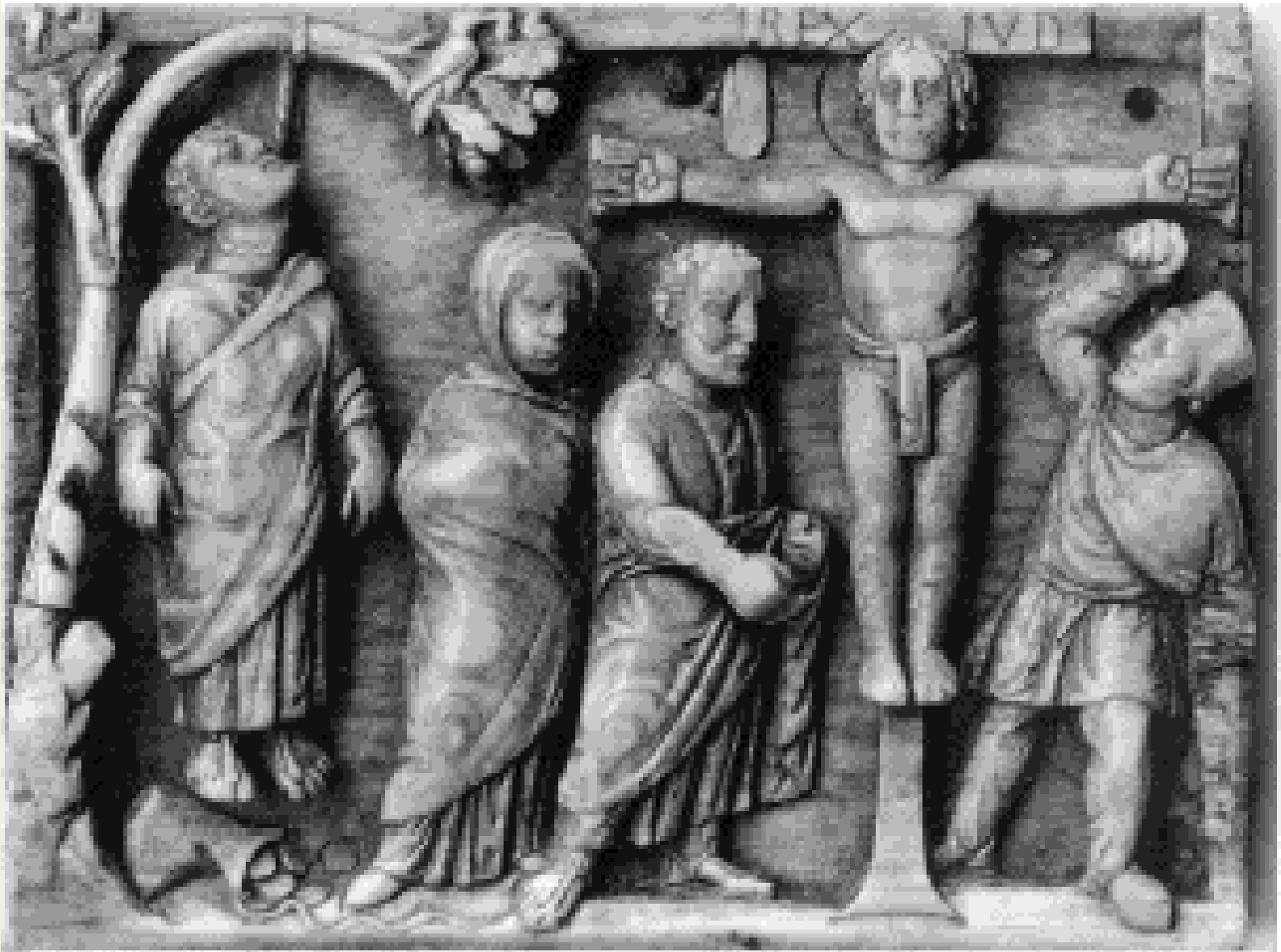
- **Beyond Reciprocity:**
  - Includes Peter & Judas
- **Missionary Dimension**  
(not a closed circle of friends):
- “Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers (*apostoloi*) greater than the one who sent them.” (13:16)



## Jesus' Mission in John

- To befriend humanity so as to draw all persons to himself and unite them with God (12:32; 17:21)
  - Life in abundance 10:10
  - Alleviate suffering: healing, forgiveness, confrontation of injustice
- Forming communities of friends who lay down their lives for one another out of love

John 19:34



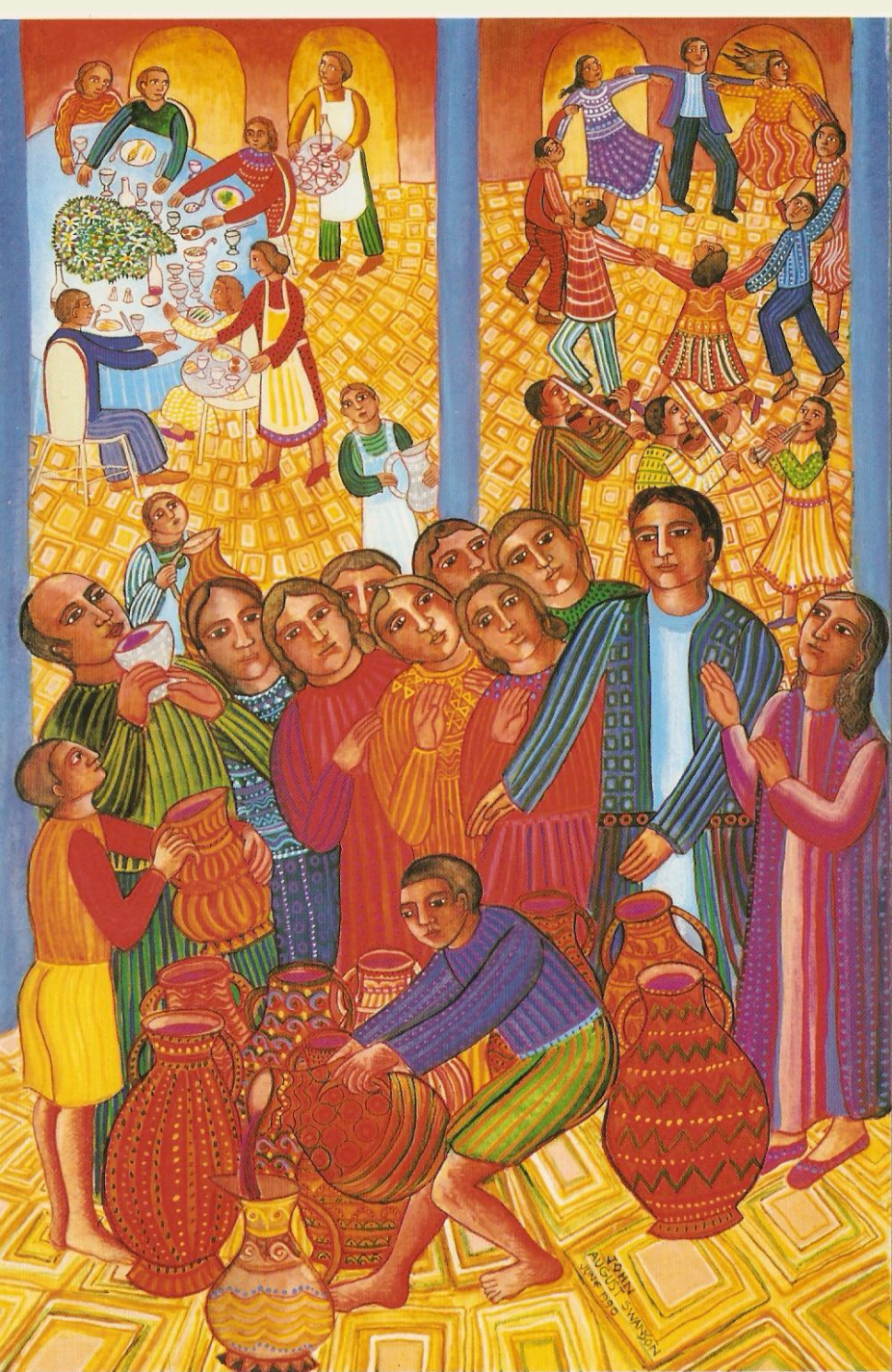
117. Ivory relief, Italic, 420/430 AD, Crucifixion of Christ, (right) Longinus' thrust into the heart side, (left) Judas' suicide

“Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were

- **his mother,**
- and his mother’s sister,
- Mary the wife of Clopas,
- and Mary Magdalene”  
(John 19:25)

*Green Crucifixion, Mary Southard, CSJ*







## Prologue: birthing of God's children through faith in the *Logos*

- All things **came into being** (*ginomai*) through him  
(vv. 3-4)
- To all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who **were born** (*egennēthēsan*) not of blood or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God” (1:12-13)

“No one can see the kingdom of God without being **born again/from above**” (3:3),  
... “truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of **water and the Spirit**” (3:5).



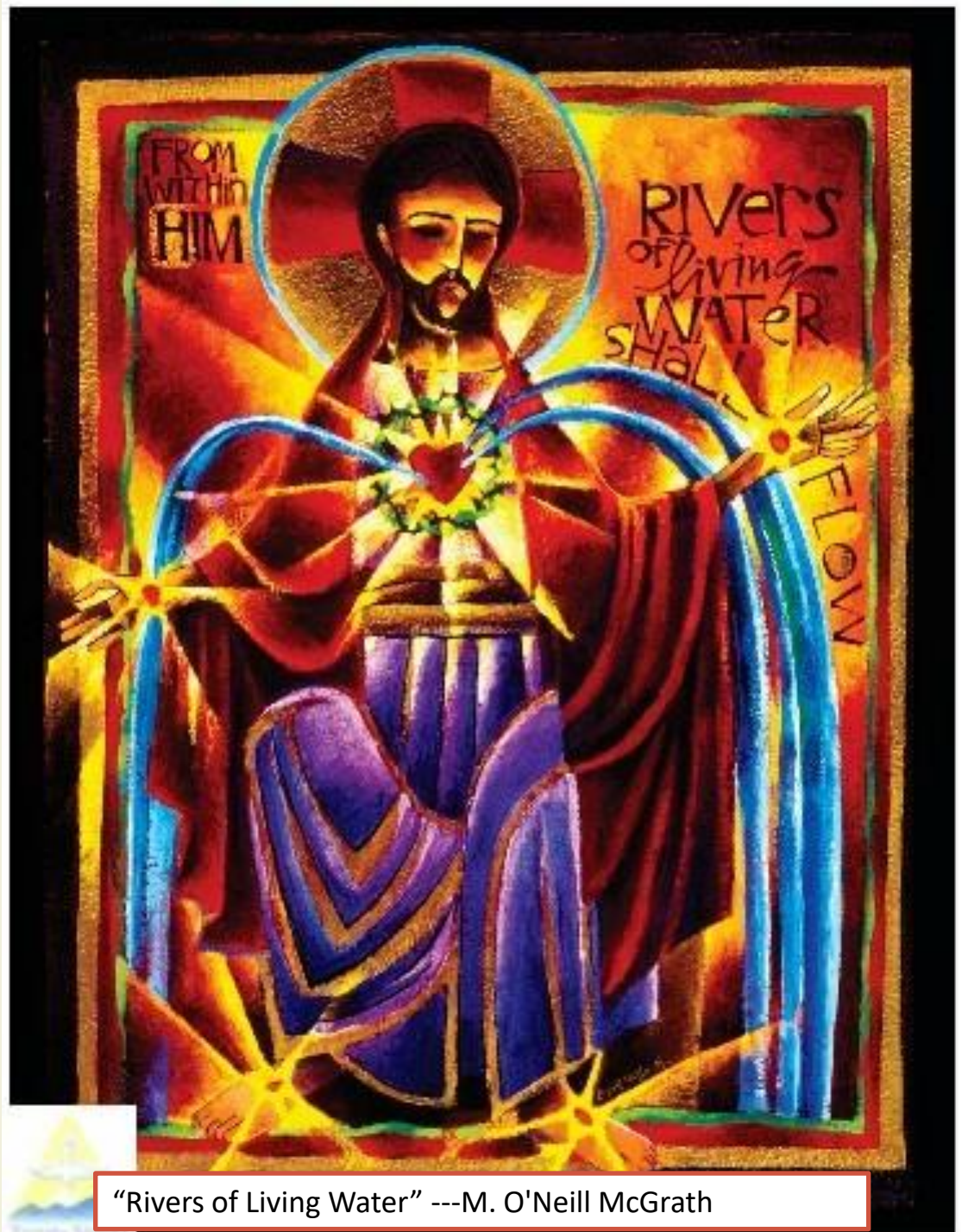


“those who drink of the water I give them will never be thirsty.

The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life” (4:14).

# John 7:38

- “rivers of living water will flow from within” --- Literally: **from the womb** (*koilia*)
- of Jesus / the believer



“Rivers of Living Water” ---M. O'Neill McGrath



- John 1:18 “. the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart  
*(eis ton kolpon tou patros)*
- John 13:23 “the one whom Jesus loved was reclining next to him.”  
*(en tō kolpō tou 'lēsou)*

## John 16:21-22

“When a woman is in labor, she has pain, because **her hour has come. [2:4; 13:1].**

But when her child is born, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy of having brought a human being into the world. So you have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.”



# Isaiah 42:14

I have looked away, and kept  
silence,  
I have said nothing, holding myself  
in;  
But now, I cry out as a **woman in  
labor**,  
Gasping and panting.



John 19:34





**John 19:30 – cry of victory: “It is finished!”**





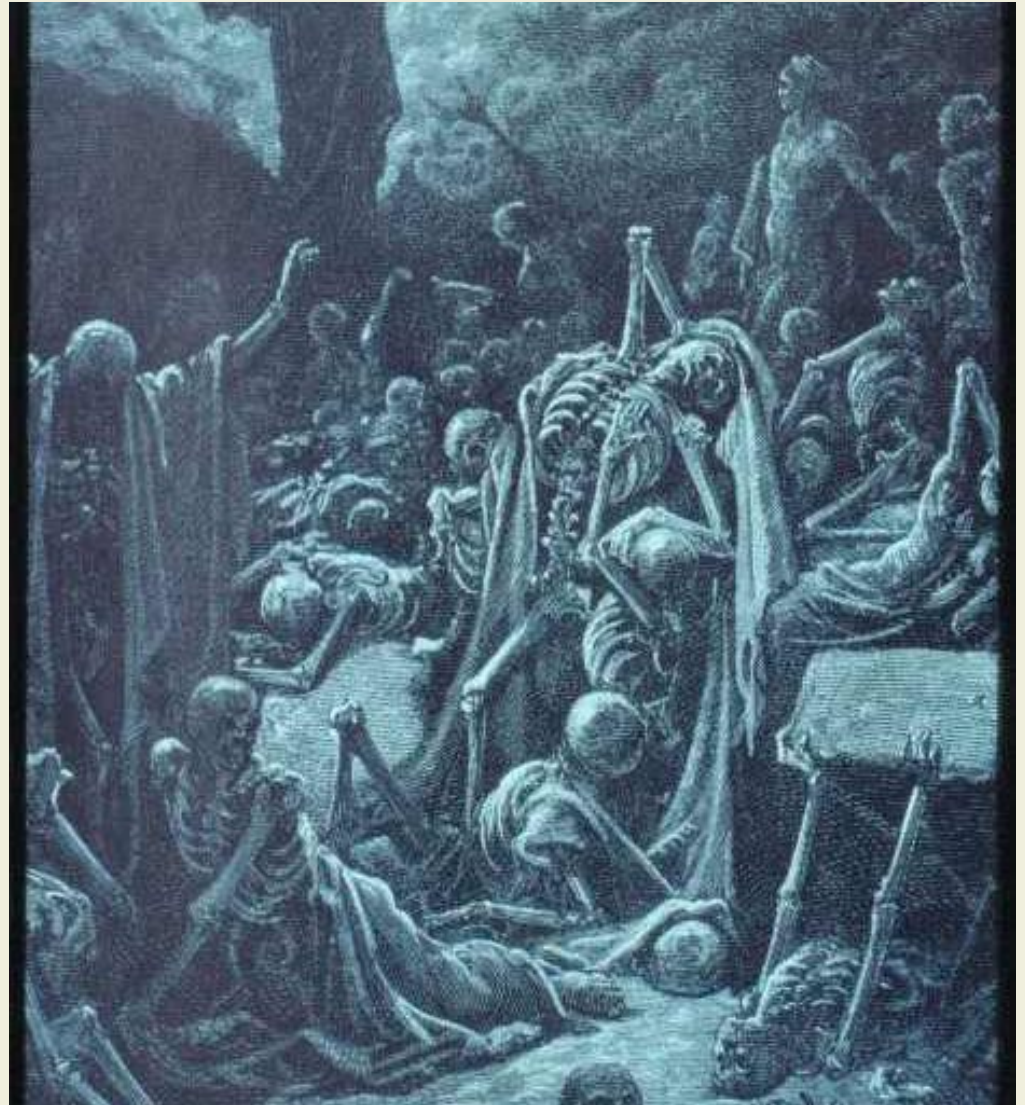
John 19:40 –  
wrapping  
// swaddling –  
Luke 2:7



**John 20:22 // Gen 2:7 “then the LORD God formed a human from the dust of the ground, and breathed into its nostrils the breath of life; and the human became a living being.”**

## Ezek 37:5

“I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live.”

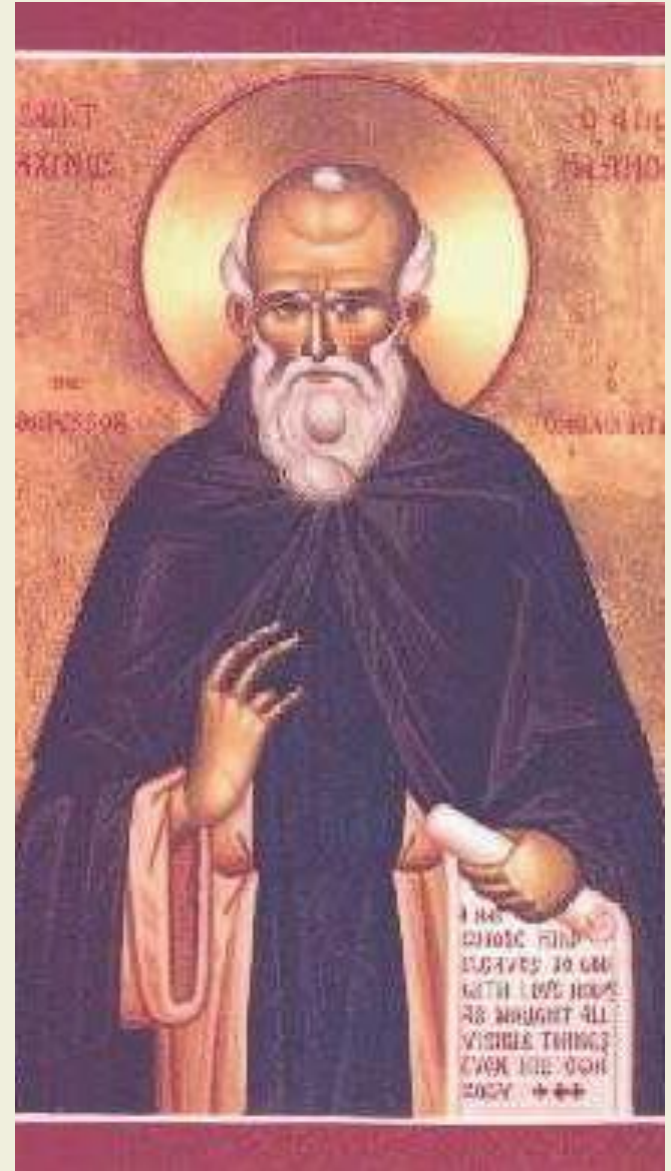




# Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-211)

- “The Lord himself brought forth in the throes of flesh, which the Lord Himself swathed in his precious blood . . .

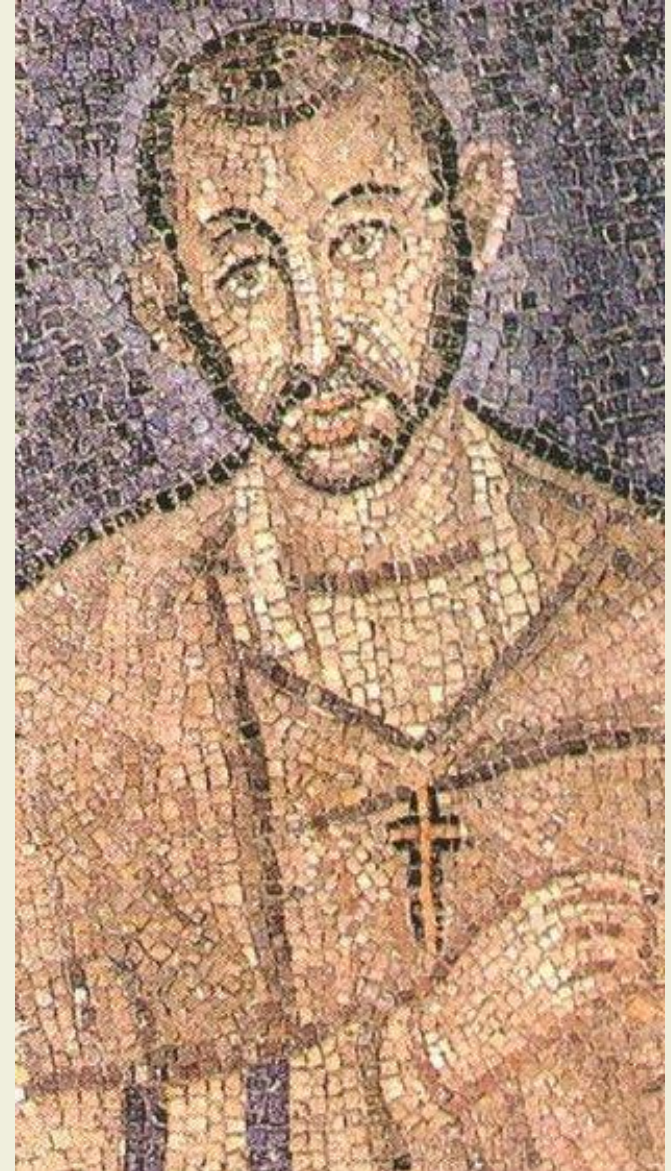
**O amazing birth!”**



# Ambrose

(bishop of Milan – d. 397)

- “Christ is the Virgin who bore us”



# Julian of Norwich

(mid 14<sup>th</sup> century)



“Jesus our savior is our true Mother in whom we are endlessly born and out of whom—we shall come.”

# Meister Eckhart (1260-1327)

*WHAT DOES GOD DO  
ALL DAY LONG?*



# Cross as a Symbol of Birth

Speaks of love that is mutual and self-replicating

Speaks of suffering not as deserved or desirable, but gives value to travail as part of a process of bringing forth new life

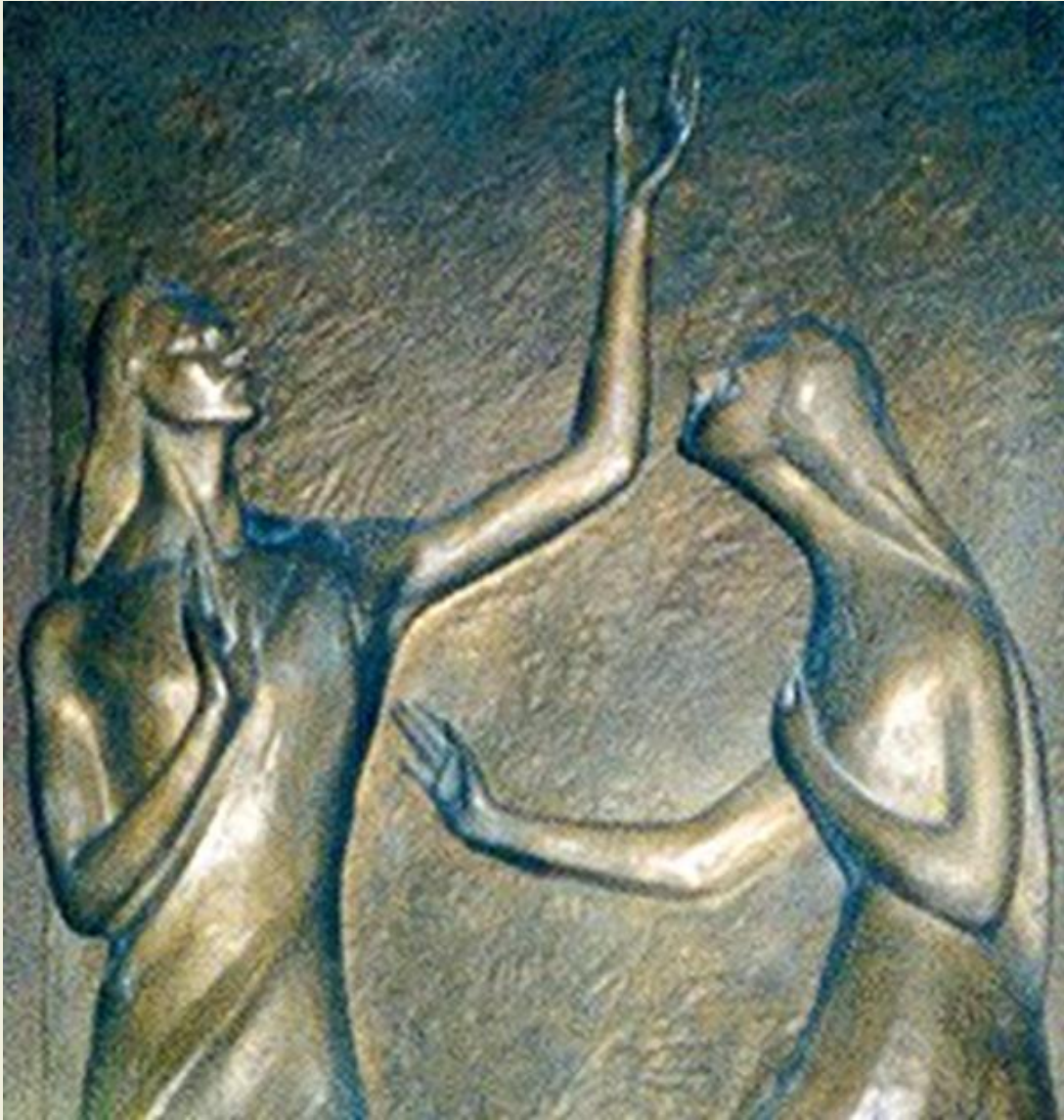
Pachamama Dando a Luz  
María La Placa (Boliviana)



# John

## 20:1-18

- “We do not know **Where** they have laid him” (20:2)  
[Representative Character]
- In 1:38 “Rabbi, **Where** are you staying?”
- Jesus knows **from where** he comes and **to where** he is going; his enemies do not know (8:14)
- A central question in the Last Discourse: **Where** are you going? (14:5)
- **Where?** = inner communion with Jesus; not geographical space



“to [earthly] *me*  
do not cling”  
(20:17)

Holy Sepulchre  
Chapel of Mary Magdalene, Jerusalem

“Go to my brothers and sisters [*adelphoi*]” (20:17)



*One Sacred Community* – Mary Southard, CSJ

**I have  
seen  
the Lord!**

(+ 20:25  
disciples to  
Thomas)



Lucy D'Souza



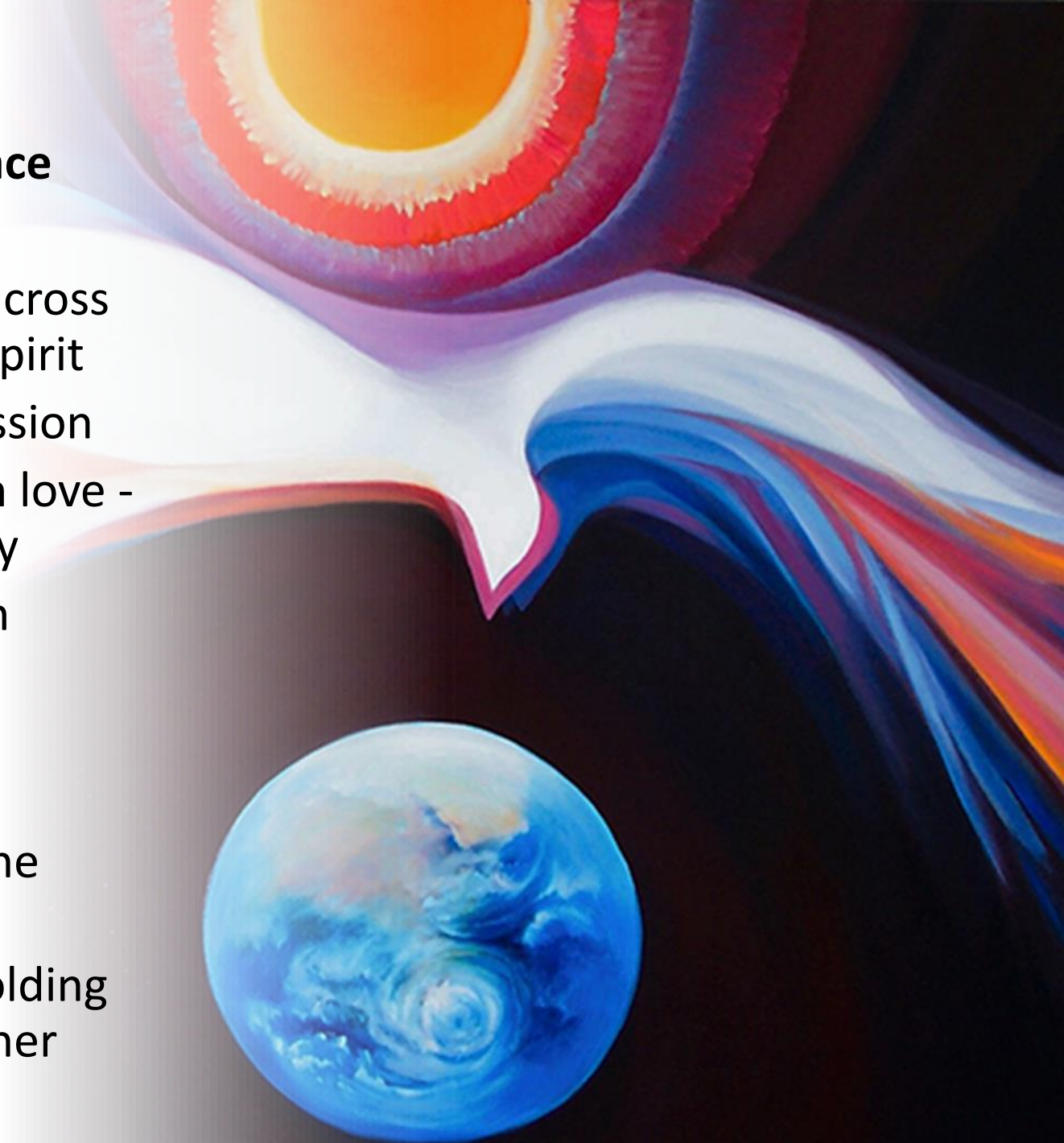
## **“Apostle to the Apostles”**

Mary so called  
at least as early as  
Hippolytus  
(C3 Rome)

# John 20:19-23 New Life Unleashed



- **From Fear to Peace**
- Wounds
  - Link between cross & gift of the Spirit
- Joy – Peace – Mission
  - 15:11 abide in love - > complete joy
  - 16:20-24 birth pangs->joy
  - 17:13 joy completed
- Empowered by the Spirit (19:30)
- Forgiveness & Holding Fast to one Another



- “If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; whomever you hold are held fast.” (20:23)  
**NOT:** *if you retain [the sins of] any, they are retained.*”



*Joie de vivre, Paula Turnbull*

# Read 20:23 in light of

- **John 6:37, 39**
  - Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away;
  - And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day
- **10:27-29**
  - <sup>27</sup> My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. <sup>28</sup> I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. <sup>29</sup> What my Father has given me is greater than all else, and no one can snatch it out of the Father's hand
- **17:12** While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled.
- **18:9** This was to fulfill the word that he had spoken, "I did not lose a single one of those whom you gave me."



# Thea Bowman, FSPA

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=thea+bowman+addresses+the+bishops&&view=detail&mid=C4B70DC7A6C9802905A1C4B70DC7A6C9802905A1&&FORM=VRDGAR&ru=%2Fvideos%2Fsearch%3Fq%3Dthea%2Bbowman%2Baddresses%2Bthe%2Bbishops%26qpvt%3Dthea%2Bbowman%2Baddresses%2Bthe%2Bbishops%26FORM%3DVDVXX>



# John 21:15-19

- Do you love me?
- Feed my lambs / tend my sheep
- Stretching out your hands and being led where you do not want to go.



Tabgha statue depicting the reinstatement of Peter

- V. 15 *agapas me . . . philo se*
- V. 16 *agapas me . . . philo se*
- V. 17 *phileis me . . . philo se*

- *boskein* (feed) – v. 15, 17
- *poimainein* (tend) – v. 16
- Both translate Heb. *rā`āh*



- *arnion* (lambs) – v. 15 / *probaton* (sheep) vv. 16, 17

# Final Exam Question:

*Do you love me?*





## Deep Incarnation / Deep Cross / Deep Resurrection

--through his bodily resurrection, Christ lives united with the flesh of all creatures forever; his resurrection marks the beginning of the redemption of the whole cosmos.



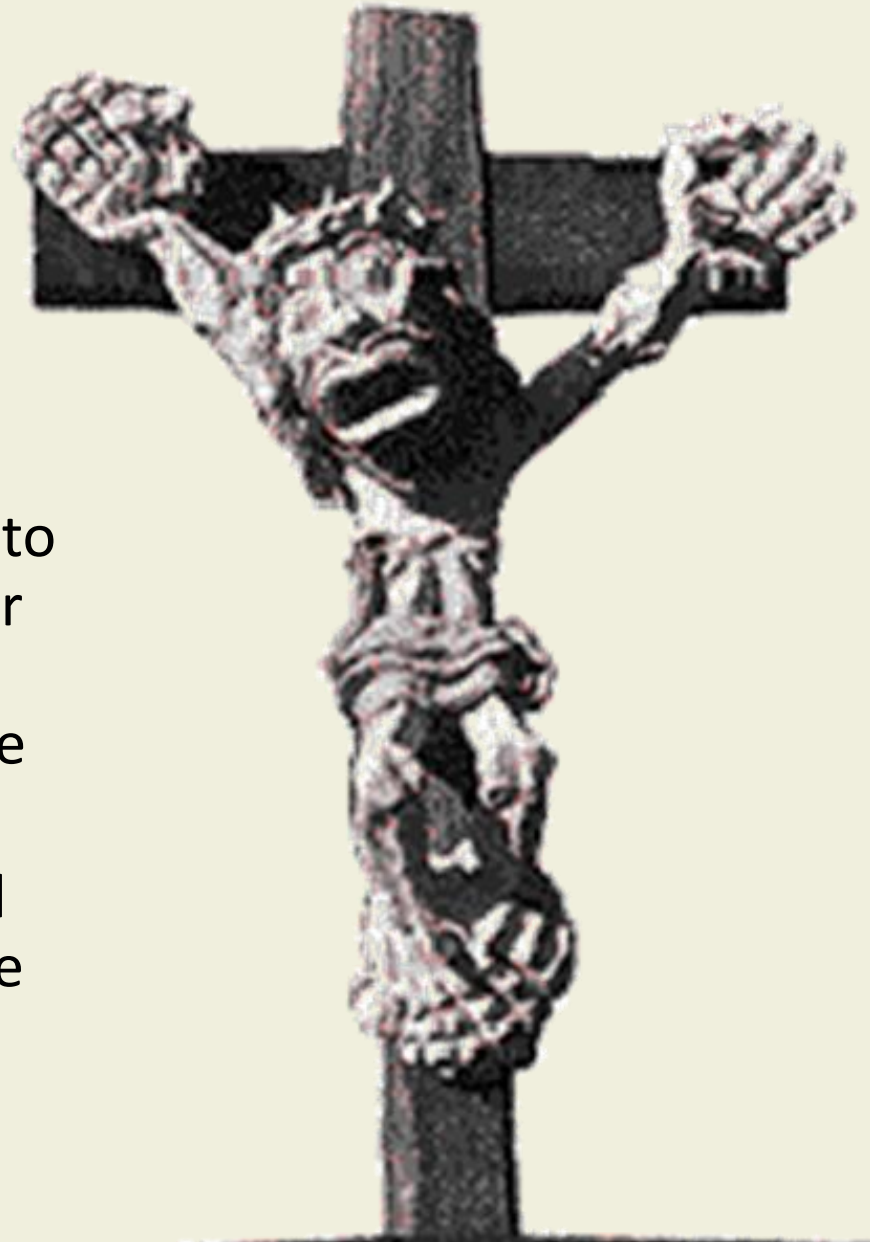
- **Resurrection is not a victory,**
- “A manifestation of the meaning for the whole person of life in God now lived in all its fullness.”

“The Christian gospel tells us not simply that we are saved from sin or that our guilt is taken away---it insists we shall find out who we are and what we may be in an encounter, a relationship [with Christ]” -  
--Schneiders

# Problematic Aspects

---

- Cross as victory does nothing to question a pattern of behavior in which the powerful simply eliminate those who challenge them
- Reinterprets the cross instead of naming it as violence by the powerful
- Contributes to ongoing victimization of people



# Open Tomb as Transformative Space

[*Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet*, chap. 4]

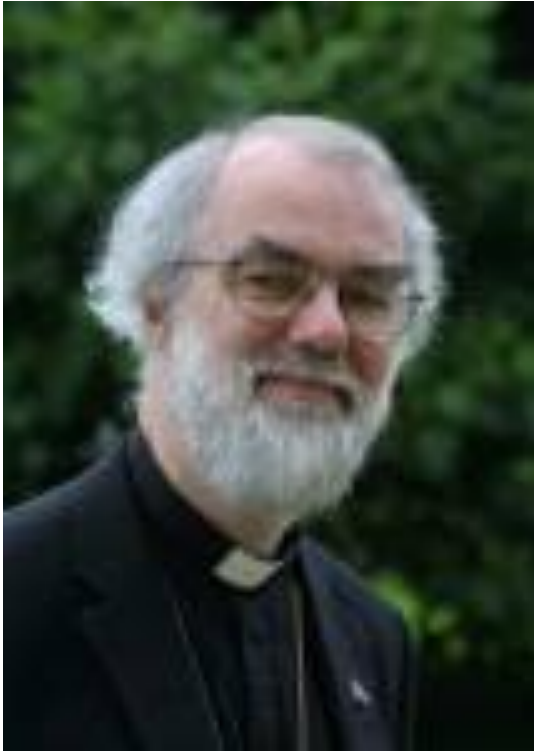
Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza:

- Begin with the fact of unjust oppression, the experience of struggle for a different world, and an encounter with the victimization and death of the dehumanized person.
- LIVING ONE who goes ahead.
  - Luke 24:5: “Why do you look for the living among the dead?”
  - Mark 16:7: “he is going ahead of you to Galilee”
- Transformation of the spaces of death: taking death seriously, but not as having the last word.
- Women witnesses: commitment & solidarity with victim.



## Rowan Williams

### *Christ on Trial. Resurrection , Interpreting the Easter Gospel*



- Resurrection is GIFT
- Transformation, Not reversal of roles
- Not a “happy ending” or reversal of tragedy
- Not simple fulfillment of expectations
  - [predictions of future glory are retrojected post-resurrection insights]
- Not a confirmation of what had already been said & believed
- Mysterious, baffling,
- Threw expectations off balance
- Says that violence and death cannot end or extinguish what is present in Jesus
- A glimpse of God in utter difference from us and our expectations

*Making All Things New: Catholicity, Cosmology, Consciousness*  
(Orbis, 2015) – Ilia Delio

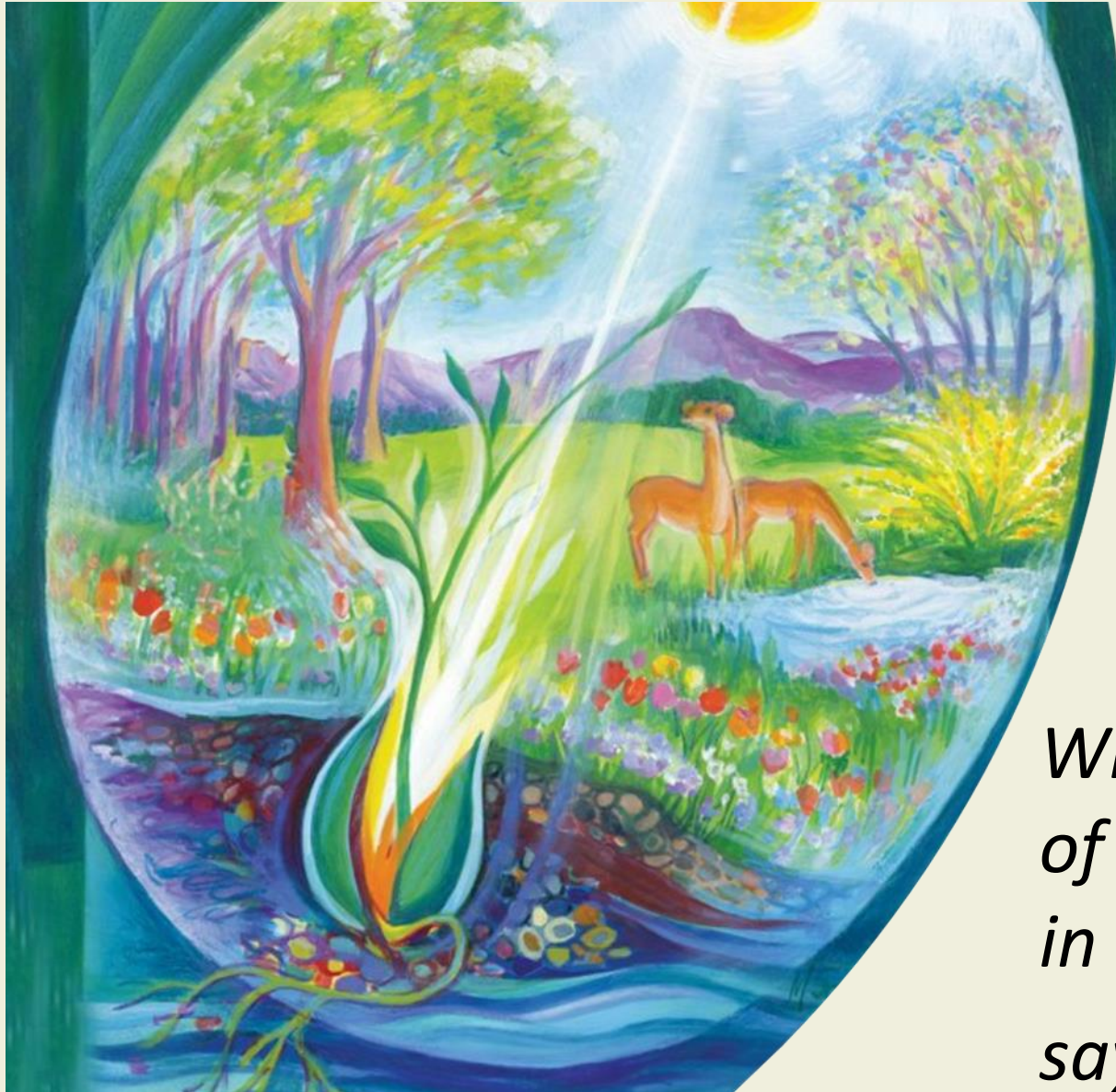


- Jesus had to die because the limits of human life oppose the fullness of God’s love. Every limit must be transcended in the longing for eternal life.... the death of Jesus was a culmination of his living out of a deep oneness with God.
- Only by dying into God can we become one with God, letting go of everything that hinders us from God.
- “every act of physical death is an act of new life in the universe. The resurrection of Jesus reveals to us new cosmic life.”



# Foretaste of Resurrection of all

- All persons; the whole person
- All living things
- Union with all the dead throughout history
- Purified & Transformed
- God's new creation already begun in Jesus's resurrection
- We are not redeemed *from* this earth, but *with* it.
- At death we encounter God in the risen and rising Jesus
- God has accepted and loved us so completely we will forever encounter God as the Incarnate One

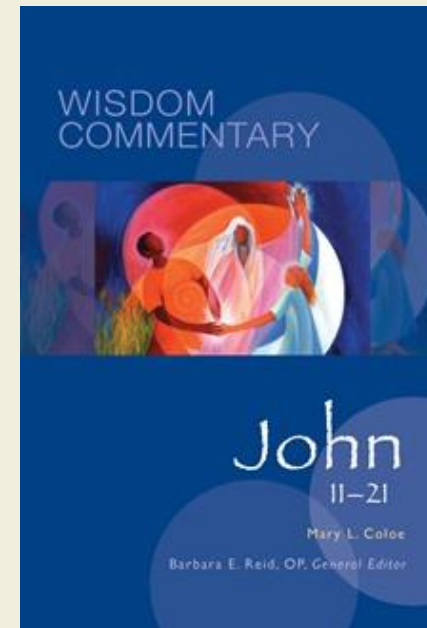
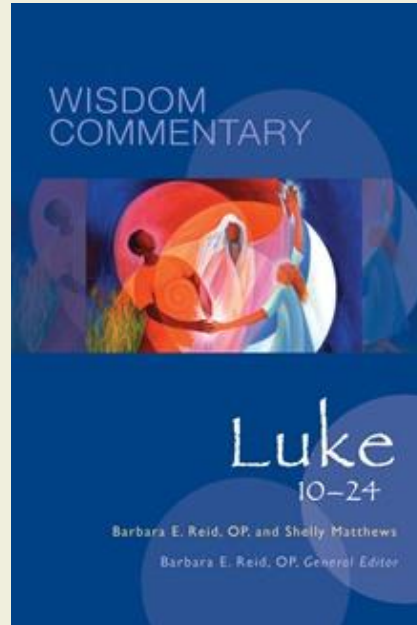
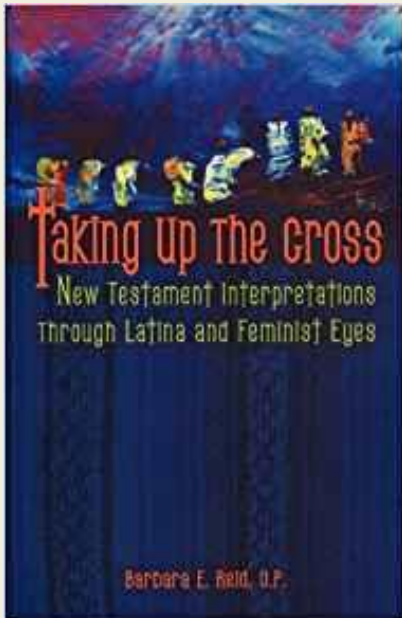


## *For Reflection*

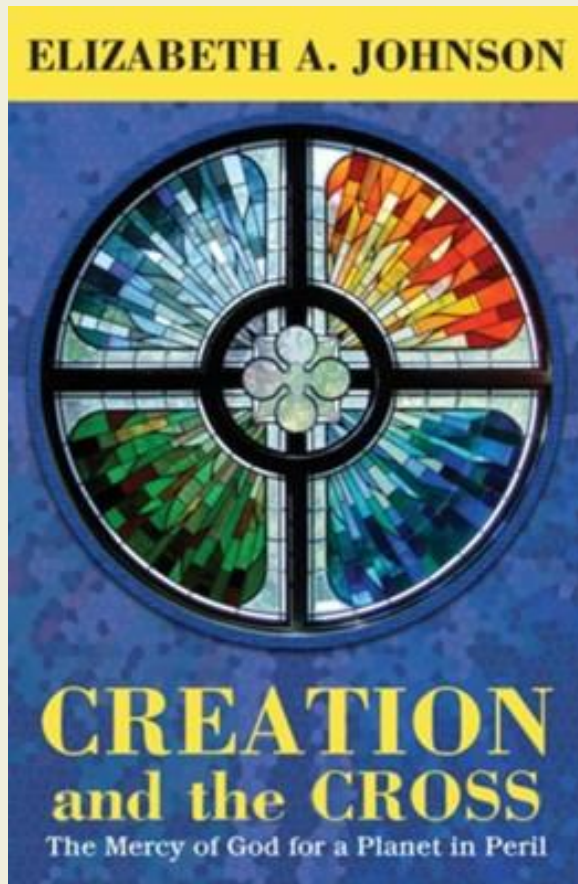
*What do the images  
of birthing new life  
in the Fourth Gospel  
say to you?*

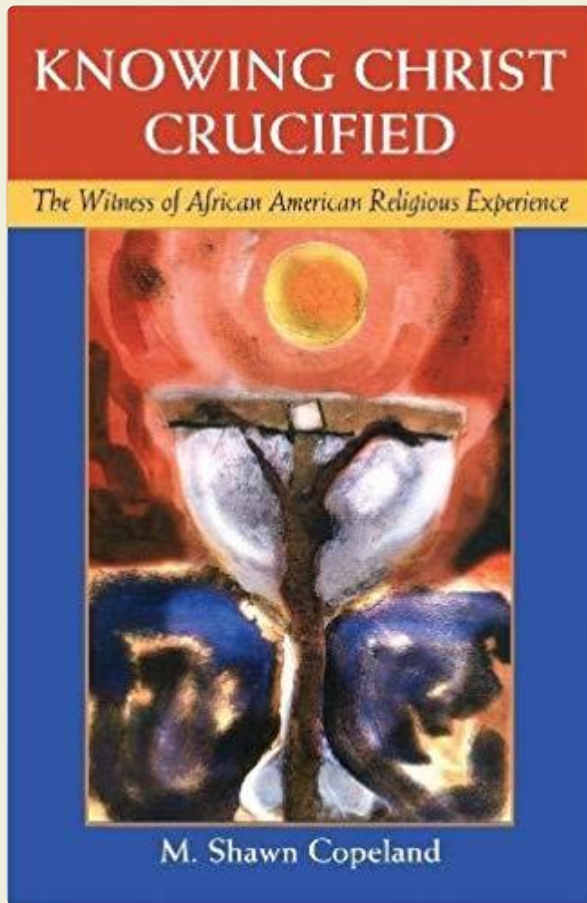
## For Further Study

- B. Reid, *Taking up the Cross* (Fortress, 2007); Spanish translation: *Reconsiderar la cruz* (Verbo Divino, 2009)
- [www.wisdomcommentary.org](http://www.wisdomcommentary.org)



*Elizabeth Johnson,*  
*Creation and the Cross: The Mercy of God for a Planet in Peril*  
(Orbis Books, 2018)





M. Shawn Copeland,

*Knowing Christ Crucified. The Witness of African American Religious Experience*  
(Orbis Books, 2018)



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