



# The House of New Bethany

Holy Devotion to St. Mary Magdalene

Walter Emerson Adams, ©2024

## *Preface*

This brief book of reflections distills the essence of what I have been writing for over fifteen years. Despite the shortness of the book, the reader might take a lifetime to finish it. Behind every sentence are years of contemplation, Eucharistic adoration, reading, and writing. What remains hidden behind the glimpse of Holy Devotion to St. Mary Magdalene expressed here is a shimmering Kingdom circumscribed by the light of the combined hearts and St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. The Kingdom is a form in the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. St. Mary Magdalene embodies this Kingdom and holy devotion to her through the Virgin Mary leads us to the feet of Christ in Bethany, the foot of the Cross, the tomb of the resurrection, and, finally, to Mystical France on the shores of Provence. May the reader find Catholic spiritual nourishment here and life in the Mystical Kingdom of Catholic and Royal France for eternity.

Happy the man who meditates on wisdom and reflects on knowledge.

She will nourish him with the bread of understanding and give him the water of learning to drink.

He will lean upon her and not fall; he will trust in her and not be put to shame.

She will exalt him above his fellows; in the assembly she will make him eloquent.

Joy and gladness he will find, an everlasting name inherit.

~ Canticle of Sirach 14:20; 15:3-6



## Table of Contents

<b>Preface .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The Author's Personal Mission .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>About the Author.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Introduction to The House of New Bethany .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Veritas and Aletheia - The Appearance of the Appearing .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Mystical France.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Mystical France as Magdalene qua Magdalene .....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>1.0 The Beginning .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>2.0 The Language .....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>3.0 Inceptual Contemplation .....</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>4.0 The Alabaster Light.....</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>The Second Wind .....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>31</b>

## *The Author's Personal Mission*

The reign of the Immaculate Heart Mary through consecration to St. Mary Magdalene, St. Joan of Arc, St. Thérèse of Lisieux and the Renaissance of Catholic and Royal France in hearts worldwide.

## *About the Author*

These writings are personal reflections on my spiritual journey through the Catholic Church.

I hold an undergraduate degree in Economics from Princeton University and a master's degree in Public and Private Management from Yale University.

I am married and the father of one child. Though raised a Methodist in the Bible Belt and surrounded with evangelicalism as a youth, I converted to the Catholic Church prior to my marriage in 1985.

Touched deeply by the life of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and imbued with a filial love for Mary, I set out on a life-long spiritual journey to "seek first" Christ's Kingdom with Thérèse as my guide.

Eventually led to confront my inner most being on that lonely, mystical hill of Calvary, I discovered through Mary's maternal guidance and Thérèse's sisterly care that Jesus had called another mighty saint to walk with me and to protect me through that dark and awful night of self-confrontation that leads us in Christ to true freedom. That saint, a spiritual sister to Thérèse, was Joan of Arc.

~ Walter Emerson Adams





## *Introduction to The House of New Bethany*

*Like the Mother of God and like St. John, Mary Magdalene will not finish her days by martyrdom. She will also live in the tranquil benediction of her love. She will live at the feet of the vanished Christ, as she lived in Bethany and in Calvary, a lover accustomed to the delights of contemplation, and having no other need but to look with her soul at the One whom she looked upon in other times through the transparent veil of mortal flesh. But what famous or obscure havens will have been prepared for her? Where will she hide the blessed remainder of her existence? Are they to be the deserts of the East, the river banks of the Jordan, Mt. Sion, the field after the harvest of Nazareth or of Bethlehem, which will be the last witnesses of her inaccessible charity? Jesus Christ bequeathed his Mother to Jerusalem, St. Peter to Rome, St. John to Asia --- to whom will he have bequeathed Mary Magdalene?*

*We know already, it is France who received from the hands of God this part of the Testament of His Son.<sup>1</sup>*

Welcome to The House of New Bethany. For fifteen years I contemplated the French heroines, St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. I wrote down my

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<sup>1</sup> Lacordaire, OP, *The Life of St. Mary Magdalene*.  
p. 58.

reflections and gathered the themes into a transcendent map of meaning enshrined in the shimmering unfolding of their combined hearts. Appearing in the barely perceptible light on the horizon of my mind was the contour of a heavenly kingdom. Through this process of descriptive writing and contemplation, I came to love the emerging kingdom I termed “Mystical France” in the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. I consecrated my heart, mind, and soul to the Virgin Mary through the combined hearts of Joan and Thérèse that I might join them in their kingdom.

An essential characteristic of the celestial realm and my consecration to the Virgin Mary through the French royal hearts of my saintly sisters was the gleaming embodiment of the kingdom through St. Mary Magdalene. The fundamental essence of Joan and Thérèse’s Catholic and Royal France glimmered around the figure of Magdalene on the shores of Provence. She comported herself in union with Our Lady and Jesus Christ at the foot of the Cross while present in France. She was the bridge between France and the Cross. Magdalene was the apostle for France journeying from the Cross and the tomb of the resurrection to Provence. This unfolding embodiment of the kingdom united to Christ on the Cross was St. Mary Magdalene as the foundress of a new Bethany, a royal line of the House of New Bethany. Her mode of being circumscribed a softly lit pathway through my map of meaning to the kingdom. Magdalene’s charism constituted the syntax, the proper order, of my

spiritual, intellectual, and philosophical mode of being.

According to tradition, Mary Magdalene lived her last thirty years as a hermit in a cave at La Sainte-Baume in Provence. I desire to create a “cave of contemplation” in union with her through this journal. The journal is public and transparent for the benefit of others should anything I contemplate be worthy of another’s consideration.

## *Veritas and Aletheia - The Appearance of the Appearing*

Where shall I begin? I will begin with this story.

In February of 2013, I venerated the shin bone of St. Mary Magdalene. The relic was on tour in the United States. Six months later, Mary Magdalene appeared to me in a dream. The apparition did not announce herself by name. She did not speak a word. I was in a crowded room when suddenly everyone dispersed instantly except one, the lady. She robed herself in ancient attire, the style we would imagine women wore in Our Lord's time and place. By intuition, I understood that the lady was holy. She looked into my eyes and smiled. Then, I woke up.

After waking, I knew her as Magdalene by an unfolding awareness that preceded and then embraced me. She had appeared as one with primacy to a hidden story. As I continued writing in the spirit of the combined hearts of St. Joan and St. Thérèse, Magdalene's story unfolded as a transcendent map of meaning through a kingdom with which I felt familiar but had not formally traversed. Through empathic devotion to Mary Magdalene, always guided by Joan and Thérèse, the mystical kingdom emerged as an ever-appearing phenomenon. It emerged out of glimmering concealment behind the figure of Magdalene on the shores of Provence. The Kingdom held within itself Magdalene's mode of being as its form shining through Our Lady's

relationship with the Holy Trinity. The phenomenon of the kingdom centered itself on my transcendent event horizon. I felt immersed in apprehension of something that needed to be put into words.

Gathering my phenomenological insights with Joan and Thérèse, Magdalene beckoned me to a transformational mode of being in Christ, a comportment with Logos that is primordial to all Being and is Being itself. Through her, Veritas as the Platonic metaphysics of the Church lit up the emerging kingdom as Aletheia, an unconcealment of truth. She led me into the story over which she held primacy by the grace of Jesus Christ at whose feet she had sat in inceptual wonder. Her Aletheian charism was a grace from God through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Magdalene's charism and the story it revealed reconstituted my being in Jesus Christ - heart, mind, and soul. Following the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed to the kingdom through time with Joan and Thérèse, I had been prepared to receive the phenomenon. Joan and Thérèse had been guiding me towards that horizon over the years.

God calls us through the aletheian "appearance of the appearing" in union with the saints. We respond to the call to journey not only through the Veritas of metaphysics but through the Aletheian unfolding of a phenomenon God places before us. The combined hearts of Joan and Thérèse represent both Veritas and Aletheia before, behind, and beside us as we follow the soft light

marking Magdalene's map. Veritas protects the primacy of the story, the unfolding of Aletheia, by the marked Trail of the Dogmatic Creed revealed by God through the Church. Joan and Thérèse guide us through our upright heart of goodwill in union with the magisterial teachings of the Holy Catholic Church.

*“Let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.’ Although man can forget God or reject him, He never ceases to call every man to seek him, so as to find life and happiness. But this search for God demands of man every effort of intellect, a sound will, ‘an upright heart’, as well as the witness of others who teach him to seek God.” (CCC, para 30.)*

## *Mystical France*

*"But a thought comes into my mind: "Why did God give this light to a child who, if she had understood it, would have died of grief?" "Why?" Here is one of those incomprehensible mysteries which we shall only understand in Heaven, where they will be the subject of our eternal admiration. My God, how good Thou art! How well dost Thou suit the trial to our strength!"<sup>2</sup>*

Why did Magdalene appear to me in a dream? The context is significant. Over the previous four years, I had written devotionally about my love for the French heroines St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. I learned that Magdalene journeyed to Provence after persecution broke out in Jerusalem. She lived her final thirty years as a hermit in a cave at La Sainte-Baume. The Lord's great commission tied St. Mary Magdalene to France. As the "apostle to the apostles," the saint who spent time at Jesus' feet, at the foot of the Cross, and at the tomb of the resurrection, she brought the apostolic faith to the shores of what later would be called France. This connection was the first mystical pairing of France to the Kingdom of God. Four centuries passed, and the Burgundian Queen St. Clotilda founded Christendom

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<sup>2</sup> Thérèse, *The Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux*. p. 46

through the conversion of her husband, King Clovis, the first Catholic King of the Franks. Almost one thousand years later, St. Joan of Arc reinforced the foundation of Mystical France by declaring to Charles VII that Jesus was the King of France and he, Charles, was Our Lord's Lieutenant. King Louis XIII and Queen Anne consecrated France to the Blessed Virgin two hundred years after Joan's martyrdom. Over two hundred years later, St. Thérèse blessed France as the greatest saint in modern times. France has a mystical relationship with Heaven, and Magdalene's presence in Provence is the inception of that mysticism.

### **Mystical France**

*Mystical France, she lifts my heart  
Her spirit holds me by the hands  
Of saintly sisters honored, who  
Attend and guide me to their land*

*Mystical France, the Kingdom of  
Our Lord and Queen who reign above  
And here is where by Joan of Arc  
Heaven kissed earth through fire and love*

*Here too, is where, since La Pucelle  
Through Holy Spirit joyful, blessed  
With earth enriched, now sweetly fresh  
He cultivated Saint Thérèse*

*Mystical France, I love your saints  
They hold us both, to us impart  
Kinship and joy that renders you  
The sanctuary of my heart*



## *Mystical France as Magdalene qua Magdalene*

The appearance of the mystical kingdom of Catholic and Royal France is Magdalene qua Magdalene. St. Mary Magdalene in her glory is the ontological condition for Mystical France in the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Magdalene is prior to the constitution of the kingdom. Her intercession with Our Lady and Our Lord imbues the combined hearts of Joan and Thérèse with her appearance on the shores of Provence in a transcendental constitution discernible to our noetic field of meaning. Through this immanent constitution, we ascend the stairway of Magdalene's Mystical France.

St. Mary Magdalene is our means of True Devotion to the Virgin Mary through the aletheian fount of Catholic and Royal France in our hearts. Through the ontological condition for the appearance of Mystical France in our hearts, Magdalene reveals her friendship with us. She is the liaison between Our Lady and us as members of her royal line. She is the Foundress of Mystical France who benevolently bestows God's grace on us through the mediation of Our Lady. We are who we are in the kingdom because of God's will, Our Lady's desire, and Magdalene's Ladyship of Mystical France.

Magdalene's charism in the kingdom is the inceptual intellect that reconciles the correspondence of Veritas with the emergence of Aletheia.

## *1.0 The Beginning*

On a brisk October day in 2008, St. Joan of Arc unfolded in my life and established a new paradigm by which I lived in the world. She “appeared” instantly like a sentinel, a herald, bearing within her Being a language that compelled me to gather as my own. Her heavenly language was both a gift and an invitation. Our mystical friendship became defined by this ongoing gathering of language corresponding to our shared Logos, Jesus Christ, as “the Word” who gathers all creation to himself. Through this “gathering in the Lord’s gathering” over the years, Joan oriented my life toward the Good as revealed through the holy Catholic Church - the Kingdom of God on earth and the only means of salvation for mankind.

My encounter with Joan resulted from the Jehannian plays and poetry of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. A beautiful heavenly light surrounded their Combined Hearts, slightly apparent through Thérèse’s mode of expression. Thérèse’s words were likewise a gathering of Being imbued with Joan’s language. The heavenly hue was a “gleaming” phenomenon. The light lit their two hearts like a prism. The gleaming of the Combined Hearts unfolded as a divine egress from the darkness of subjective consciousness to an aletheian gateway opening the Kingdom of God. Advancing into the depths of that light where the earthly clouds of the ontic world gave way to the Being of the Kingdom itself, I perceived that it was the Mystical Kingdom of France in the center of the

Immaculate Heart of Mary. I spent the next fifteen years gathering that Kingdom to myself by reaching for the language of the Combined Hearts of Joan and Thérèse. Turning away from self-will, I projected myself into the aletheian unfolding of the Combined Hearts resulting in their “physis,” or “becoming” in my world from their celestial heights. I gave up everything to assist the Holy Spirit in unfolding this pearl of great price, to bring the Combined Hearts of Mystical France “on earth as it is in Heaven.” In doing so, I hoped to be gathered within the Combined Hearts of Joan and Thérèse and brought to life in the Mystical Kingdom of Catholic and Royal France, the lily of Our Lady’s heart.

My efforts began with descriptive writing. I described what I saw as the gift of Being in God shining around, behind, and through the Combined Hearts. I rejoiced in the aletheian physis, the “becoming in truth” and “that which is” as the kingdom appeared on the horizon through their hearts. The Combined Hearts invited me to join them on a journey with Joan as my leader and Thérèse at my side. After writing four poetic prose that same October expressing my initial experience, my search took the form of journaling. The four prose contained the seeds of everything that followed over the fifteen years. This entire story I am revealing to you can be found hidden in those initial four poetic prose. Everything else is simply elaboration and the gathering of a language that symbolizes it.

A metaphor emerged immediately, the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed, representing the journey of union with St. Joan and St. Thérèse toward the Kingdom. The Combined Hearts compelled me to follow them to the Kingdom in the distance. I could not resist the Truth, Beauty, and Goodness that ordered the shimmering light surrounding their hearts. Walking the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed in friendship with St. Joan and St. Thérèse became my persistent theme, as expressed in the following poem written a couple of years later.

### **The Ballad of Thomas Ox**

A tiny village in Christendom  
Is where this tale tells on  
Down dusty trails into the town  
I found a man anon

So worn from travel, three of us  
Pursuing rest and cheer  
Thérèse with Joan of Arc did fuss  
As I ventured off to hear

This man stood in the square and sang  
His name was Thomas Ox  
I left my saintly sisters praying  
To tell Sir Ox my thoughts

“Good cheer my friend!” I bowed in need  
“We travel by your way  
On this the trail, Dogmatic Creed  
We march in hope today!”

“You see, our young Thérèse found me  
Alone and lost in fear  
From darkest woods I soon was free  
To dance in sunlight clear”

“And as we waltzed toward the sun  
In prayer with silent hearts  
How pleased was I to come upon  
Her friend, dear Joan of Arc”

“Sent from Our Lady's throne so sworn  
These two to lead me home  
They've said this trail through here is worn  
By saintly steps of old!”

“Indeed,” spoke Ox, he widely grinned  
“What troubles you then lad?”  
I glanced toward my saintly friends  
Who make my heart so glad

“I heard you sing, Sir Thomas Ox  
That God loves more or less  
Your words were sweet, they were not lost  
I felt their soft caress”

“I see the beauty of my saints  
I know I'm not the same  
I sing their praise because God paints  
More beautifully their name”

“But on some days, I do complain

I'll never make their lot  
That makes me sad and filled with pain  
What say you, Thomas Ox?"

"Now son," said he, "do dry your eyes  
I also shared this hymn  
While God makes souls of different size  
He fills each one to brim"

"Our Lord and Lady love you dear  
To pour from larger casks  
Like those of your two sisters there  
Into your heart that lacks"

"God loves the same in that each soul  
He fills up to its crest  
Some overflow to make His goal  
Of filling all the rest"

Rejoice! My heart then felt aflame  
This was the secret key  
To love that I am less than them  
Prepares me to receive

Right then I saw that love's not far  
When reaching high from low  
And loving those among the stars  
God's raised from here below

God favors those in whom he makes  
Abundance for the rest  
His favors to my saintly mates

For me is bounty blessed

I ran toward my sisters dear  
Was time to move in haste  
My heart now filled with joyful tears  
From God's cascading grace

We journeyed on, toward the sun  
Thérèse and Joan with smiles  
“Dear man, come on! “ they pled in fun  
Our Kingdom's many miles!”

I think God loves them very much  
I'm filled when I do too  
And that is what I learned with such  
Engaging, prayerful muse

I strolled behind and made them leap  
By kicking a small rock  
They laughed and kicked it back to me  
As I waved to Thomas Ox

## *2.0 The Language*

Joan's language was heavenly, meaning, it was a language of thought. We live through a fallen nature in a fallen world where sin obscures and conceals heavenly language by clouding our intellects. The Trail of the Dogmatic Creed before me, therefore, was clarity of thought. The dogmas, doctrines, and magisterial teachings of the Church formed guardrails between which the gathering progressed. Since Joan and Thérèse led me by a "gathering in the Lord's gathering," thinking, as the means of gathering this language, was the mode of being for the journey. Gathering, or thought, as a mode of being, required contemplation in the Lord's own gathering of all creation in the Eucharist. Eucharistic adoration brought order to the aletheian physis unfolding around me. The egress out of the Dark Forest of my own subjective consciousness, circumscribed by the gleaming light of the Combined Hearts of Joan and Thérèse, unfolded the Trail before me. I had been blind, but as I stepped out, I could see, though only partially, as if peering into a serene, misty valley at dusk.

Then Mary Magdalene appeared to me in the dream. Her primacy to the adventure concealed in the valley ahead connected her forever to the journey. The Trail of the Dogmatic Creed disappeared in the mist before us. As the pure dark night of faith fell, the soft light of Magdalene's poetic syntax appeared, forming the pathway's lamp posts.



### *3.0 Inceptual Contemplation*

Entering the Dark Night on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed, Mary Magdalene's syntax shone atop the lamp posts separating the pathway from the Night. The Trail within the lit border remained concealed as darkness while the lights circumscribing its borders revealed a flowing progression into the distance. The mist had disappeared in the gleaming of the pure night. The purity of the darkness was shimmering and divine. The Night concealed a gathering of concrete possibilities made apparent by the orderly flow of the Trail. The Trail was a revealing expression of one possibility, one with repeatable value for others. It was a pathway for pilgrims. Magdalene's light revealed the Trail in both its ontic and ontological splendor. Only Magdalene's syntax shone, but through the aurora, the Holy Spirit threw open the entire panorama of the Divine Night.

Standing on a hilltop overlooking the valley, I sensed Joan of Arc at my side. We stood in silence surveying the hidden beauty before us. The soft lights disappeared into the distant horizon. The journey to the Mystical Kingdom required that we pass through the valley of inceptual thinking. We were leaving the verdant meadows of descriptive generation engulfed in the shimmering unfolding of the Combined Hearts of Joan and Therese. The gathering in the language of the Kingdom with my saintly sisters had ushered us to the ridge, present between the previous descriptive panorama

and the astonishment of aletheia before us.

A gleaming aurora of possibilities lay concealed in the Night. In sacred silence, Magdalene's light constituted the path of orderly correlation with the Kingdom concealed over the horizon. From the hilltop at the border of Jehannian, Thérèsian descriptive phenomenology, Magdalene launched me into a Second Wind of aletheian unconcealment flowing across the open frontier below. The journey on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with Joan and Thérèse had passed from descriptive devotion to inceptual unconcealment of "that which is" shimmering around and over the Combined Hearts.

Mary Magdalene had appeared in my dream to imbue me in the charism of inceptual thinking. At the feet of Jesus in Bethany, she had inceptually contemplated the shining aletheia around the man, Jesus Christ. This unfolding of the person of Jesus was "the better part," just as the light engulfing the Combined Hearts of Joan and Thérèse was the better part of my devotion to these saintly sisters. Magdalene brought the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in Heaven while contemplating inceptually as a hermit in Provence. The Combined Hearts brought me to the Kingdom of France in heaven in the same manner, as I contemplated inceptually, sharing Magdalene's mode of being. Holy devotion to St. Mary Magdalene is inceptual contemplation in union with her repentant, contrite, all-loving heart oriented only to Jesus Christ in service to his

most Holy Mother, Mary.

Holy devotion to St. Mary Magdalene unites us to Mystical France through the Combined Hearts of St. Joan and St. Thérèse, True Devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and adoration of Jesus Christ at his feet in the Eucharist.

## *4.0 The Alabaster Light*

Magdalene's alabaster jar represents the soft light of her syntax. The bright transparency of her jar reflects the fire of her Heavenly ointments which are graces from Our Lord Jesus Christ bequeathed to us through a union of hearts. These ointments are an overflow of the essence of her being in Christ, namely repentance, contrition, divine friendship, and Christ's love. Magdalene's mode of being is the alabaster brilliance of inceptual thinking that constitutes the soft light guiding our way.

The light is Aletheia circumscribed by metaphysics. Magdalene's map of meaning draws light from within Catholic Veritas, and the form of the softly lit pathway navigating our way through this map is Aletheia. What we seek in prayer remains hidden inside the alabaster light. The lighted pathway through Magdalene's map of meaning is the order of being we interpret in spiritual empathy opened to us through the Holy Spirit. We unite our hearts with Magdalene as our sister, our patroness, and the founder of our royal house. Walking the way of the alabaster light imbues our souls with love for the Holy Spirit and the Divine Trinity. We are in love with God. God is all we desire, our only possession.

The alabaster light is Mary sitting at the feet of Jesus, contemplating that which remains hidden behind his divine countenance. It is the grace of Jesus Christ through the heart of Mary Magdalene gifted to us by the

Holy Spirit and the will of the Father. We love God and recognize Jesus Christ as He Who is.

## *The Second Wind*

A second wind caught me.  
Effortlessly, I reached upward;  
I was lifted higher, higher.  
It was first wind; then the second.

Magdalene. The apostle appeared,  
Mary Magdalene. She received me  
at the first wind, and cast me  
into the second, to heights unimagined.

As I rose, I was robed in splendor.  
A crown, a scepter, a silent whisper,  
“You are a King of France,  
a royal son of New Bethany.”

The Lord’s friendship, God’s place of rest.  
Mary’s fragrance, Magdalene’s home.  
From New Bethany, my eyes spanned  
the world below the second wind.

~ Walter Emerson Adams

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