THE DAILY BREAD

*The Magnificat of the Beloved*



# Encountering Christ as a Woman

A FORMATION BOOK BY

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*The Everyday Apostle*

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*Magnificat of the Beloved*

# Encountering Christ as a Woman

*Meeting the Living Lord, Not Just the Doctrine*

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*A Daily Bread Formation Book*

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INTRODUCTION

# Beyond the Doctrine to the Person

It is possible to know a great deal about Jesus, the Incarnation, the Redemption, the Resurrection, and still not quite know Him. The doctrines can be understood, the theology grasped, the facts held clearly in the mind, and yet the living Person behind them can remain somehow distant, known about rather than known. For the point of all the doctrine is not information but a Person, the living Christ, who desires to be encountered, met, loved, and known, not merely studied. And a woman has, in her own experience, particular ways of drawing near to Him, for women have always been uniquely close to the mysteries at the heart of who Christ is and what He did, the mysteries of taking flesh, of suffering, of death, and of new life, through their own embodied experience of these very things.

This book is about encountering the living Christ, moving beyond the doctrine to the Person. It will show the difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Him; how to meet Him in the Gospels, especially in His encounters with women; how a woman's embodied experience gives her a particular closeness to the mystery of the Incarnation, to the Cross, and to the new life of the Resurrection; how to meet the living Christ in the sacraments and in prayer; and how to let the encounter with Him change her. The aim is not to add to a woman's knowledge but to lead her into a living relationship with the One all the doctrine is about, so that she does not merely know the truths about Christ but knows Christ Himself.

*That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share his sufferings.*
*— Philippians 3:10*

Saint Paul's deepest desire was not merely to know about Christ but to know Him, to know the power of His resurrection and to share His sufferings, a personal and living knowledge of the Lord Himself. This book will help a woman toward that knowing: moving from doctrine to the Person; meeting Christ in the Gospels; drawing near to Him through her closeness to the Incarnation, the Cross, and the new life; encountering Him in the sacraments and prayer; and being changed by the encounter. A woman may know much about Jesus. This book invites her to know Him, to encounter the living Christ who stands behind all the doctrine and desires, above all, to be met and loved by her.

CHAPTER ONE

# Knowing Him, Not Just About Him

### *From Information to Relationship*

The first thing to grasp is the difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Him, between holding information and having a relationship, for the whole point of the faith is not to know facts about Jesus but to know Him personally. Understanding that the goal is to know Christ Himself, not merely to know about Him, reorients a woman from information to relationship and opens the way to a living encounter.

*And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. — John 17:3*

## More Than Information

Knowing about Christ, holding correct information about Him, is not the same as knowing Him personally, for one can have accurate knowledge of the facts and still lack a living relationship with the Person. It is possible to know a great deal about Jesus, His life, His teachings, the doctrines concerning Him, and yet not know Him, for knowing about a person and knowing them personally are different things, the one a matter of information and the other of relationship, so that a woman may have much knowledge about Christ while her personal knowledge of Him remains thin. This means the knowledge the faith aims at is more than information, more than accurate facts about Jesus, for it is a personal knowing of Him, a relationship, so that a woman is called not merely to learn about Christ but to know Him as a living Person. The woman who understands that knowing Christ is more than information seeks a personal relationship with Him and not merely accurate knowledge about Him. More than information is required to know Christ, for holding correct facts about Him is not the same as knowing Him personally, so that the faith aims not at information but at a living relationship with the Person.

## Eternal Life Is Knowing Him

Jesus Himself defined eternal life as knowing God and knowing Him, revealing that the heart of salvation is a personal knowing of God, a relationship and not merely correct belief. When Jesus spoke of eternal life, He defined it not as holding correct doctrines but as knowing God and knowing Himself, the one whom God sent, so that the very essence of eternal life, of salvation itself, is a personal knowing of God, an intimate relationship with Him, revealing that the faith is ultimately about knowing a Person and not about possessing information. This means the goal of the whole faith is to know Christ, for

eternal life itself is this knowing, so that a woman's faith reaches its purpose not in understanding doctrines but in knowing the Lord personally, the relationship that is eternal life. The woman who understands that eternal life is knowing Him seeks that personal knowing as the very heart of her faith, not merely correct belief. Eternal life is knowing Him, as Jesus Himself defined it, a personal knowing of God and of the one He sent, so that the heart of salvation is a relationship with the living Christ and not merely correct belief.

### The Doctrine Serves the Encounter

All the doctrine about Christ exists to serve the encounter with Him, to lead a woman to know the living Person, so that the teaching is not an end in itself but a means to the relationship it describes. The doctrines about Christ, essential as they are, are not ends in themselves but exist to serve the encounter with Him, to make the living Person known, to lead a woman into relationship with Him, so that the teaching is in the service of the knowing, the map that leads to the Person rather than a substitute for meeting Him. This means a woman should let the doctrine she has learned lead her to the living Christ, using her knowledge about Him as a doorway into knowing Him, so that her study serves her encounter and her understanding deepens her relationship rather than replacing it. The woman who understands that the doctrine serves the encounter lets her knowledge about Christ lead her to know Him, the Person the teaching describes. The doctrine serves the encounter, existing to lead a woman to know the living Christ, so that the teaching about Him is not an end in itself but a doorway into the relationship it describes.

## CHAPTER TWO

# Meeting Him in the Gospels

### *Where Christ Still Reveals Himself*

One of the surest ways a woman encounters the living Christ is in the Gospels, where she can enter the scenes of His life, watch Him act and speak, and especially witness His personal encounters with women, meeting Him there as a living Person. Understanding how to meet Christ in the Gospels, entering the scenes and encountering Him personally, gives a woman a concrete way to move from knowing about Him to knowing Him.

*And he said to her, Your sins are forgiven. — Luke 7:48*

### Entering the Scenes

A woman meets Christ in the Gospels by entering the scenes, imaginatively placing herself within the Gospel events, watching Jesus, listening to Him, being present to Him, so that the Gospel becomes an encounter rather than a text. Rather than reading the Gospels merely as information, a woman can enter the scenes, placing herself imaginatively within them, watching Jesus heal and teach, listening to His words as if spoken to her, being present at His encounters, so that the Gospel account becomes a living encounter with Christ, a meeting with the Person rather than a reading of a text. This means a woman meets the living Christ in the Gospels by entering them, by being present to the scenes and to the Person at their center, so that her reading becomes an encounter, the Gospel a place where she meets Jesus rather than merely learns about Him. The woman who enters the scenes of the Gospels meets the living Christ there, present to Him in the events of His life. Entering the scenes of the Gospels, a woman places herself within the events and is present to Jesus, so that the Gospel becomes a living encounter with Christ rather than merely a text to be read.

## Watching How He Treats Women

In the Gospels a woman can watch especially how Christ treats women, with a tenderness, respect, and personal attention that reveal His heart toward her, so that His encounters with women become a window into how He meets her. The Gospels are full of Christ's encounters with women, the woman at the well, the woman who anointed Him and heard her sins forgiven, the woman healed of her affliction, Martha and Mary, Mary Magdalene, and in each He shows a tenderness, a respect, a personal attention remarkable in His time, so that watching how He treats women reveals His heart toward them and toward every woman who comes to Him. This means a woman can learn how Christ meets her by watching how He met the women of the Gospels, with mercy, dignity, and personal love, so that His encounters with them become a window into how He regards and receives her, drawing her to meet Him with the same confidence. The woman who watches how He treats women sees His tender and personal love toward her, mirrored in His meetings with the women of the Gospels. Watching how He treats women in the Gospels, with tenderness, respect, and personal attention, reveals Christ's heart toward every woman, so that His encounters with women become a window into how He meets her.

## Hearing Him Speak to You

As a woman enters the Gospel and watches Christ, she can hear His words spoken to her, the forgiveness, the healing, the calling He gave others addressed now to her, so that the encounter becomes personal. When a woman enters the Gospel scenes and attends to Christ, His words to those He met can become words to her, for the forgiveness He spoke

to the penitent woman, the peace He gave the afflicted, the call He issued to His followers, are addressed also to her when she receives them personally, so that she hears Christ speaking to her through the Gospel, the encounter becoming a personal address. This means the Gospel is not only a record of what Christ said to others but a place where He speaks to a woman now, so that she can hear His words as spoken to her, meeting the living Christ who addresses her personally through the scenes of His life. The woman who hears Him speak to her meets the living Christ in the Gospel, His words becoming a personal address to her. Hearing Him speak to you turns the Gospel into a personal encounter, for the words Christ spoke to those He met are addressed also to a woman who receives them, so that she hears the living Christ speaking to her now.

CHAPTER THREE

# A Woman's Nearness to the Incarnation

### *The Mystery of God Taking Flesh*

A woman has a particular closeness to the mystery of the Incarnation, for the taking of flesh, the forming of life within a body, the bearing and nurturing of a child, are mysteries a woman knows in her own embodied experience, so that God becoming flesh touches something she uniquely understands. Understanding a woman's nearness to the Incarnation, her embodied closeness to the mystery of God taking flesh, reveals a particular way she can encounter the mystery of the Word made flesh.

*For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. — Psalm 139:13*

## The Mystery of Life in the Body

The Incarnation is the mystery of God taking flesh, of divine life formed within a human body, and this is a mystery close to a woman's own experience of life formed and carried within her body. God becoming man meant the Son being conceived and formed within a woman's body, carried in her womb, taking flesh from her flesh, and this mystery of life formed and borne within the body is one a woman knows in her own embodied experience, in the capacity to bear life, so that the Incarnation touches a mystery near to her own nature. This means a woman has a particular nearness to the Incarnation, for the mystery of life formed and carried within the body, central to God becoming flesh, resonates with her own embodied experience, so that she can encounter the mystery of the Word made flesh through a closeness rooted in her own nature. The woman who understands the mystery of life in the body sees her own embodied experience as a

window into the mystery of God taking flesh. The mystery of life in the body, central to the Incarnation, is one a woman knows in her own embodied experience of life formed and carried within her, so that she has a particular nearness to the mystery of God taking flesh.

## Mary and the Incarnation

Mary's experience of bearing God in her womb is the supreme instance of a woman's closeness to the Incarnation, and every woman who ponders Mary's role draws near to the mystery through her. The Incarnation happened in and through a woman, Mary, who conceived, carried, and bore the Son of God, so that the supreme human closeness to the mystery of God taking flesh belongs to a woman, and every woman who ponders Mary's bearing of Christ enters the mystery through her, contemplating the astonishing nearness of a woman to the taking of flesh by God. This means a woman draws near to the Incarnation through Mary, the woman who bore God, whose experience of carrying the Word made flesh gives every woman a point of entry into the mystery, a closeness to God taking flesh mediated through the Mother who bore Him. The woman who contemplates Mary and the Incarnation enters the mystery of God taking flesh through the woman who bore Him, drawing near through Mary. Mary and the Incarnation are inseparable, for her bearing of God in her womb is the supreme instance of a woman's closeness to the mystery, so that every woman draws near to the Word made flesh through the Mother who carried Him.

## Encountering the Word Made Flesh

A woman encounters the mystery of the Incarnation most deeply not merely by understanding it but by wondering at it, letting her own closeness to the mystery of embodied life open her to adore the God who took flesh. The way to encounter the Incarnation is finally through wonder and adoration, a woman letting the astonishing truth that God took flesh, formed within a woman's body like every human life, move her to marvel and to worship, so that her own nearness to the mystery of embodied life becomes a doorway into adoring the Word made flesh. This means a woman encounters the Incarnation not only by grasping it intellectually but by wondering at it from the place of her own experience, adoring the God who stooped to be formed in a womb and to take human flesh, so that her closeness to the mystery deepens into worship of the One who became flesh for her. The woman who encounters the Word made flesh lets her nearness to the mystery open into wonder and adoration of the God who took flesh. Encountering the Word made flesh comes through wonder and adoration, a woman letting her own closeness to the mystery of embodied life open her to marvel at and worship the God who took flesh for her.

CHAPTER FOUR

# A Woman's Nearness to the Cross

### *The Mystery of Redemptive Suffering*

A woman also has a particular closeness to the Cross, for the experience of suffering, of carrying pain that is not always her own, of standing faithfully in the presence of anguish, is one women know deeply, so that the mystery of Christ's redemptive suffering touches something a woman uniquely understands. Understanding a woman's nearness to the Cross, her closeness to the mystery of suffering love, reveals a particular way she can encounter the crucified Christ.

*And there followed him a great multitude of the people and of women who were mourning and lamenting for him. — Luke 23:27*

## Women Who Know Suffering

Women often know suffering intimately, in their bodies, their relationships, their losses, and in the carrying of pain that belongs to others, so that the mystery of suffering is one near to a woman's own experience. Women are often deeply acquainted with suffering, in the pains of the body, the griefs of relationship and loss, and especially in the carrying of pain that is not their own, the suffering of those they love which they bear alongside them, so that suffering is a mystery many women know intimately, from the inside, through their own long experience of it. This means a woman has a particular nearness to suffering, not as a stranger to it but as one who knows it well, so that the mystery of the Cross, of redemptive suffering, touches a reality close to her own experience, giving her a point of entry into the suffering of Christ. The woman who knows suffering has a nearness to the Cross, meeting the crucified Christ from the place of her own acquaintance with pain. Women who know suffering, in their bodies, relationships, losses, and in carrying others' pain, have a particular nearness to the mystery of the Cross, so that the suffering of Christ touches a reality close to a woman's own experience.

## Standing at the Cross

The women of the Gospel stood faithfully at the Cross when others fled, and in this they model a woman's particular closeness to the crucified Christ, a faithful presence in the face of suffering. When Jesus was crucified, it was the women who stood faithfully by, who had followed Him to the Cross mourning and lamenting, who remained present through His suffering when most of the disciples had fled, so that the women model a particular closeness to the crucified Christ, a faithful standing in the presence of anguish,

a refusal to abandon Him in His suffering. This means a woman draws near to the Cross as the women of the Gospel did, by faithful presence, standing with the suffering Christ rather than fleeing, bringing to the Cross the capacity women often have to remain present in the face of pain, so that she encounters the crucified Lord through faithful nearness. The woman who stands at the Cross meets the crucified Christ through faithful presence, as the women of the Gospel stood by Him. Standing at the Cross, the women of the Gospel modeled a woman's particular closeness to the crucified Christ, a faithful presence in the face of suffering that does not flee but remains with Him.

### Suffering Joined to His

A woman encounters the Cross most deeply when she joins her own sufferings to Christ's, offering them in union with His redemptive suffering, so that her pain is transformed from mere affliction into a sharing in His saving work. The deepest way a woman meets the crucified Christ is by joining her own suffering to His, offering her pains and griefs in union with His Cross, so that her suffering is not wasted or merely endured but joined to Christ's redemptive suffering, transformed into a participation in His saving work, a sharing in the Cross that gives her pain meaning and power. This means a woman's own suffering becomes a place of encounter with the crucified Christ, for when she joins it to His, she meets Him in it, shares His Cross, and finds her pain transformed from meaningless affliction into a redemptive sharing in His suffering love. The woman who joins her suffering to His meets the crucified Christ in her own pain, transformed into a sharing in His redemptive work. Suffering joined to His transforms a woman's pain into a sharing in Christ's redemptive work, so that she encounters the crucified Christ most deeply by offering her own sufferings in union with His Cross.

## CHAPTER FIVE

# A Woman's Nearness to New Life

### *The Mystery of the Resurrection*

A woman has a particular closeness to the mystery of new life, for the bringing forth of life, the experience of new life emerging from labor and pain, is one women know, so that the Resurrection, the bursting forth of new life from death, touches a mystery near to a woman's own experience. Understanding a woman's nearness to the Resurrection, her closeness to the mystery of new life, reveals a particular way she can encounter the risen Christ.

*Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, I have seen the Lord. — John 20:18*

## New Life From Labor

Women know in their own experience the bringing forth of new life through labor and pain, and this gives them a particular nearness to the Resurrection, the mystery of new life emerging from death. The experience of bringing forth new life, of labor that passes through pain into the joy of new life, is one women know intimately, and it resonates with the mystery of the Resurrection, in which new and glorified life bursts forth from the darkness of death, so that a woman has a particular nearness to the Resurrection through her own experience of new life born through travail. This means a woman can encounter the Resurrection through a closeness rooted in her own experience of new life emerging from labor, so that the bursting forth of risen life from death touches a mystery she knows from within, giving her a particular point of entry into the joy of the Resurrection. The woman who knows new life from labor has a nearness to the Resurrection, meeting the risen Christ from the place of her own experience of life born through pain. New life from labor, the bringing forth of life through travail, gives a woman a particular nearness to the Resurrection, the mystery of new and glorified life emerging from the darkness of death.

## First to the Tomb

The women of the Gospel were the first to the empty tomb and the first to encounter the risen Christ, so that women hold a place of particular closeness to the Resurrection, the first witnesses and announcers of the risen Lord. It was the women who came first to the tomb in the darkness, who first found it empty, who first met the risen Christ, and to whom He first appeared, Mary Magdalene becoming the first to announce, I have seen the Lord, so that the women hold a place of singular closeness to the Resurrection, the first witnesses and heralds of the risen Christ. This means a woman draws near to the Resurrection as the women of the Gospel did, the first to seek Him, the first to find Him risen, the first to proclaim Him, so that she can meet the risen Christ with the particular closeness of those women who encountered Him first and carried the news of His rising. The woman who is first to the tomb meets the risen Christ with the closeness of the women who first found Him and announced Him. First to the tomb, the women of the Gospel were the first to encounter the risen Christ and announce Him, so that women hold a place of particular closeness to the Resurrection as its first witnesses and heralds.

## Encountering the Risen Lord

A woman encounters the risen Christ not only as a past event but as a present reality, meeting the living Lord who is risen and present to her now, the source of her own hope of new life. The Resurrection is not only a mystery a woman draws near to through her experience but an encounter with the living Christ who is risen now, present to her, the same Lord who met Mary Magdalene at the tomb and who meets His own today, so that a woman encounters the risen Christ as a present reality, the living Lord who is with her and who is the source of her hope of sharing His new life. This means a woman meets the risen Christ not merely by contemplating a past marvel but by encountering the living Lord present to her now, so that the Resurrection becomes a personal meeting with the One who is risen and who promises her a share in His new life. The woman who encounters the risen Lord meets the living Christ present to her now, the source of her hope of new life. Encountering the risen Lord is a present reality, a woman meeting the living Christ who is risen now and present to her, the source of her own hope of sharing His new life.

CHAPTER SIX

# Where He Is Truly Found

### *Christ in the Sacraments and Prayer*

Beyond the Gospels and the mysteries, a woman encounters the living Christ most surely in the sacraments, above all the Eucharist, and in prayer, where He is truly present and truly met, so that these are the privileged places of her ongoing encounter with Him. Understanding where Christ is truly found, in the sacraments and in prayer, gives a woman the sure and constant places to meet the living Lord throughout her life.

*He took the bread and blessed and broke it. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. — Luke 24:30-31*

## Christ in the Eucharist

The surest place a woman encounters the living Christ is the Eucharist, where He is truly present and given to her, so that in Communion she meets not a symbol but the living Lord Himself. The Eucharist is the privileged place of encounter with Christ, for there He is truly, substantially present, given to a woman as food, so that in receiving Communion she meets the living Christ Himself, taken into her, as the disciples at Emmaus recognized Him in the breaking of the bread, a real and intimate encounter with the Lord. This means a woman has, in the Eucharist, the surest and most intimate encounter with the living Christ available on earth, for there she does not merely remember or

contemplate Him but receives Him, meeting the living Lord truly present, so that the Eucharist is the heart of her ongoing encounter with Him. The woman who meets Christ in the Eucharist encounters the living Lord truly present, received in Communion as the disciples recognized Him in the breaking of bread. Christ in the Eucharist is the surest encounter, for there He is truly present and given to a woman as food, so that in Communion she meets not a symbol but the living Lord Himself.

## Christ in Prayer

A woman also encounters the living Christ in prayer, in the personal conversation and communion with Him that is open to her at any time, so that prayer is a constant place of meeting the Lord. Prayer is a continual place of encounter with Christ, for in prayer a woman speaks with Him, listens to Him, rests in His presence, relates to Him as a living Person, so that she meets the living Lord not only in the sacraments but in the daily communion of prayer, a personal encounter available to her at any time. This means a woman can meet Christ constantly in prayer, bringing herself to Him, conversing with Him, dwelling in His presence, so that prayer becomes an ongoing encounter with the living Lord, a daily meeting that sustains and deepens her relationship with Him. The woman who meets Christ in prayer encounters the living Lord in personal communion, available to her at any time. Christ in prayer is a constant encounter, for in the personal conversation and communion of prayer a woman meets the living Lord, so that prayer is a daily place of meeting Him available at any time.

## A Lifelong Encounter

The encounter with Christ is not a single event but a lifelong relationship, deepened continually in the sacraments and prayer, so that a woman meets the living Lord again and again throughout her life, growing ever closer to Him. Encountering Christ is not a one-time experience but a lifelong and deepening relationship, sustained and renewed in the Eucharist, in Confession, in prayer, through the whole of a woman's life, so that she meets the living Lord continually, her encounter with Him growing deeper and more intimate over the years. This means a woman's encounter with Christ is meant to be lifelong, a relationship renewed and deepened in the sacraments and prayer through every season, so that she does not meet Him once but continually, growing ever closer to the living Lord across the whole of her life. The woman who lives a lifelong encounter with Christ meets the living Lord continually in the sacraments and prayer, growing closer to Him through all her years. A lifelong encounter is what meeting Christ becomes, a relationship deepened continually in the sacraments and prayer, so that a woman meets the living Lord again and again throughout her life, growing ever closer to Him.

CHAPTER SEVEN

# Changed by the Meeting

### *Becoming Like the One You Love*

The purpose of encountering Christ is not merely consolation but transformation, for to truly meet the living Lord is to be changed by Him, gradually conformed to His likeness, so that the encounter remakes a woman over time. Understanding that the encounter with Christ is meant to change a woman, transforming her into His likeness, reveals the deepest fruit of knowing Him and the reason the encounter matters.

*Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. — 2 Corinthians 3:18*

## Transformed by Beholding Him

To behold Christ, to gaze on Him in encounter, is to be transformed by Him, for a woman becomes like the One she contemplates and loves, changed into His image by the encounter. The Scripture reveals that beholding the glory of the Lord transforms a person into the same image, from glory to glory, so that to encounter Christ, to gaze on Him in prayer and sacrament and Gospel, is to be changed by Him, gradually conformed to His likeness, for a woman becomes like the One she beholds and loves, transformed by the very encounter. This means the encounter with Christ is not static but transforming, for in meeting and contemplating Him a woman is changed into His image, so that the more she beholds Him the more she becomes like Him, the encounter working a real transformation in her. The woman who is transformed by beholding Him becomes like Christ through the encounter, changed into His image by gazing on Him. Transformed by beholding Him, a woman becomes like the One she contemplates and loves, so that encountering Christ changes her into His image, the very meeting conforming her to His likeness.

## Conformed to Christ

The transformation the encounter works is a conforming to Christ, a gradual remaking of a woman into His likeness in her character, her love, and her whole self, so that she comes to resemble the Lord she meets. The change that comes from encountering Christ is a conforming to Him, for as a woman meets and loves the living Lord, she is gradually remade in His likeness, her thoughts, desires, character, and love being shaped into His, so that over time she is conformed to Christ, coming to resemble the One she has encountered and loved. This means the fruit of a woman's encounter with Christ is her

growing likeness to Him, a real conforming of her whole self to the Lord, so that knowing Him does not leave her unchanged but remakes her into His image, transforming her into the woman He is making her to be. The woman who is conformed to Christ is remade in His likeness through her encounter with Him, coming to resemble the Lord she loves. Conformed to Christ is the transformation the encounter works, a gradual remaking of a woman into His likeness in character, love, and whole self, so that she comes to resemble the Lord she meets.

### Living From the Relationship

A woman changed by her encounter with Christ comes to live from the relationship, drawing her life, strength, and identity from her ongoing communion with Him, so that He becomes the center and source of her whole life. The deepest fruit of encountering Christ is that a woman begins to live from the relationship, no longer drawing her life from herself or the world but from her communion with the living Lord, finding her strength, her identity, her joy, and her guidance in Him, so that Christ becomes the center and source of her whole life, the relationship the wellspring of all she is and does. This means the encounter with Christ, deepened over time, reshapes a woman's whole existence, for she comes to live from her relationship with Him, drawing everything from her communion with the living Lord, so that her life flows from the One she has met and loves. The woman who lives from the relationship draws her whole life from her communion with Christ, who has become its center and source. Living from the relationship is the deepest fruit of the encounter, a woman drawing her life, strength, and identity from her ongoing communion with the living Christ, so that He becomes the center and source of her whole life.

## CONCLUSION

# Meet Him

The woman who knew the doctrine of Christ but longed to know Him now has the way to encounter the living Lord. We have seen the difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Him, for eternal life is knowing Him; how to meet Him in the Gospels, entering the scenes and hearing Him speak; how a woman's embodied experience gives her a particular nearness to the Incarnation, the Cross, and the new life of the Resurrection; where He is truly found, in the Eucharist and in prayer; and how the encounter changes her, conforming her to His likeness until she lives from the relationship.

Through all of it runs a single invitation: meet Him. All the doctrine, all the truth about who Christ is and what He did, exists for this, that a woman might meet the living Lord Himself, know Him, love Him, and be changed by Him. He is not a figure of the past or a set of truths to be studied but a living Person who desires to be encountered, and He is near, waiting to be met.

So meet Him. Move beyond knowing about Christ to knowing Him, for this is eternal life. Meet Him in the Gospels, entering the scenes and hearing Him speak your name. Draw near to Him through your own closeness to the mysteries of His flesh, His suffering, and His new life. Find Him where He is truly present, in the Eucharist and in prayer, and make your encounter with Him the habit of your life. And let the meeting change you, conforming you to His likeness until you live from your communion with Him. You have known much about Jesus. Now meet Him, the living Lord who became a woman's child, who suffered and rose for you, and who desires, above all, to be known and loved by you. Meet Him, and be changed.

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*Encountering Christ as a Woman is part of The Daily Bread Library.*