

# Ordinary Lives Transformed

*Richard Rohr writes about encountering the Risen Christ in our ordinariness and woundedness.*

I've noticed in the Gospels that even after two appearances of the Risen Christ, the apostles return to their old job of fishing (John 21:3). They don't join the priesthood, try to get a job at the Temple, go on more retreats, take vows, leave their wives, or get special titles. Nor is there any mention of them baptizing each other or wearing special clothing beyond that of a wayfarer or "workman" (Matthew 10:9–10). When the inner is utterly transformed, we don't need symbolic outer validations, special hats, or flashy insignia.

We can also note that the Risen Christ is never apparent as a supernatural figure, but is mistaken in one case for a gardener, another time for a fellow traveler on the road, and then for a fisherman offering advice. He seems to look just like everybody else after the Resurrection. (John 20:15; Luke 24:13–35; John 21:4–6), even with his wounds on full display! In the Gospels it appears we can all go back to "fishing" after any authentic God encounter, consciously carrying our humiliating wounds, only now more humbly. That is our only badge of honor. In fact, it is exactly our woundedness that gives us any interest in healing itself, and the very power to heal others. As Henri Nouwen rightly said, the only authentic healers are always wounded healers. Good therapists will often say the same.

True mysticism just allows us to "fish" from a different side of the boat and with different expectations of what success might mean. All the while, we are totally assured that we are already and always floating on a big, deep, life-filled pond. The mystical heart knows there is a fellow Fisherman nearby who is always available for good advice. He stands and beckons from the shores, at the edges of every ordinary life, every unreligious moment, every "secular" occupation, and he is still talking to working people who, like the first disciples, are not important, influential, especially "holy," trained in theology, or even educated. This is the mystical doorway, which is not narrow but wide and welcoming. [1]

Matthew Fox affirms mystical experience as a gift:

Deep down, each one of us is a mystic. When we tap into that energy we become alive again and we give birth. From the creativity that we release is born the prophetic vision and work that we all aspire to realize as our gift to the world. We want to serve in whatever capacity we can. Getting in touch with the mystic inside is the beginning of our deep service....

Mysticism is about the awe and the gratitude, the letting go and the letting be, the birthing and the creativity, and the compassion—including healing and celebration and justice making—that our world so sorely needs.... Every mystic is a healer. We are healers all. [2]

References:

[1] Adapted from Richard Rohr, *Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi* (Cincinnati, OH: Franciscan Media, 2014), 16–17.

[2] Matthew Fox, *Introduction to Christian Mystics: 365 readings and Meditations* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2011), 3, 5.