

# Connecting New

September, 2014

My spiritual director once pointed out to me that there is only one place in Scripture when a man lost his voice. Specifically, when Zechariah (Mary's cousin Elizabeth's husband) questioned the angel Gabriel about Elizabeth becoming pregnant. "But now, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time, you will become mute, unable to speak, until the day these things occur." (Luke 1:5-25; 57-66)

Although I am a man, I sometimes notice how women often do not have a voice or have their voices ignored or silenced. This occurs in our homes, our schools, our places of work, not only in the U.S. but across the globe. On the other hand, we thankfully have many examples of women who have been and are heard, and these women inspire us to be more, to be authentic, free and the fullness of ourselves. This month I share two poems that I hope encourage all people to claim their voices and to hear the authentic voices of others.

## Invisible

When she speaks, her words  
get absorbed into a vacuum,  
where nothing escapes, nothing is heard,  
nothing is noticed, and nothing ever changes.  
Sometimes it's like she's a ghost -  
if she punched someone, they wouldn't perceive it.  
It's systemic, but it's also personal,  
especially for her and the sisterhood  
to which she belongs.  
I want to stand with her,  
to be her ally, yet  
only she can find her own voice,  
only she can speak her own words,  
and so I pray, truly I pray,  
that I am authentic,  
that I am listening,  
that I hear her.

## Discernment

She searches for an answer that is not there.  
She seeks, not really believing she will find.  
She is afraid to follow her heart  
because doing that has caused so much pain,  
disappointment, distrust, confusion  
and sense of failure.  
She believes that discernment works for others,  
but not herself -  
she must be doing it wrong, or worse  
perhaps the past she lived,  
and the bleak future she sees,  
really is the will of God.

And I just want to look in her eyes and tell her,  
"Only when you have the courage to say out loud  
what you most desire will you find it.  
Don't settle, but instead hold onto it  
like a snapping turtle,  
like Jacob wrestling with the angel,  
and be open to recognizing that what you most  
desire may come in a way you do not expect."

Peace and Blessings,  
Clarence



Clarence Heller is a spiritual director, poet, and dreamer whose writing and paintings are inspired through prayerful reflection.

Contact: [clarence@clarenceheller.com](mailto:clarence@clarenceheller.com)

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