

Connecting New

June, 2016

In the fourteenth chapter of Mark's Gospel, a story is told of a woman who anoints Jesus with very expensive oil, while others look on criticizing her. Jesus refutes her critics and graciously opens himself to receive what she is offering. This month, I share a poem and a painting that present an interpretation of this story, one that applies to many women past and present, I believe.

Notice in the painting that Jesus adopts a submissive, vulnerable posture as the woman anoints him. And notice how each and every of the many onlookers are pointing in judgment. As we move outward from Jesus and the woman, the painting grows ever darker and the accusers blend into the background so well they become almost impossible to see. Again, an experience that I imagine is familiar to many of us.



The Woman with the Alabaster Jar

As a young girl, and ever since,
ever since,
she had a problem with men
and they with her.
Never enough -

good enough, smart enough, pretty enough.
Never seen as a person,
much less an equal.
Never heard,
much less listened to.
Never thanked,
much less appreciated.
Never welcomed to the table,
although it was she who prepared it.

She was an object to be used,
and in turn she used men.
Codependents in shame and secrets,
survival and compromises,
scheming and manipulating.
Her soul had grown weary of weeping.

But this time, this time,
someone had loved her in truth,
and she received it to her core,
and her response was gratitude.
But this time, this one time,
she would do it well enough,
beyond criticism,
beyond what could go unnoticed.
She sold all she had to purchase the oil.
And although her familiar foes judged,
attacked and dismissed once more,
this time, this time,
someone received her with dignity and respect,
love for love,
person to person,
divinity revealed to those who would see.

May each of us receive what God is offering us, and may we in turn offer that to others.

Peace and Blessings,
Clarence

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

Contact: clarence@clarenceheller.com

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