

Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Aug 21st 2015

“Do not ask me to abandon or forsake you for wherever you go, I will go, wherever you lodge I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God my God.”

Book of Ruth

As I savor this passage from the Book of Ruth, I feel blessed to have experienced the feminine aspect of God’s love through the support of other women, much as Naomi and Ruth did.

Mentally I return to a life- altering crisis that no one could have coped with alone. But fortunately God sent angels - women friends who did not “abandon or forsake” me any more than Ruth forsook Naomi. When I called at midnight, they were there for me. They went miles out of their way to help – in one case literally. Their faithfulness mirrored that of God for his children.

Sadly, the Bible has few major accounts featuring the experiences of ordinary women. Most Bible stories in which women appear at all revolve around queens like Esther, seductive women like Salome or strong wives like Sarah and Rachel. That makes this passage about two women coping with a crisis on their own with the help of God and each other especially precious. It is noteworthy that Naomi and Ruth were from different tribes, reminding us that love must transcend kinship and ethnic boundaries.

What strong, courageous and loving women Naomi and Ruth were! They seem less like historic figures than like women whose responses to their trials are ageless.

Like Naomi, how many modern women put the welfare of their children ahead of their own? Like Ruth, how many of us stand by others when we’ve been given the chance to jump ship?

Although Naomi and Ruth are women, we should celebrate their traits in both women and men by thanking the Naomi’s and Ruth’s in our own lives regardless of gender. We know who they are.

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