

REFLECTION
June / July 2017

"Where you go I will go, where you stay I will stay also;
your people shall be my people and your God my God."
"Ka haere ahau ki tau wahi e haere ai, ka noho hoki ki tau wahi e noho ai;
ko tau iwi hei iwi moku, ko tou Atua hei Atua moku."
(Ruth 1:16)

Naomi and Ruth

Naomi and Ruth
We cherish your story
You who
Pressed your case

Found strength in your bond
Desired, strove and claimed much
To
Bring to bear
In your time
The fuller intention of our God

Naomi and Ruth
Alive in our tradition
Help us carry
Our bellyful of hopes
And pains and dreams
As you did
In sacred perseverance
For
It would seem

In our time
We have yet
To affirm every gift
And bring about the loving kindness
That is also justice.

"E kore e tukua e au ... I will not let it go"
(The Story of Suzanne Aubert p.82)

Compassion Values

Divine Providence – He manaakitanga Atua Tapu
Simplicity – He ngawaritanga
Action with the poor – Nga awhina ki nga rawakore
Justice – He tika o nga tangata ki nga tangata
Partnership – Te Kotahitanga

"The works of God are done little by little,
by beginning and progress:
so then, we must act gently, pray much,
and work conjointly with our fellow-labourers."
(Spiritual Tonics p.111)

"Faith is the light of the mind, the life of the just
the soul of great actions."
(Spiritual Tonics p.22)

Comment

The story of Naomi and Ruth is an ancient story. These are women of Jesus's whakapapa who travelled a long journey in friendship and faith. Far from satisfied with lesser 'leftover' lives (widows of the time had no social or economic status) these two women journeyed from lives of severe loss and dispossession to a newer, freer place both materially and spiritually.

From markedly different faith backgrounds and traditions, they made their extraordinary journey together and in doing so they set a powerful example. They were blessed by God as they empowered each other to claim a place at the table.

For Naomi, there was a physical journey back to her roots to reclaim what little may be available to her through kinship to Boaz. For Ruth, there was the bold choice to live outside the bounds of her own culture, in solidarity with the older woman. In a world that insisted on the invisibility of both women it was the sharing of their gifts with each other, and their vision of a God who ultimately wanted them to be whole through full membership of their community that makes the difference.

These women who are gifted to us through Old Testament scripture are worthy forebears of Suzanne Aubert. May we who draw on such richness of example feel more greatly resourced in responding to the challenges of our times.

(Acknowledgement: "The Story of Ruth: Twelve Moments in Every Woman's Life", Joan Chittister)



Image credit – Sandy Freckleton Gagon, "Whither Thou Goest"

Possible Prompts for Reflection

- In what ways do we seek justice for each other?
- How is ours a vision of compassion that seeks justice?
- Is there any particular way I am being called to affirm another's gift?

Closing Prayer

Lord
keep us moving in our faith
discovering in loving service
the giftedness of all your peoples.
Amen.

Christine Kelly