

Holy Ground

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A quarterly reflection on
the contemplative life



TO YIELD OR NOT TO YIELD

*Have Thine own way, Lord!
Have Thine own way!
Thou art the potter I am the clay!
Mold me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting,
Yielded and still.*

Hostility and anger have coarsened our public conversations and formed cynical callouses on our souls. We tend to perceive those who yield, defer, or step aside with contempt, as “cowards, weaklings, and losers.” Our ability to respond to change and loss has hardened into blame, shame and efforts for control and power to force others to accept our wills. Violence frequently erupts in devastating attempts to rid

ourselves of our own self-loathing, rage, and suffering. Yet somewhere deep inside is a child sobbing.

Are we doomed to impasse, stalemate and chaos? I do not think so. We can be better than this. We are better than this. After author and pastor, William Otis Moss III, jumped a friend who had taken his ball, William’s mother said, “Never allow someone to have that much power over your spirit.” She explained that once someone learns how to get under your skin, how to provoke you into unleashing violence, then you have given away the real power, which is the power of choice. *Dancing in the Darkness, Spiritual Lessons for Thriving in Turbulent Times*, p 34

Women have long been cast in roles of deference and submission, with little opportunity to choose to yield or not to yield. Many women in the world still face this struggle daily.

People who are oppressed may learn to yield to power out of self-preservation. Yet yielding is more than saving your own skin.

Consider the men and women who chose to yield throughout the nonviolent movements led by Ghandi, Howard Thurman, the Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, Myrlie Evens-Williams, and Congressman, and founding member of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, John Lewis.

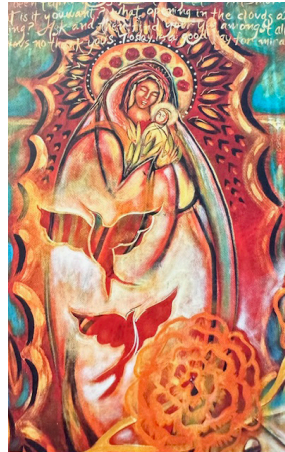
Today Father John Dear continues his work in teaching nonviolence. As well as Buddhists, Quakers, Mennonites, and other religions which practice nonviolence by redirecting their anger and rage in positive life-giving directions.

People of privilege have much to learn about the power of spirit that rises up from the deep faith and the willingness to deny themselves, in the hearts of those, who have been oppressed by the violence of others.

Men must see that force begets force, hate begets hate, toughness begets toughness. ... Somebody must have sense enough and morality enough to cut off the chain of hate and the chain of evil in the universe."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

When yielding is not seen as a possible, effective way of responding to conflict, there are many who can show us how to do it. I offer the stories of three women who demonstrate, alongside Jesus, ways to stop the madness of ceaseless war and conflict.



“Choose a card that interests you,” said my spiritual director, as she gestured to the colorful cards spread across the small table. The cards were varied depictions of

Mary and Jesus.

I chose the card called *Our Lady of the Hearth* and was asked to reflect on the card during the retreat. My card featured Mary holding the Christ child. What caught my attention was the Mother of Jesus’s association with the Hearth. I knew about Hestia, who in Greek mythology was the Goddess of the Hearth.

The role of women tending the hearth and home is longstanding. Here food is



prepared, family members are nurtured and kept warm. The hearth serves as an altar where offerings are made by the householder. Here, too, the light, which allows us to see deeply and more clearly, is kept burning.

Hestia does not always stay at home with the kids. Her presence was required on important public occasions. The meeting cannot begin without her and the fire she carries. She is invoked and venerated for presiding over affairs of the state, where the attention is not so much on Hestia, but on the flame she tends.



Mary shows up too, where she needs to be, over and over and is willing to step out beyond her comfort zone. “How can this be? I have no husband?” In a stable she delivers the light of the world. Surrounded by threats she perseveres and shows up to witness the horror of the suffering of her son. She is revered and to this day many pray to her for help.

Now meet our third woman, Sarah Addison Pollard. She was born in Bloomfield, Iowa in 1862. Early on Sarah demonstrated some of her power, when, not caring for the name, Sarah, changed it to Adelaide. She was educated in Denmark, Iowa; Valparaiso, Indiana; at the Boston School of Oratory; and the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois. She taught in Chicago, and at the Christian and Missionary Alliance Training School in New York.

One of Adelaide’s deepest desires was to travel to Africa as an evangelist. She had set her heart on this with all the determination of someone who has a gift, a light to shine and a passion for helping others. But when the money wasn’t coming in to fund her aspirations she attended an evening prayer meeting. Listening to an elderly woman pray, Adelaide had a powerful shift in her understanding of God and herself. Instead of praying for God to do this or that or give her blessings, the older woman simply prayed to understand God’s will for her life. Stunned, Adelaide went home and looked up the story of Jeremiah and the potter’s wheel.

Then I went down to the potter’s house,



and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so, he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. - Jeremiah 18:3,4



Adelaide, as many of us, had got the cart before the horse. As Hestia knew, her task as a light bearer was not about her and her plans, but rather about the fire of love burning within her and the light she gave to others, wherever she was.

That evening Adelaide wrote all the stanzas of what would become a well-known hymn, *Have Thine Own Way, Lord*. Adelaide would continue her education and eventually went to

Africa, as well as Scotland. In 1934 she was invited to speak at a conference in New Jersey. She became ill and died of a ruptured appendix. She was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, Fort Madison, Iowa.

*Have Thine own way, Lord!
Have Thine own way!
Search me and try me,
Master, today!
Whiter than snow, Lord,
wash me just now,
As in Thy presence humbly I bow.*

Finally, we turn to the pioneer and perfecter, Jesus, and his relationship to earthly and heavenly power. The Rev. William Ottis III observes, “As a matter of pure supernatural strength, Jesus always had the power to wipe out the armies of the Roman empire that were oppressing his people. . . The beauty of the narrative is his choice to restrain his power and say instead: I will bleed. I will hurt, and I will die. . . Jesus restrained his power, not to show weakness or accept humiliation, but because it was the only way to achieve a greater good.”



To yield, to restrain and divest oneself of power on behalf of one's enemies and persecutors releases a mysterious depth of faith and strength of spirit. This mystery is the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection. Holiness is not a personal achievement. It's an ache, a yearning emptiness you discover in yourself. Instead of trying to get rid of the pain, you accept and embrace the sobbing child within yourself. Your emptiness now holds, the burning fire of love, for it is Christ within you who is the hope of joy and everlasting life.

To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Colossians 1: 27

This age of conflict, chaos, and uncertainty is calling us to extend our roots and expand the breadth of our embrace to include the broken hearted, angry, sobbing children within and around us all.

...African Americans have created and still sustain civil rights and Black Power movements, striving to recognize the humanity of all, even the people who disregard them. There is a depth of spirituality in that choice that is deeper than any doctrine. In that choice we feel the sacred.

William Otis Moss, III, *Dancing in the Dark*, 43-44

Those with power and privilege have much to learn from those who have been denied power. The strength of soul and courage of the ones we seek to help teaches us how to break the curse of *an eye for an eye* with the sacrificial love and power of Christ within us. We cling to our perceptions and beliefs, as our egos anxiously pace with the need to do something, anything. Our own doubt and fear blocks the flow of God's will to move through our wills and mold and form us for sacred purposes. We fail to see that those we seek to help and heal will heal us too.



Have thine own way Lord,

Have thine own way.

wounded and weary, help me I pray.

Power, all power, surely is Thine.

Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.

As Kirk Byron Jones writes, “What’s in you is greater than what is against you. We have an opportunity to choose our real power, which is the power and freedom to choose the path we will take. Do not quench the fire of light, love, truth, and justice within you!

Yield. Yield a little more. Pray with the monks, “In your will is our peace.” Show up with your fire and flame and your willingness to understand God’s will for your life. And let Christ carry you all the way home.

PRAYER

Here I am starting another day.

*The sticky shreds of dreams about
attempting impossible tasks*

cling to me.

*Help me see through my hazy illusions
to you with the holes in your hands.*

Love, bind me to this fire.

-Loretta F Ross

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Here are some questions to ponder, whatever your gender identification may be: Who has power over your spirit? What is your relationship to power – your own power and the power of others? What forms of power attract you - money, prestige, education, possessions? In what areas do you feel powerless? Do you ever give away power to determine your worth to others?

Pick one of these questions to consider for a few days. You may sit in silence with a question or take it for a walk with you. Which of the stanzas of *Have Thine Own Way Lord* included in this issue of Holy Ground speak to you? Do your worries about the future and concerns about the past keep you from being present to God and God’s will in the present? How has God helped you understand what God desires from you?

How does it feel for you to allow yourself to be formed and reformed by God?



SANCTUARY UPDATE

I am keeping busy contacting potential publishers with my new book.

I am sending out query letters and book proposals. It is a bit like tossing the book into an abyss. One hopes a hand will reach out, or an eagle soaring by would grasp it in its claws and drop it at the door of an acquisitions editor. One really must entrust it all to the will of God. Whatever happens God is good and each day brings new possibilities.

*There is no hope but hope in you.
There is no word to catch the claw
of crow or trap you in rusty cages
of meaning.*

*Oh, vast solitude Oh voluminous
silence wrap us in the soft folds of
your will.*

“ Not all powers are spectacular. Sometimes the hardest power is the power to master the power of yielding. I am here when all else fails, when all the other mighty gods have gone off to war, I am all that is left. Home. Hearth. I am the last Olympian. ”

-Hestia in *The Last Olympian*,
a novel by Rick Riordan

THE Praying Life

A BLOG ABOUT CONTEMPLATIVE LIVING

Stay current with Sanctuary news.
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resources. Catch up on earlier editions of
Holy Ground as well as recent ones.

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<http://www.theprayinglife.wordpress.com>

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Loretta F Ross on Facebook, Instagram.**

And if social media is not your thing, just email
info@fromholyground.org or call 785-230-0365.

Thank You!

Holy Ground readers are amazing. Thank you
for your generous support of this Wayside
Fruit Stand. The Sanctuary and its programs
are open to serve a wide range of people. And
we have a great assortment of the fruits of the
Spirit ready for you.

Stories From Those We Serve

*I simply can't tell you how much your words on
prayer blessed me this morning. You write more
beautifully than anyone and I needed to read your
eloquent words.*

- Janet

*Thanks, you really helped me over a rough spot last
session*

- Mike

**Do you have a story or experience over the past
35-40 years related to the Sanctuary ministry?
If so we would love to hear from you and share it
with others.**



Give over thine own willing, give over thine own running, give over thine own desiring to know or be anything, and sink down to the seed which God sows in thy heart and let that be in thee, and grow in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee, and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that and loves that and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is his own portion.

Isaac Penington (1617-1679)



Holy Ground is published by The Sanctuary Foundation for Prayer.

...the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Revelation 22:2-3

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