

Depth in my inner self :: surrender at midday

Awaken me to your presence
Alert me to your love,
Affirm me in your peace.

Open to me your way
Reveal to me your joy,
Enfold me in your warmth.

For my heart is ready,
Holy One, my heart is ready.

... silence ...

From Psalm 107

Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to an inhabited town;
5 hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.

6 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and he delivered them from their distress;
7 he led them by a straight way,
until they reached an inhabited town.



8 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.

9 For he satisfies the thirsty, and the hungry he fills with good things.

a personal issue:

in what ways am I thirsty?

what do I see when I look into my depths?

fear of my own darkness; my fear of being in the wrong, or of not looking good; of failing, of dying, of loneliness ... fear of what others think.

how do I handle my fear?

The sacred gaze:

Focus on the painting in front of you. Let it engage you – affect you.

What do you see? Let your eyes travel over the whole of the image – and then rest where your attention draws you most.

Where do you feel invited to stop? Where do you feel least invited to dwell?

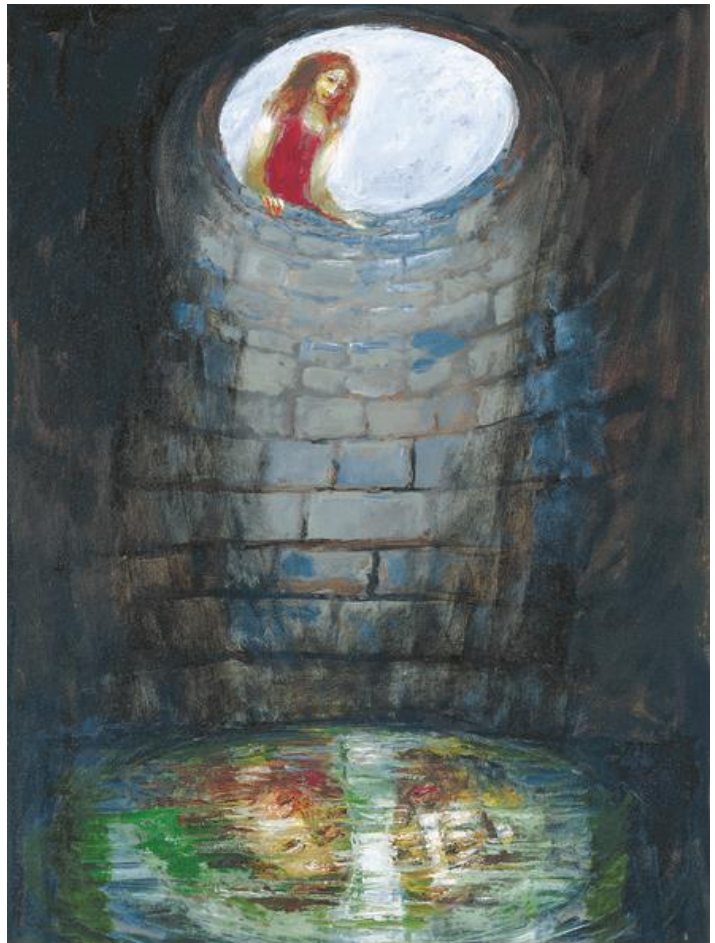
Where do you feel comfortable? Where do you feel uncomfortable?

What happens to you as you contemplate the painting? How do you feel?

What inner images might it evoke? What memories come up?

Do you like the painting? The colours? The subject matter? Why?

Give the painting a name which is a feeling word (anger, joy, peace, hurt..)



As you continue to look at the painting, allow a (different) story or conversation to emerge. . . .

What might have happened?

What is happening?

What is going to happen?

How might this story reflect your life in some way?

Now let go of the immediate engagement with the painting. Consciously notice your breath flow through you – and relax.

Reflection:

Where – perhaps – in this image has God visited me?

How – maybe – has the image helped me to hold before God some aspect of the self that is me?

What has begun to be known? What has become visible? What do I need to revisit?

What is stirring in me as I pray? Am I consoled, troubled, left cold?

I imagine Jesus himself standing or sitting at my side, and share my feelings with him.

Am I able to surrender to God's view of me as a beloved person on whom God's favour rest?

And a couple of years later?

Something was going on in Samaria in the decade of the thirties (30+ CE)

Check it out in Acts 8.14-17, 25.

What are the chances that the conversation at the well was often referred to? In fact, was that where John (the Gospel writer) heard the detail of the conversation – from the woman herself, now a key player in the growing faith community there?

I wonder what she saw in the depths of the well I wonder what gifts or calling flowed from that?

Response:

Feel invited to speak to the Holy One about how the painting affects you.

You may wish to respond with simple art materials spontaneously – using colour, line, form, texture...

A Prayer to Own your Beauty

O God,
help me
to believe
the truth about myself
no matter
how beautiful it is.

(Macrina Wiederkehr)

...

Rest

Sit quietly with God, at rest in the presence of the One who loves you. Do not worry that you may appear to be doing 'nothing'. Trust that the Holy Spirit is at work in the depths of your spirit, deepening your faith. Let the image and its message move from your head to your heart to dwell there in peace-full silence.

May the gentleness and strength of the Holy One
The delight and vulnerability of thy Way of Christ
And the graceful mystery of the life-giving Spirit
Be with you now and always. AMEN