



Ash Wednesday

"Let us be reconciled with God."

We can begin our journey through contemplating the places in our lives and in the world where separation and division are experienced... the need for reconciliation; where sharp contrasts cause pain. We become silent and allow ourselves to be affected by reality.

Video: [In Our Darkness](#). Photos by Ugur Gallen

"We implore you on Christ's behalf:

Be reconciled to God (...)

As God's co-workers we urge you not to receive God's grace in vain. Or he says, 'In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.' I tell you, now is the time of God's favour, and now is the day of salvation."

(cf. 2 Cor 5, 20-6, 2)



Journeying in Reconciliation

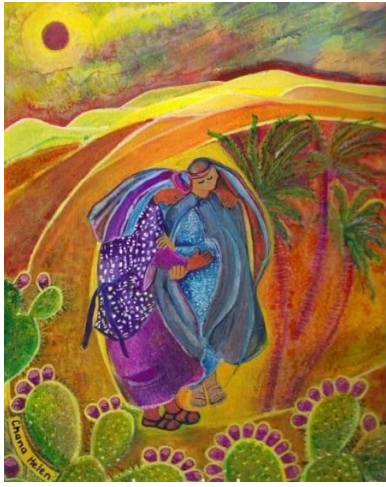
Naomi and Ruth are two women from different backgrounds who, at different times in their lives, embark together on the adventure of creating hope. Ruth offers Naomi a faithfulness for better and for worse, a faithfulness that knows no turning back. (*Ruth 1, 16*). Together they trust in *the One who deals kindly with them*; they will help each other to live at peace in a time of loss and brokenness for both of them. Along the journey, they will learn that to be helped means to be human.

Naomi also offers support to Ruth, who is a foreigner and alone, and says to her: **"Daughter, I want to find you a place where you can live happily."** (*Ruth 3:2*). Is this not the greatest tragedy of millions of human beings in our world, that they have no place to call home, where they can work, and where they can see their children grow up without fear? This is what God puts into Naomi's mouth, in the winter of her life, what he himself longs for each of his creatures: to find them a place where they can live with dignity and meaning.

Beginning the season of Lent with the memory of these women shows us the *God-who-accompanies-uncertainty*. They have become **companions of hope in the midst of fragility**. They have discovered that a full life is a life that is shared and connected, where no one is a stranger to anyone else, where every creature has a place and a life worth living.

"Let us be reconciled to God...now is the right time." (2 Cor 5:20).

What good news does this invitation to reconciliation and hope bring us?



How can our life become a space for reconciliation?

What do we learn from the way Ruth and Naomi are bonded?

As Lent begins, how do I open my heart, what do I want to share, what do I need to ask for?

We are grateful for the relationships that sustain and encourage us in this time...

Song: [Ser hoy tu corazón](#), (*Being your Heart today*), Cristobel Fones

We make our own this prayerful poem by **Madeleine Delbrêl**, which is a plea, a desire for deep communion with each person; the longing to live in the concrete, in the everyday, those areas where everything can be reconciled in love.

*"You have brought us tonight to this café
where you wanted to be You in us for a few hours...
And because your eyes awaken in ours,
because your heart opens in our heart,
we can feel how our fragile love opens up inside us
like a splendid rose,
it deepens like an immense and welcoming refuge
for all these people whose life throbs around us...
it becomes deeper like an immense and welcoming haven
for all these people whose very lives pulsate around us..."*

*Then the café is no longer a profane place,
a corner of the earth that seemed
to turn its back on you [...].
Draw them all to you in us...
Draw them into us so that here they may find you.
Open our hearts wider so that all may have room."*



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