

Women's Sunday 2010 we decided to focus on the feminine aspect of God and the need for balance with feminine and masculine energy. You will see in our service there are men and women participating in the service.

In this meditation there are 4 readings for you to contemplate.

The first is **Women's Wisdom**

From Grandmothers Counsel the World,

The second is the scripture of Proverbs and John blended together.

The third is from God is a Woman and She is Growing Older by Margaret Moers Wenig;

The fourth is a reading by Kathleen Norris from her book Amazing Grace.

"Today's Civilization has been cut loose from the essential roots that formed humanity," says Grandmother Bernadette. Those roots, the Grandmothers say, reach deep into the Sacred Universe, the domain of the Spirit where feminine and masculine energies are in perfect balance and harmony, where the unity and connectedness inherent in all sentient beings is revealed. However, in today's world the power of the feminine – the most potent, loving, and creative of forces on earth – is severely suppressed, and if not again honored the imbalance of male and female energies could cause the destruction of humanity, if not the Earth Herself. This female power that sustains the Earth and all Her inhabitants, and that is so essential for the survival of the planet, resides within each one of us, man and woman alike.

(Liz – red)

Depending on our spiritual or religious devotion or our culture, the Divine Feminine may come to us as Shakti, with the electrifying vitality that ignites the flame of life.

(Jacque – blue)

She may come to us as the Virgin of Guadalupe or the Blessed Mother Mary, whose gentle hearts have an infinite capacity for enduring grief and sorrow, as She comforts the most humble, modest, and often-forgotten of our brothers and sisters.

She may manifest as the radiant light being, Tara, Mother of the Victorious Ones whose infinite wisdom fills an infinite sphere.

Or Quan Yin, the bodhisattva of infinite compassion.

She may speak to us as the Black Madonna, the embodiment of all that is sacred on this Earth.

She may come to us as White Buffalo Calf Woman, who brought to the Lakota people their sacred pipe, with which they walk like a living prayer, a bridge between the sacred beneath and the sacred above.

She may enter our bodies through communion with Her plants as She heals, nourishes, and transforms us.

Her manifestations are not confined by any specific people, place, belief, or time.

We meet Her in meditation, prayer and visions, in the person sitting next to us, in our mothers and fathers, in the children we love, and within ourselves.

And others meet Her through us.

Kathleen Norris writes in Amazing Grace

I found this excerpt from Kathleen Norris to ring true to experience. How many of us have wondered, "Can I be a feminist and a Christian?" after learning about all the misogynist practices inherent in our Judeo-Christian heritage. It is important to

interpret not only our scripture with suspicion but also easy feminist assumptions. And in the suspicion of interpretation there needs to be a healthy dose of trust and belief enough to nourish a developing faith. Can we learn to trust our own experience and our own true voice?

This is the key in a religion based on a human incarnation of the divine, when ideology battles experience, it is fallible ordinary experience that must win. It was the false purity of ideology I had to reject, in order to move toward the realistic give-and-take of community. I could still employ heavy-duty theology as a useful guide to navigating Christian seas.

But I could also learn to look to the strong women of the congregation,

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But I could also learn to look to the strong women of the congregation,

who often seemed to incarnate a central paradox of the Christian faith: that while the religion has often been used as an agent of women's oppression,

it also has had a remarkable ability to set women free.

The questions that had stymied many for so long – is Jesus a male savior?

If so, can a male savior be of use to women?

Or could we hear Jesus' words addressed to us, personally that we might use them for our own good, and the good of others?

It suddenly seemed possible, that within this religion is a range of female strength, and a feminism we can live with.

In a religion centered on what is in Christian convention termed a "living Word,"

even our ridiculously fallible language becomes a lesson in how

God's grace works

despite and even through our human frailty.

AMEN

Proverbs 8:22-31

The Lord created me at the beginning of his work,
In the beginning was the Word,

the first of his acts long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God

When there were no depths I was brought forth,
when there were no springs abounding with water.
Before the mountains had been shaped,
before the hills, I was brought forth—
When he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world's first bits of soil.
When he established the heavens, I was there,
when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
when he made firm the skies above,
when he established the fountains of the deep,
when he assigned to the sea its limit. So that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker;
All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being.
What has come into being in him was life,
and the life was the light of all people. (all)

and I (wisdom) was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

(staggered)

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

(blended)

But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.

**God is a Woman and She is Growing Older by
Margaret Moers Wenig**

Our liturgy shows us God as an immovable rock
As a shield

As the commander of a host of angels
As a shepherd
God as Father
And God as King

All of these images are metaphors or allusions, never meant
to be taken literally
Merely meant to point us toward something we can
imagine but never really see.

Today, I invite you to imagine God as a woman
A woman who is growing older.
God is a woman, and she is growing older.
She moves more slowly now
She cannot stand erect
Her hair is thinning
Her face is lined
Her smile no longer innocent
Her voice is scratchy
Her eyes tire
Sometimes she has to strain to hear.
God is a woman and she is growing older.

But she remembers everything.

God sits down in her kitchen
Opens the Book of Memories on her table
And begins turning the pages
And God remembers.

There, there is the world when it was new
And humanity when it was young...
As she turns each page of the book she smiles as she sees
before her like so many dolls in a department store window,
All the beautiful colors of our skin and all the varied shapes
and sizes of the gardens we have planted,
The skyscrapers we have built, the stories we have told, and
the ideas we have spun.

"They now can fly faster than the winds I send," She says to
herself,
"and they sail across the waters that I gathered into sea.
They even visit the moon that I set in the sky. But they
rarely visit me, she thinks.

Then there are the pages she would rather skip,
The things she wishes she could forget.
Her children spoiling the home she created for us, brothers
killing each other or putting each other in chains...she
remembers seeing us racing down dangerous roads and
being unable to stop us. She remembers the dreams she had
for us
Dreams we never fulfilled
And she remembers the names
So many names, inscribed in the book,

Names of all the children she has lost through war and

Famine
Earthquake and accident
Disease and suicide...
And God remembers the many times she sat by a bedside
weeping that she could not halt the process she herself set
into motion.

God is home alone tonight
Turning the pages of her book.
"Come home," she wants to say to us, "come home."
Even if we don't realize it, God knows that our busyness is
just an excuse.
She knows that we avoid returning to her because we don't
want to look
Into her age-worn face.
She understands that it is hard for us to face a God who no
longer looks the way she looked to us when we were
children.
She understands that it is hard for us to face a God who
disappointed our childhood expectations.
She did not give us everything we wanted;

We avoid going home to protect ourselves from our
disappointment and to protect her.
We don't want her to see the disappointment in our eyes.
But God knows it is there

What if we did?

I imagine that God would usher us into her kitchen seat us
at the table, pour two cups of tea.
So we fill up an hour with our chatter
Words, words, so many words,
Until finally, she touches her finger to her lips and says,
Shh. Be still. Shhh.
Then she pushes back her chair and says,
Let me have a good look at you
And she looks.
And in a single glance, God sees us both newly born and as
dying;
Coughing and crying.

She sees us as we were when we were young,
when we thought there was nothing we could not do.
She sees us in our middle years
When our energy was unlimited
When everyone needed us and we had not time for sleep.
God sees us in our later years;
When we no longer felt so needed
She sees us sleeping alone in a room that once slept two.

God sees things about us we have forgotten
And things we do not yet know

After many hours at sitting and drinking tea
We are transported back to a time before memory
when Our fever wouldn't break
And we couldn't sleep
Exhausted from crying but unable to stop.
She picked us up and held us against her bosom
And walked with us.

Ah yes, that's where we learned to wipe the tears.
It was from her we learned how to comfort a crying child.
How to hold and sing to someone in pain.

Then God reaches out and touches our arm.
You will always be my child. She says
But you are longer a child
Grow old along with me
The best is yet to be
The last of life
For which the first was made.

We are growing older, as God is growing older.
How much like her we have become.
For us, growing older means facing death.
God holds our face in her two hands and whispers
Do not be afraid.
I will be faithful to the promise I made to you when you
were young.
I will be with you
Even to your old age I will be with you
Grow old along with me...

The face that time has marked no longer looks only frail to
us now
But wise as well
For we understand that God knows those things only the
passage of time can teach.
That one can survive the loss of a love
That one can feel secure even in the midst of an ever
changing world
That there can be dignity in being alive even when every
bone aches.

God's movements no longer seem slow to us now but strong
and intent
She sees everything there is to see
Understands everything she hears and touches all that lives
Now we understand why we were created to grow older.
Each added day of life
Each new year
Makes us more like God
Who is ever growing older.