

Contemporary: Stubborn Blessing by Jan Richardson

Don't tell me no.
I have seen you
feed the thousands,
seen miracles spill
from your hands
like water, like wine,
seen you with circles
and circles of crowds
pressed around you
and not one soul
turned away.

Don't start with me.

I am saying
you can close the door
but I will keep knocking.
You can go silent
but I will keep shouting.
You can tighten the circle
but I will trace a bigger one
around you,

around the life of my child
who will tell you
no one surpasses a mother
for stubbornness.

I am saying
I know what you
can do with crumbs
and I am claiming mine,
every morsel and scrap
you have up your sleeve.
Unclench your hand,
your heart.
Let the scraps fall
like manna,
like mercy
for the life
of my child,
the life of
the world.

Don't you tell me no.

For the Word of God in poetry and scripture,
for the Word of God among us,
for the Word of God within us.

We give thanks.

Gospel: A reading from the Gospel of Matthew 15:21-28

Jesus left there and departed for the district of Tyre and Sidon. It happened that a Canaanite woman living in that area came and cried out to Jesus, "Heir to the House of David, have pity on me! My daughter is horribly demon possessed."

Jesus gave her no word of response. The disciples came up and repeatedly said to him, "Please get rid of her! She keeps calling after us."

Finally Jesus turned to the woman and said, "My mission is only to the lost sheep of the House of Israel."

She then prostrated herself before him with the plea, "Help me, Rabbi!"

He answered, "But it isn't right to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs."

"True, Rabbi," she replied, "but even the dogs get to eat the scraps that fall from the table."

Jesus then said in reply, "Woman, you have great faith! Your wish will come to pass." At that very moment her daughter was healed.

For stories of grace and acceptance,

We give thanks!