

## Friday of the Tenth Week in Ordinary Time Lectionary: 363

June 12, 2020 +

*1 Kings 19:9A, 11-16*

*Psalms 27:7-8A, 8B-9ABC, 13-14*

*Matthew 5:27-32*

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There's no denying that the Gospel, the good news of Jesus the Christ, is political. It touches into not only our own experience of the Sacred, but also into the deepest cares and concerns of all of creation. It touches into how we are – or are not – in right relationship with others.

If we were a more vocal worship community, I imagine I'd hear a lot of "amens" after this Gospel passage in which Jesus makes it clear "that no one should be regarded as a sex object." Biblical scholar Amy Jill-Levine writes, "The burden is placed on the man: women are not held to be responsible for enticing men into sexual misadventures."<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to believe that two millennia later, we are still struggling with our insistence on making women objects and maintaining a patriarchal system that not only creates disadvantages for women, but that makes violence against women "not a big deal."

Yesterday, the Louisville Metro Police Department released the incident report from the night that Breonna Taylor was killed by police officers while she was in her own bed. Breonna, a 26-year-old Black woman, was shot at least eight times in her sleep. Yet, in the section of the report meant for listing her injuries, it simply says, "none."<sup>2</sup> The officers who killed her have not been arrested nor have they even been fired from their jobs.

It was not even worth it in the report to acknowledge that this beautiful Black body had been pierced eight times by bullets.

When I take this into my heart, I feel like Elijah from our first reading wanting to take shelter within a cave. I want to shelter myself from the heartbreak and the pain and the rage that I feel when I think of Breonna and how we, as a white patriarchal society, have treated her. I am part of that "we," and perhaps that's why so many of us seek shelter from the shock of our own realization of our complicity.

But what happens? God calls: "Go outside and stand on the mountain before the Lord; the Lord will be passing by."

Go outside of your cave, your shelter, your refuge. Go outside of your comfort zone. Go outside of your feeling of powerlessness. And stand.

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<sup>1</sup> Amy-Jill Levine, commentary on the gospel of Matthew in *Women's Bible Commentary*

<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.femestella.com/breonna-taylor-incident-report-released/>

When we are out of the cave standing in the light, we can see ourselves more clearly. We can see not only our inherent beauty and goodness, but also the ways in which we have made choices that have been harmful to ourselves and others. Sometimes we harm through action; sometimes through inaction; and sometimes it is the attitudes and prejudices that we harbor in our hearts.

As we enter into our individual and collective contemplative silence, let us image ourselves within that mountain cave. Let us listen for God's call to each of us ... to come out of the cave and stand.