Voices of Sisters
Spirituality



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An ancient Chinese proverb (once said by Mao Zedong) states that "women hold up half the sky." Well, the ancients gave us at least half of the sky. Perhaps credit is due for more than half.

The United States of America: Wars have been waged. Native Americans tortured and eliminated. Tribes moved further west so that white immigrants could have more room. Slaves brought to this country to do the hard work. Global warming denied. The poor taxed to help the rich. Fortunes spent to protect fossil fuels. A government overthrow attempted.

We just might need more of a woman's touch in this country.

Read any high school history book and search for evidence of contributions by women. Good luck.

It might be time to take another look.

Jochebed, the mother of Moses, took a great risk and saved her son's life. We know the rest of that story.

Ruth left her homeland and went with Naomi, and has been a model of faithfulness ever since.

Without Mary of Nazareth there would be no Jesus. What then?

Martha fed Jesus and gave him a place to rest, but her sister Mary seems to get all the press. Can you imagine a tired and hungry Jesus giving the Sermon on the Mount?

The star, in my view, of the "Superstar" story, is Mary Magdalene. She stood with Jesus and never left his side. She was loyal. Never abandoned him. The foot of the cross. The empty tomb. The first person that Jesus spoke to on that glorious Sunday. I saw a cartoon once where a group of men said to her right after the resurrection, "Thanks Mary, but we'll take it from here." Not a surprise.

Let us not forget the women who, from scratch, founded the religious orders that continue to educate and nurse to health more people than can be counted. And the sisters today who march for peace, petition the government, welcome the stranger, eradicate human trafficking, feed the hungry, clothe the naked and house the homeless. Where would the world be without them?

Advertisement

Marian Anderson (1897-1993) was barred from singing in Washington D.C.'s Constitution Hall because she was Black. Then-First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt instead helped enable Anderson to perform at the Lincoln Memorial. According to the website for the Marian Anderson Museum and Historical Society, the performance on Easter Sunday in 1939 was attended by 75,000.

Rosa Parks (1913-2005) did not lead a march or speak to a national audience. She just refused to get out of her seat on that bus. As she said, "People always say that I didn't give up my seat because I was tired, but that isn't true. I was not tired physically, or no more tired than I usually was at the end of a working day. … No, the only tired I was, was tired of giving in." Her name and spirit were major reasons for the success of the civil rights movement.

Gladys West (1930-) was instrumental in creating GPS. You know where we would be without her. Well. You know. Lost.

Mary Oliver (1935-2019) with her lovely words, gifted us with a new view and a new understanding of the beauty of our world. Giving us a moment of serenity in a busy day.

Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1933-2020) was the first Jewish woman and the second woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. She was an icon of progressivism and a staunch supporter of equal rights. As a result she was lovingly dubbed "the Notorious RBG."

Madeleine Albright (1937-2022) was the first woman to serve as U.S. secretary of state. She carried out her duties with a strong mind, a straight back and a generous heart.

Dolly Parton (1946-) did not spend the dollars she has earned to build a spaceship, strap in and take off to take a look at the heavens. No. She continues to buy millions of books for children all over the country. Mailed to their home every month. Neither race nor religion a factor.

And of course, Kamala Harris, (1964-) the first woman vice president of the United States. But for sure not the last.

All the unsung heroines, the mothers who created safe and loving homes and raised their children to be kind and generous.

The teachers who worked to teach, to form and guide the bright ones but saw, really saw, those who were close to sinking. The grieving, the lonely, the frightened, the hungry and the dirty. They put their arms around them and pulled them to the surface. Perhaps saving lives. Gold medal worthy.

Too many brave and courageous and generous women to list here. Some common. Some accomplished. Some famous. All valued.

Take all of the women off the earth. Cede all of the sky. In 100 years, the sun is still shining. But no people.

Women have not been recognized nearly enough for our role in actually serving and saving civilization.

We are every age, every color, every ethnicity, every religion. Our praises will only be sung if we do it ourselves. Together. What a powerful force for good it would be if we stood arm in arm, heart to heart and showed the world the worth of our efforts. Nothing short of glory.

So, move over, guys. We're on the move, and we are gaining ground. Or should I say sky. So surrender at least half of your part before we take it.

It truly belongs to us.