



## 2<sup>nd</sup> PART: January - March, 2025 “Returning to the Roots”

### January, 2025

- **Song:** Come back to me <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SJ20I-UhTec>
- **Biblical Reading:** Ruth 1, 6-16
- **Reflection:**

***Take decisive action in challenging times: make choices, return or leave, say farewell, and reclaim your freedom. Sometimes, letting go is necessary to regain the power to choose.***

Naomi recognizes that it is time for her to take the initiative, which can be encapsulated in the concept of "return," a term that appears twelve times (1:6-22). Returning means returning to the place from which one left. But the content of this verb is not the same for each of the three women. For Naomi, returning means leaving Moab and going back to Bethlehem, her homeland, her roots, and her God. In contrast, for Orpah and Ruth, it means returning to their father's house and remaining in Moab.

The first step towards change is to "go out" and start something new. Remaining stagnant in desolation is not an option. As the scripture notes, *"In the company of her two daughters-in-law, she left the place where she lived and began her return to the country of Judah"* (1:7).

This "going out" parallels the Exodus story, where God has visited his people and given them bread (1:6) that prompts their journey. Trust in God and the need for sustenance drive them forward. They have among themselves the ties of friendship and kinship. Despite being single women, they are active participants in their own destinies, with the ability to choose, love, and be loved.



*"Saying goodbye"* is a crucial step in opening yourself up to new possibilities. It means letting go, releasing the past, and not clinging to what life no longer offers. By opening your hands and bidding farewell to what has been taken from you—whether willingly or not—you have the chance to accept it freely, even if it is painful. This is the challenge facing the three women.



They have to say goodbye to what until now identified them: their roles as wives of the house they lived in, the land they were connected to, and the relationships that bound them. Must they truly relinquish all of this?

Naomi invites her daughters-in-law to reclaim their freedom (1:8-15). She tells them they can return to their homes, rebuild their lives, and find new husbands and homes—essentially, the opportunities that society offers for establishing their identities. She blesses them with God's favour.

The decision is difficult, and each woman must take control of her own life and make a choice.

Naomi, out of love, does not wish to manipulate her daughters-in-law or give them false hope. She loves them and would rather choose to face her own loneliness and poverty than drag them into a future she believes will be bleak. She lays bare the challenges of her situation: she has nothing to offer them, choosing her is giving up their future, for she cannot provide new husbands or children, and furthermore, she feels that God has abandoned her. (1:11-13).

Because they are free individuals, they must make their own choices, though it involves relinquishing certain things. This is the essence of making a choice—you can't have everything. Ruth, despite the sacrifices involved, reaffirms her commitment to stay with her mother-in-law, saying, "Do not insist that I leave you or turn back from following you" (1:16).

- **Questions:** During this time we are invited to return to our roots, reconnect with the truest, the most authentic, God in us...
  - *What resonates within you from this text?*
  - *What do I need to let go of to make that path? What to say goodbye to? What do I need to embrace?*



## February, 2025

- **Song:** "I come up from the desert" by Debora Santamaría RJM

### Subo del desierto

Subo del desierto  
apoyada en mi amado.  
Subo del desierto  
porque Tú me has encontrado.  
Subo del desierto  
cuando entiendo Tu lenguaje,  
cuando pierdo el miedo  
a sentirte tan cercano.  
Mientras yo te hablaba  
de rupturas, soledades,  
no decías nada  
simplemente me abrazabas  
ahora que te encuentro  
habitando mi silencio,  
vamos de la mano  
no hace falta las palabras.

*No insistas más, en que me aleje de ti,  
donde tu vayas yo iré, donde vivas viviré  
Tu tierra será mi tierra, Tu Dios es mi Dios,  
donde mueras yo moriré, quiero vivir tu ley.*

Mientras yo te hablaba  
de rupturas, soledades,  
no decía nada  
simplemente te abrazaba  
ahora que me encuentras  
habitando tu silencio,  
vamos de la mano  
no hacen falta las palabras.

I come up from the desert  
leaning on my beloved.  
I come up from the desert  
because You have found me.  
I come up from the desert  
when I understand Your language,  
when I lose the fear  
of feeling You so close.  
While I was talking to you  
about breakups, loneliness,  
you didn't say anything,  
you just hugged me  
now that I find you  
inhabiting my silence,  
we go hand in hand,  
words are not necessary.

*Don't insist any longer,  
that I move away from you,  
where you go I will go, where you live I will live  
Your land will be my land, Your God is my God,  
where you die I will die, I want to live your law.*

While I was talking to you  
about breakups, loneliness,  
I didn't say anything, I just hugged you  
now that you find me inhabiting your silence,  
we go hand in hand,  
words are not necessary.

- **Bible Reading:** Ruth 1, 16-18
- **Reflection:**

***Embark on a journey to a new land, chosen out of love,  
where I can learn to live anew.***

In making this choice, Ruth gives up her own people, culture, religion, and family to join a new people, culture, religion, and family that belong to the woman she loves. She wishes to embrace these new spaces, adopt these beliefs, and become part of this new family as her own.



This is the miracle of love: stepping beyond one's familiar "self" with its known references and paths, and expanding it to include the references and paths of another. It involves letting go of one's previous belongings to live by new references rather than erasing one's identity, but enriches it.

The strength of "you" or "we" liberates the individual ego and reveals the depth of one's truth and the ability to love with a devotion that even death cannot break: "*Wherever you go... wherever you live... your people... your God... Only death can separate us.*" Such a bold, risky decision can only be driven by love (1:15-17). Ruth demonstrates that love is about compassion, acknowledging one's own vulnerability while standing alongside another in their humanity, in that tender space where God's presence is felt and nurtured.

Ruth has the freedom to choose, and she desires to make this choice independently. She asks Naomi not to insist on her departure: "*Do not insist that I abandon you and separate myself from you*" (1:16).

Ruth commits to journeying with Naomi, fully aware of the risks involved. Her decision is driven by love, with no expectation of personal gain, and she sacrifices much to remain loyal and supportive to her mother-in-law, precisely now when she needs her most, in her time of need.



At this point, they confront a reality that is thrust upon them— they do not choose it, it is in front of them and they can only welcome, assume and transform it into a source of life.

Those who have spent significant time in a foreign land, understand this experience well. It involves more than just material displacement; it means a profound internal shift—opening oneself to new perspectives, other frames of references, adapting to different rhythms, to the rhythms of others, and letting go of familiar patterns. This process is not merely about giving up but about discovering enrichment in the unfamiliar. It is in these new experiences that one gains valuable insights and learn a different wisdom unknown to you before, realizing the worth of living alongside others with their own rhythms and perspectives. Although this learning is challenging and requires sacrifice, it ultimately forges a richer and more valuable identity over time.

- **Questions:** In this time, we are invited to make choices based on love and to make our love grow...
  - *What resonates within you from this text?*
  - *What life do you perceive today that has emerged from experiences of surrender and renunciation for love?*
  - *Looking at Ruth in her capacity to love, to what 'magis' do you feel invited?*



## March, 2025

- **Song:** Walk on Holy ground <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZFFCE8wsll>
- **Bible Reading:** Ruth 1, 18-22
- **Reflection:**

### ***Know how to live with and at the same time search for and define one's own identity. "Together they walked"***

"These two women, are at very different moments in their life, but they undertake the adventure of weaving hope together. Naomi offers shelter and confirmation to Ruth, and from her wisdom and life experience, she will accompany her in the process of her growth. Both women give each other protection, they strengthen themselves together, and they begin to walk with confidence that God will act, although they cannot yet guess how.

These two women, though at very different stages in their lives, embark on a shared journey of weaving hope together. Naomi provides refuge and reassurance to Ruth, and with her wisdom and experience, guides her through the process of seeking growth. In turn, both women offer each other protection and mutual strength, walking forward with confidence that God will act, even if they cannot yet see how.

Ruth supports Naomi by staying with her, forging a deep connection with her life, with a love for her people, her home, and her faith in her God (Ruth 1:16). She pledges her loyalty through both good and bad times, offering a commitment rooted in faith. Together, they place their trust in the God who shows kindness and blesses them.



They help each other unlock their inner strength amid their losses, learning the true value of affection and loyalty, and growing in resilience. They come to recognize the quiet presence of God—who, though seemingly absent, provides sustenance, blesses the land, sends rain, and raises Boaz as a mediator to ensure justice for vulnerable women.

They will walk with the support of each other, they remain attentive to the silent presence of God, much like what Hagar experienced in the harsh desert (Gen 16:14).



Throughout their journey, they discover that being helped is a fundamental part of being human. As women celebrate the birth of Ruth's son, they bless Naomi, saying, "*Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a kinsman-redeemer; may his name become renowned in Israel!*" (Ruth 4:14).

From this point forward, Ruth will no longer be seen as a "foreigner" but as a courageous woman who has become a part of the people of Israel, with her name included in the genealogy of Jesus. Together, Naomi and Ruth have become companions and symbols of hope during times of vulnerability and fragility. They have learnt that a truly abundant life is one of connection and shared experience, where no one is a stranger, and every person has a place and a life worth living. (*Naomi and Ruth, resilient and inspiring women for Advent - CJ blog*)

- **Questions:** Contemplating the path of these two women...
  - *What resonates within you from this text?*
  - *How have you felt accompanied by others in important moments of your life?*
  - *What persons/events affirm you in your deepest identity?*

