

Saturday 7/7: Morning

Let us pray.

Bless to me, O God, The earth beneath my foot,
Bless to me, O God, The path whereon I go;
Bless to me, O God, The thing of my desire;
Thou Evermore of evermore, Bless Thou to me my rest.
Bless to me the thing Whereon is set my mind`1Bless to me the thing
Whereon is set my love;
Bless to me the thing Whereon is set my hope;
O thou King of kings; Bless Thou to me mine eye!
- *Carmina Gadelica, Hymns and Incantations* collected by Alexander
Carmichael (Floris Books 2006)

I gave you this overview yesterday but allow me to recap a little. In mythology and in all great stories there is a phenomenon, a pattern, (most famously associated with Joseph Campbell) known as the **hero's journey**. The hero's journey is a very common template in literature. In all the great stories from the Odyssey to the Bible to the Hobbit to the Chronicles of Narnia to Harry Potter and Star Wars, the hero and heroine always follow a pattern: they leave home, have adventures, fight and win hard battles, learn things, and return home transformed. This pattern is universal.

Yesterday we began at home; We established that we must know who we are and whose we are so that when we hear the call, we are ready. We remembered Queen Emma of Hawai'i, so devoted to home.

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I; send me!"

We have begun a Heroine's Journey of our own. Today, I want to honor a woman who has been mentioned several times already at Triennial

Meeting, a woman who answered God's call to leave home and family to journey all over the world spreading the kingdom: Julia Chester Emery.

Miss Julia is the next heroine who will serve as a guidepost on our Heroine's Journey. She was born in Dorchester Mass in 1852 to Susan and Charles Emery, who was a sea captain. The Emery family were devout Episcopalians, and this grounding in the faith made a difference in their home and ultimately made a difference across the world. Several of the eleven Emery children became active in religious service. Two sons became priests. At least three daughters were involved in missionary work. When General Convention in 1871 passed legislation to organize a women's society, Mary Abbott Emery became its first corresponding secretary. Her sister Julia took over as Secretary of the Women's Auxiliary in 1876 when she was 24 years old.

Julia Chester Emery was National Secretary of the Women's Auxiliary, now called the Episcopal Church Women, from 1876 until 1916. Her 40 years of service was characterized by leaving home, following the call of God all over the world. In addition to much writing of letters and articles, Julia traveled to remote missions in the far east in the service of God. In addition, she visited every diocese and missionary district within the US.

Imagine what worldwide travel was like for a single, professional woman at the turn of the last century. Victorian-era values preferred separate spheres for men and women. Men were the public, vocal members of society, the politicians and professionals. The female sphere was primarily the world of childrearing, home-keeping. A woman could work in service, of course, but it was much better to be able to afford to hire someone else to do the work for you.

Even as women became more educated, they were still shut out of non-traditional professions and roles. It is so interesting to me that Miss Julia's work for the Women's Auxiliary of the Episcopal Church was actually

kind of non-traditional for a Victorian lady. Although I don't know that she was involved in women's suffrage, Miss Julia's life and work certainly spanned those years between the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 and all the way to 1920, when women were finally granted the right to vote. Her willingness to go out into the mission field must have brought her many adventures. She wrote that she went where God called her "with hope for enlargement of vision, opening up new occasions for service, acceptance of new tasks."

Julia Chester Emery's contributions to our world and to our beloved Episcopal Church cannot be overstated. She was a leader to get canonical status for deaconesses and of course was the founder of the United Thank Offering. She advocated for education, social issues, and leadership development for women. She is honored in the Episcopal calendar of saints on January 9.

Let us pray.

God of all creation, you call us in Christ to make disciples of all nations and to proclaim your mercy and love: Grant that we, after the example of your servant Julia Chester Emery, may have vision and courage in proclaiming the Gospel to the ends of the earth; through Jesus Christ our light and our salvation, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.