

Trusting Our Inner-Knowing: Hyacinth Day, May 6, 2014

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On May 6th, 1882, Janet Erskine Stuart stood beside a bed of blue hyacinths and, as the story goes, *the Word of the Lord came to her and she saw it all*. It was a day so important that Mother Stuart “kept” it every year for the remainder of her life.

When hearing the story or reading it in isolation, it is easy to say, oh, that only happens to saintly souls. How often we LONG for such clarity? How often we want to just KNOW God’s “Word” for us? How frequently we yearn to be sure of what God is asking of us, either in a particular situation or in our life? Does it *really* happen like that?

I think it is right to recall the context of Janet’s May 6th “event.” She had done her intellectual work regarding her life of faith; she had a routine prayer life, and she was in the process of developing a relationship with the God she desired desperately to know. She was READY, OPEN and POISED to hear God’s invitation. Moreover she was pondering her options. With all of those pieces in place, the God who surprises, did indeed gift Janet with the gestalt of deep inner knowing.

And, yet, what is so interesting to me is that Janet, being as human as the rest of us, STILL DOUBTED her experience! Within minutes she said, well, yes, but if this is REALLY, REALLY TRUE, God, put me on the prie-dieu. And, seemingly impossibly, as the story continues, she went into the convent chapel and “the nun who had just come (to the prie-dieu) . . . came to beg me to take it, saying she felt too ill to stay – so I did not doubt further.” (Goose bumps are appropriate at this moment!)

Oh my! I can almost hear Janet saying to herself, what I KNEW inside of me **WAS REALLY REAL!**

I think back on my retreats, the questions for God at key moments in my life, particular prayer experiences and the flashes of insight; the power and awe of my inner experiences of God! And yet ... the subsequent questions ... is this REAL? Am I imagining it? Is this God? There always seems to be a desire for exterior confirmation of our inner knowing!

Perhaps what Janet celebrated when she desired to look at hyacinths every May 6th was a **reminder of the TRUTH of the inner experience**. I am sure Janet was celebrating the power of God’s interior “Word” to her. But, I often like to think that she was **also reminding herself to TRUST the verity of the gestalt inner-knowing-moments**.

May we do the same!

