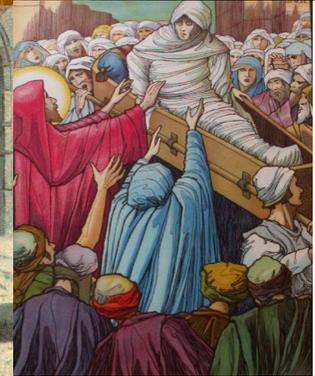
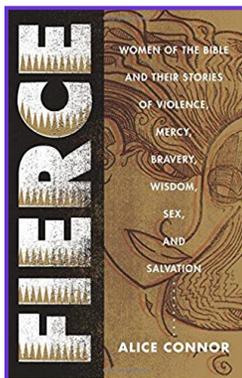


St. Mary's Church
Stone Harbor, New Jersey
 We Welcome You to Join Us
 For the Adult Forum and
 Worship
 All Year Long (well, almost)!



October 28, 2018
Fierce
Alice Connor
"Widows"

"Those
 Left
 Behind"



*Here are a few comments from Alice Connor
 on the subject of "Widows"*

It's hard to be alone when you're used to someone else's body being around. (p.98)

Some of the widows in the Bible mentioned by Alice Connor :

Widow of Zarephath (p.98) Widow from Nain (p.99) Anna (p.100)

Naomi, Ruth's mother (p.100) Eunice and Lois (p. 100) widow's mite (p.100)

Because a woman was considered property (bought and sold in marriage for livestock and trade agreements), once her husband died, she had no one required to take care of her – no one around to worry for her health or to inspire her work. (p.100)

Because widows (and orphans and foreigners) are stand-ins for everyone who is helpless and hopeless, they are themselves in need of care, and they are symbols of our willingness to look beyond our noses. (p.100)

Who wants a widow around, reminding everyone of the inevitability of death? (p.102)

Widows make us uncomfortable because they reveal our own closeness to death.

The widows in scripture are actual widows with actual stories but they're also metaphors for our own loneliness and loss. (p.103)

We are more than a community, we are necessary to one another. (p. 103)

...it is the vulnerable people of the world who show us our humanity... (p.104)

What insights about the Biblical widows (and more contemporary widows) mentioned by Alice Connor captured your attention?

continued on opposite side

When I recall the parishes I have served over the years, I wonder if some of them might have had to shut down if the widows failed to show up to - attend the Eucharist, prepare the Altar, arrange the Altar flowers, drop in their envelopes, serve on the Vestry, volunteer for Sunday “coffee pause,” run the church bazaar, work in the thrift shop, head committees...the list goes on. And they do it all...quietly.

Question: How might we as a parish let our widows and widowers know that we value them?

Alice Connor sets before us several widow stories from the Bible. It strikes me that two of these women demonstrated real courage. Neither the widow who showed hospitality to Elijah nor the widow who gave all she had to the temple treasury (her “mite”) could be described as prudent. A prudent person would reason that “charity begins at home.” The first widow could have turned Elijah away in order to take care of herself and her son, instead of using all her flour and oil to make a meal for a stranger (and a foreigner at that). Similarly, if the woman in the Gospel had been practical and prudent, she could have kept her coins, or at most, given only one of them to the temple treasury.

Question: What makes these widows “fierce”?
What lessons do you derive from these women?

As a widowed sociologist, I wanted to better understand widows’ experiences. I designed and carried out an exploratory study investigating how widows negotiate their new, and usually less valued role, in contemporary American society.

One of my first and most basic findings is that “widow” is a hated description. The women I spoke with found it anachronistic, conjuring up “a little old lady” image. Maybe widows had been little old ladies in the past, but not now.

When widows tried to reestablish some of their previous social activities, they did not always like what they found. Many felt betrayed by friends who were there for a week, and then “poof” — they were gone.

For religious widows, the church continued to feel like a village, with congregants acting like family in times of need. These widows felt embraced by a loving group and attuned to God

My most unexpected finding was that none of the widows I interviewed wanted to remarry. Their reasons fell into four categories: fear of losing another partner, wanting to keep their new-found freedom and independence, lack of interest in becoming a caretaker again, and worries about spousal abuse. For several upper-middle class women, who conducted their personal and social lives as a unit, the death of their spouses was so painful that they were unwilling to lose yet another husband. In another case, one minority, lower-income woman surprised herself when she realized she valued her new freedom so much that she was leery of considering remarriage an option, not expecting a second husband to allow her as much leeway.

(excerpt article “Suddenly Single,” by Professor Regina Kenen, The College of New Jersey, 7/5/2018)

Question: Was any of this surprising to you?



Date	“Fierce Women” and Page
November 4	<i>Jerusalem</i> p.107