

# MUSINGS

## Thoughts on the *Song of Songs*

Rosemary Ciaudelli Grace

This beautiful and mysterious collection of love poetry has intrigued scholars over the centuries and did not fail to do so at Mount Saint Agnes Theological Center for Women. While it is appreciated as a work on its own merits, there were other considerations, such as its place in scripture, and what the work looks like from a feminist perspective.

Several things enriched this course: a talented teacher who is able to weave together literature, visual art and music; a translation by Marcia Falk, who first heard the Song chanted in Hebrew and didn't think the English translations did it justice; and the insights of participants. It was fun during the slide sessions to pick out semi-hidden visual references to the text.

What interested me most was the question of why the Songs is in the Bible. I'm not sure which school of thought I would ascribe to, but I found this quotation from Rabbi Akiva powerful:

*The whole world is not worth the day on which the Song of Songs was given to Israel for all the writings are holy but the Songs of Songs is the holiest of the holy.*

Ze'ev Raban

