

Gifts of the Visitation Project by ACCW, 2021
Based on the book, *Gifts of the Visitation* by Denise Bossert

Session #12: Gifts of Prayer and Praise

Opening Quote:

“Praise is the ‘breath’ which gives us life, because it is intimacy with God, an intimacy that grows through daily praise.” Pope Francis

Scripture: *The Magnificat*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.

He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.

He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of his servant Israel
for he remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children forever.

Lk 1:46-55

Written Reflection:

Immediately upon the Visitation, Mary lifts up her song of praise, *The Magnificat*. Mary’s life seemed to be one of continuous praise for all the good things God had done. Mary continued to praise God throughout her life, even when witnessing her Son on the cross. Mary never took credit for what she had done—her obedience, her humility, her good works—but gave all praise to God. She is a remarkable example for each of us: Is my life marked by praise? Do I give praise to God daily? Do I make a habit of looking for the good things in my life, and then giving God credit—giving God praise? Do I give God praise when He works through me? What does my praise “look” like—singing, on my knees in silent prayer, walking in nature?

Video Witness:

Gifts of Prayer and Praise by Sheila and Carrie Rassman of Christ Our Hope Cluster, Holy Trinity Parish in Protivin.

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

In many ways we saved the best for last with this beautiful mother-daughter duo! Like Mary and Elizabeth, these two obviously love each other and praise the Lord together. Carrie, such a grace-filled young woman, noted that music is her and her mother’s “go-to form of prayer and praise.”

What is your “go-to” form of praise? Song? Silent prayer? Praise of beauty/of nature? Of recollecting each day on “the good” God has done in your life?

Carrie said her relationship with her mom has been strengthened “through song-leading, singing at funerals and sharing music with people at nursing homes and different places like that.” These two obviously share their gifts frequently for the glory of God. How do you share your gifts for God’s glory? Are you able to go where God leads you, whether a nursing home, a prison, or a funeral service?

This young woman, with wisdom beyond her years, exclaimed: “Singing is praying twice. It’s a gift given to be shared with other people in order to glorify the Lord, to sing and proclaim His goodness. ... Sometimes we don’t feel we’re adequate enough, like on Sunday morning, but I really do think the Holy Spirit is working through us to be able to proclaim and worship through music. Mary and Elizabeth had to feel that way also.” When have you felt inadequate to share your gifts? Name a time when it felt like the Holy Spirit was working through you for God’s glory. How is sharing our gifts giving praise to God? What do you think of the statement, “Singing is praying twice”?

Sheila commented on Mary and Elizabeth: “We just know that we do it for the glory of God. What we do for our neighbors, they did for the world.” And with the world we’re living in, Carrie adds: “In our world, music can get us through anything and elevate our worship to another level.” How can praise get us through today’s difficulties? How can daily praise keep our eyes focused on Jesus? Sing? Listen to praise and worship music? Take a walk and intentionally praise God for the beauty, especially in the little things? Pray *The Magnificat* each day in order to proclaim and praise—and to rejoice!

Sheila and Carrie conclude their witness by singing *The Magnificat*, which gives us a glimpse into their ministry—so simple, but goosebumps. Just listen, enjoy, and pray with them. How did you feel when listening to them? Had you heard this version of *The Magnificat* before? How will this remind you to pray daily with Mary to proclaim the greatness of the Lord?

Challenge:

Name one way you will incorporate praise into your daily prayer. Think of one way you will uplift another’s life through praise. Look for the good things in your life today, each day—and give praise.

Closing Prayer:

“Lord, give me a spirit of praise. Help me to see all the good things you have done in my life. Let me use everything within me to proclaim your greatness and to rejoice in all you have done for me. Help me to be like Mary—open to your will—giving praise no matter what is happening in my life. Help me to lift up your goodness through praise and worship. For your glory.”

Adapted from *Gifts of the Visitation*, Bossert.

Hail Mary, full of grace. The Lord is with you.
Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.