

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

Session #5: Gift of Humility

Opening Quote:

“The world tells us to seek success, power and money. God tells us to seek humility, service and love.” Pope Francis, Lent, 2019.

Scripture:

“During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, “Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”
Lk 1:39-45

Written Reflection:

C.S Lewis wrote, *“True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less.”* Humility describes our Blessed Mother to a tee. Mary humbled herself and said, “yes,” though she risked rejection—even death. She humbled herself to serve Elizabeth, though she traveled a long, perhaps dangerous, distance. Mary demonstrated humility when giving birth in a manger instead of a palace. Mary and Elizabeth continually humbled themselves before the Lord by saying, “Not my will, but Yours.” “Mary’s humility made her fully aware of the great work that God had done and was doing within her.” Bossert, p. 62

“Humility is a hand opening to God—a relaxing of the tightly squeezed fist that clings to all the false promises the world sets before us. Yes, humility is good. It is an open hand, a bent knee, a bowed head, a blessing poured out upon you. It’s a finger that lifts your chin and says, ‘You are mine, and I have always loved you. Walk in the path I planned for you when I created you in the hidden place of your mother’s womb.’” Gifts of the Visitation, Bossert, p. 71.

Video Witness:

Gift of Humility by Jean Biermann, Kathleen Hoffmann, Nancy Maher, Marlana Miller, Monica Robinson, and Susan Wardenburg, all of St. Jude Parish, Cedar Rapids, and Jennifer Francois and Jayne Rouse of St. Patrick, Cedar Rapids. (Lisa Budde of St. Jude was unable to participate due to “Grandma duties”).

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

Monica Robinson starts the conversation with an interesting comparison of their almost two-decades of friendship and geese: “Geese fly to a point. The head goose tires and falls back for a while, and someone else takes up the slack and takes the lead.” Humility in friendship allows the other to take the lead. Discuss: Nothing kills a friendship quicker than when one person dominates. How can a group foster leadership in all its members?

Jennifer continues, “I remember having a bad day and couldn’t wait to tell them all the things going on in my life. And then we’d get together, and I realized in humility that my problems were not the priority here... it takes humility to understand that you can’t always be the number one talker or sharer all the time.” Discuss: When have you been humbled by the struggles of others? Like Jennifer, have you been able to listen to another rather than speak to your own situation? When?

Susan shares her insights, “I’ve been humbled when I’ve needed support with family situations, illness, etc. [This group] just drops everything and comes to your rescue, just when you need them.” This reminds Jean of the group’s Emergency Meetings: “It doesn’t matter who it is, but it means someone is in need and we gather to fulfill the need.” Discuss: Do you have a friend who will drop anything, everything, to help you? Share an experience.

Marlana reflects: “The group humbles itself before the Lord in prayer in many different instances. To support our families. To ask for prayer, which is difficult. To hold each other up.” This group has a reputation for prayer, as one young woman needing prayer said, “Mom, I need your Church Chicks.” Discuss: How does prayer deepen friendship? Do you have friends you can ask for prayer? How does prayer keep a group together?

Monica mentions, “We’re all on different paths of our faith journey. ... Nobody knows everything. We acknowledge this and turn to each other in handling situations... We build each other up in humility, as we don’t have to be right all the time.” Discuss: When have you acknowledged the need to learn from others?

Nancy speaks to the joy found in the group: “I know we’re humble and we’re helpful but I really enjoy when I wake up the next morning and my cheeks hurt from the laughter ... I enjoy the Humility of Laughter.” Discuss: What is your take on the term, “Humility of Laughter”?

Jayne recalled the group’s experience of “escaping” an Escape Room: “We realized we all have different personalities and needed to work together... It really humbled us!” Discuss: What has been your experience of working on a project with friends? How was it humbling?

Kathleen remembers all the years with this group, from toddlers to grandchildren: “It’s just amazing—the support and everything we did for each other. There’s always something new ... there’s just so much joy in everything we share in tough times, in sad times, and joyful times. And, it’s beautiful.” Discuss: How has a friendship increased your joy? Brought beauty into your life?

Monica gives a final shout out to Lisa and then concludes: “So blessed to be a part of this group, and actually to be able to talk about it. Maybe it is humility. People ask what’s kept us together and maybe it is humility.” Discuss: Do you think it’s possible for a group to stay together without humility? What are some ways you can incorporate the Gift of Humility into your friendships?

Challenge:

Pray for the gift of humility. Be mindful in letting others speak and go before you. Be conscious of thinking of yourself less during the day.

Closing Prayer:

“Lord, give me a spirit of humility. Help me to empty myself of everything that might get in the way of serving you fully. I recognize that all that is good in my life is really a gift from you. Teach me humility, through the witness of your mother and St. Elizabeth. Fill me now with the Holy Spirit so that I, like Mary, may be a living tabernacle. For your glory. Amen.

Gifts of the Visitation, Bossert, p. 72.

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.