

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

Session #8: Gifts of Wonder and Awe

Opening Quote:

“Wonder is a great grace, the grace that God gives us in our encounter with Jesus Christ,’ said the Pope ... It is something that draws us outside of ourselves with joy,’ he noted. ‘It is not a mere enthusiasm like that of sports fans when their favorite team wins, but something deeper. It is having an inner experience of meeting the living Christ and thinking that it is not possible, but the Lord helps us understand that is the reality (and) it is wonderful,’ he exclaimed.”
Pope Francis, Homily, April 4, 2013.

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:

Women of faith are women of wonder and awe who see God working in their ordinary lives, using the Spirit to connect them with other women—all for the glory of God! Reflect with Bossert (pp. 112-113): Where have I experienced the gift of wonder and awe in the past? Do I make a habit of opening the door to the divine mystery that ushers in this gift? Do I look for Christ’s presence in the day-to-day moments of my life? Do I only look for him at Mass? Or do I look for him to show up on a Tuesday morning when I’m driving to work? ...On a Saturday morning when I’m getting groceries? ... What time of the day do I set aside to be with God, away from my busy life, for moments of contemplation, where God promises to show up?”

“I can hear them laughing: Mary and Elizabeth—laughing and laughing. And then, I see them sitting quietly together, because words and laughter could never be enough to contain the mystery. ... After the quiet settles around them and their faces reflected the wonder of God, their eyes must have filled with tears of joy, and they probably quickly wiped them away and went back to the very practical work of preparing a meal or clearing the dishes. ... The spirit of wonder and awe dwells here.”

Gifts of the Visitation, Bossert, pp. 107-108.

Video Witness:

Gifts of Wonder and Awe by Patti Davis and Julie Vulk, both of St. Benedict Parish, Decorah

Reflection/Discussion Questions:

Wow, just wow! WOW: Women of Wonder and Awe! God desires for each of us to be set on fire with wonder and awe. Not like those who awwww at fireworks, but those who recognize

God's presence and then prayerfully reflect on God's mysterious ways! "I can hear them laughing: Mary and Elizabeth—laughing and laughing. And then, I see them sitting quietly together, because words and laughter could never be enough to contain the mystery. ... After the quiet settles around them and their faces reflected the wonder of God, their eyes must have filled with tears of joy, and they probably quickly wiped them away and went back to the very practical work of preparing a meal or clearing the dishes. ... The spirit of wonder and awe dwells here" (pp. 107-108).

Julie's "biggest bear hug" was a visitation for Patti. Julie and Patti give witness to their friendship as a continuous visitation because they have kindred spirits and the Holy Spirit is working between them. Discuss: When have you experienced this type of visitation? How have you experienced the Holy Spirit working in your friendships?

Julie and Patti have "ideas" and contact each other, and when they look back, they are filled with wonder and awe at how these ideas have come to fruition. Discuss: When have you, like Julie, had an idea and just knew it would happen—and experienced wonder and awe? Or like many, did not think your idea would happen, — but it did, by the grace of God— and experienced wonder and awe?

Bossert writes: "The spirit of wonder and awe is where God visits us and where our humanity embraces God" (p. 108). Discuss: When have you experienced wonder and awe in ordinary moments? The gift of a glorious morning or the smell of baby's breath? When have you experienced wonder and awe in extraordinary moments? In the Eucharist? At silent prayer? A surprise visitation? A miraculous healing?

Challenge:

Be open to wonder and awe. Look for the ways the Spirit is working in your life. Write down moments, times, and relationships where you have experienced wonder and awe. Set aside time "for moments of contemplation, where God promises to show up" (Bossert, p. 113).

Closing Prayer:

"Lord, help me to recognize your presence and to open myself up to the gifts I received at my Confirmation, especially the gift of wonder and awe. Remind me that Jesus Christ is the source of divine mystery, and that the easiest way to enter into that mystery is to sit at Mary's feet and learn from the one within whom the Word was made flesh. Give me a spirit of Wonder and awe like that of Mary and Elizabeth. For your glory. Amen."

Gifts of the Visitation, Bossert, p. 113.

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.