

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

**Session #9: Gift of Thanksgiving**

**Opening Quote:**

“We are given a model, indeed *the* model, to whom we can look: Mary, our Mother. After hearing the message of the Angel, she lifted up her heart in a song of praise and thanksgiving to God: “My soul magnifies the Lord...” Let us ask our Lady to help us recognize that everything is God’s gift, and to be able to say ‘Thank you’. Then, I assure you, our joy will be complete. Only those who know how to say ‘Thank you’ will experience the fullness of joy.”  
Pope Francis, Homily, October 9, 2016.

**Scripture:**

*“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; Because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid; for behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed; Because He who is mighty has done great things for me, and Holy is His Name; And His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him. He has shown might with His arm, He has scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He has put down the mighty from their thrones, and has exalted the lowly. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. He has given help to Israel, His servant, mindful of His mercy - Even as He spoke to our father - to Abraham and to his posterity forever.” Lk 1:46-55*

*The author, Denise Bossert, writes about the Magnificat (pp. 118-122). Pray this prayer with an open heart for continued reception of all the gifts of the Visitation.*

**Written Reflection:**

As St. Gianna Beretta Molla, a young mother who died of cancer, wrote: “The secret of happiness is to live moment by moment and to thank God for what He is sending us every day in His goodness.” Denise Bossert writes about Mary and Elizabeth: “These two women know what we have come to know—that there is one response to a God who keeps his promises. ... They experienced a mighty work of the Lord, and filled with a sense of wonder, they cried out to God in Thanksgiving” (p. 117). Reflect with Bossert (p. 126): “What gifts have I been given? If I believe they are truly given to me by God, how does this affect me? Do I receive the Eucharist with a spirit of thanksgiving? ... Have I become the Christ-bearer that Mary and Elizabeth want me to become? Are there people in my life who need to know this Savior or perhaps just need to be reminded that he loves them? How can I let my gratitude overflow and touch their lives?”

*“It’s what Hanna, Deborah, and Judith from the Old Testament have in common with Mary and Elizabeth. They all experienced a mighty work of the Lord, and, filled with a sense of wonder, they cried out to God in thanksgiving”*

*Gifts of the Visitation, Bossert, p. 117.*

**Video Witness:**

*Gift of Thanksgiving* by Melany Hejlik of St. Boniface, Garner and Michelle Dornbier of St. Patrick, Clear Lake.

### **Reflection/Discussion Questions:**

Melany and Michelle's friendship began through their involvement at their parish. Discuss: Have you experienced this at a current or past parish? In what ways? When have your friendships started in a shared interest?

Melany and Michelle shared how thankful they are for their friendship, which helped them through many of the ups and downs of raising children. As Melany voiced, they feel a real connection with Mary and Elizabeth, "They too must have been fearful having their babies and what the future held for them." Discuss: Do you turn to Mary and Elizabeth when you have fears as well as joy?

Later Michelle said, "It's not easy raising children today." But with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and support of their friendship, God brought them through these years. Discuss: When have you worried about one of your children? How have you found support from a friend or community? How can you reach out to another mom in love, not judgment, to help and support her?

Melany and Michelle also reflected on the conversations between Mary and Elizabeth, as they often "spoke back and forth." Michelle commented on how Mel would call at just the right time. Discuss: When has the Holy Spirit inspired you to pick up the phone and check in on a friend? When have you received a note, a call, or a text at just the right time?

Through it all, Mel and Michelle are women of thanksgiving! Throughout their witness, they are filled with thanks to God for their faith and friendship. They seem to be able to recognize the gift in each experience and give thanks, especially when God has seen them through a difficult time. Discuss: Do I have the habit of thanksgiving? Am I able to thank God for the hardships as well as the goodness in my life? Do I receive the Eucharist with a spirit of Thanksgiving?

As Christian women, we are called to walk with one another on the journey of faith. We are to be Christ-bearers to one another. Mary and Elizabeth, our role models, must have delighted in this dynamic duo's final statement: "So, when you think of Mary and Elizabeth, you think of Mel and Michelle."

### **Challenge:**

Mary and Elizabeth are incredible examples to each of us. Write a *Prayer of Thanksgiving* to God for Mary and Elizabeth, and the women who have had an impact on your life.

### **Closing Prayer:**

"Lord, give me a spirit of Thanksgiving. You are the ultimate gift, and I want to share you with those I love. Help me to do that. Help me to become creative in how I share you--to find ways of sharing you that speak to the hearts of others and that help them to see you and to respond. Change me, so that I reflect the Christ-bearing models I have in Mary and Elizabeth. For your glory. Amen." *Gifts of the Visitation*, Bossert, p. 127.

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.