Columns
Spirituality



(Unsplash/A T Ø M E)



by Margaret Cessna

View Author Profile

Join the Conversation

October 25, 2023

Share on BlueskyShare on FacebookShare on TwitterEmail to a friendPrint

"*I wonder as I wander, out under the sky.*"
—John Jacob Niles

The 4-year-old son of my niece asked, "Who made the sky?" as they were in the car on their way somewhere. When told it was God who made the sky, he followed with questions that stumped my niece: "Does God have a mum and dad? Is God wearing camouflage since we can't see him? Does God have feet?" Then out of nowhere, "Why can't I see my eyes?"

His door of wonder has opened up. He is still asking questions.

Wondering is as old as humanity and adds a special kind of flavor to our lives. But why do we wonder? What captures the heart and the imagination? Why do we seek to understand what seems beyond our reach?

Adults are more sophisticated about this than children and often have deep faith. Or so they say.



Humility of Mary Sr. Margaret Cessna's 4-year-old nephew Barrett, who never runs out of questions (Courtesy of Margaret Cessna)

At my ripe old age, my world of wonder is still alive, but I don't think my questions are as interesting as my nephew's. And that's allowed. To wonder about a lot of things has been a constant from the very beginning. It is who we are, starting perhaps when we were 4 years old.

I wonder about the emotion that overcomes and quiets me when I hear Pavarotti sing "Nessun Dorma," yet I have no interest in rock or hip-hop. I also wonder about the hope that touches me when I hear Joan Baez sing with conviction that the lion and lamb will one day be at peace with each other.

"*The earth does not belong to us; we belong to the earth.*"
—Chief Seattle

What a pleasure it is to sit on the seashore and wonder about the fact that there is more life under the oceans than above the water in the whole wide world. And yet we think we are in charge of the planet.

I wonder, if trees can save the planet, why do some want to clear the rainforests?

It may sound silly, I know, but why is my left foot a tad bigger than my right foot? I thought they were supposed to match. These are the things that make me wonder.

I went to the dentist yesterday. I wonder why the dentist makes me so nervous when no dentist in my life has ever caused me to scream in pain.

When experiencing the joy of holding a brand-new baby, I wonder why it is that some children are abused.

"*I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections.*"
—John Keats

How does who you love happen? Have you ever wondered?

Why is it that when surrounded by affection, we sometimes fall into the trap of malicious behavior? Or fail to behave when a helping hand or sweet word is needed? When this happens, we can seek forgiveness and know that there is always a way to be good again.

What truly happens when the spirit leaves the body? I believe that is the very beginning of wonder.

Sometimes I wonder about prayer and how it works. There are over 326 million people in the U.S. alone. For instance, if 100 million are praying at the same time, how does prayer get heard, let alone granted? I'm not saying it doesn't happen, I'm just wondering how it's done.

Advertisement

Have you ever wondered why some children die of cancer while others live long into old age without any major problems? How does that seem right?

This one might get me into trouble. Does Jesus really know my name? Does he still exist as human after his body ascended into heaven?

When I pray to St. Anthony, as I often do, does he understand English?

Yes, to wonder is normal. We wonder about a lot of things. It has been done since the very beginning, maybe from the time the earliest humans gazed at the sky and did not understand lightning or thunder. Perhaps they wondered about that.

I wonder as I wander and there is nothing academic about it. It is just my imagination going full blast.

"*At the center of the Universe dwells the Great Spirit. And that center is really everywhere. It is within each of us.*"
—Black Elk

Perhaps it is enough to sit quietly and contemplate the gifts of the supreme Love that offers peace and harmony if we really listen. Because, in the end, when we find a home in love and affection, it is easier to then believe that each and every one of us is loved in full measure by the One who knows us best. No need to wonder about that.

There are no answers for me. Just curiosity and musing — some silly, some perhaps irreverent — as I sit on my porch and look up at the sky.

So, thank you to a very young boy who set me on this path today. His name is Barrett. We call him Bear. He, himself, is a wonder. May he continue to grow in wisdom and grace.

And never stop wondering.