

G. K. Chesterton was an English writer, philosopher, theologian, and literary and art critic. Born in 1874, he lived until 1936. He was often referred to as the “prince of paradox” because he made his points about life and faith with popular sayings, proverbs, allegories – first carefully turning them inside out. Along with many essays, speeches, and books, he also created the fictional priest-detective Father Brown. Perhaps you have read those stories or watched them on Netflix or PBS.

Chesterton once mused that “The world will never starve for want of wonders; but only for want of wonder.” If that was the case in Chesterton’s context in the early twentieth century, how much more is it true for us today?

Indifference — that listless, blasé, and detached feeling — is the contrast to wonder. We can never be astonished, awestruck, or surprised when we are either overwhelmed or underwhelmed. Feeling the first, we don’t notice the subtle blessings in our surroundings; we don’t take the time to stop and smell the roses. Feeling underwhelmed, we couldn’t care less. “So what?” becomes our response instead of “ah-ha!” Wonder is an antidote to both conditions.

In her book *Traits of a Healthy Spirituality*, Melanie Svoboda encourages us to stand humbly before the unfathomable mysteries of human life, trusting that, in them, we encounter God.

This morning’s Psalm – Psalm 29 – is doing just that. It is expressing a mystical experience regarding life and the world with the open eyes of faith. As he experiences the awe and wonder of Adnonai – of God, an interesting side effect happens. He also experiences strength and peace. Don’t we all need that, these days, as we follow public health measures and await our turn to be vaccinated?

There is no end to the things that can awaken our wonder, from the majesty of the night sky to the smell of rain in the spring to the turning of the leaves in the fall. And it is all right here, a feast of epiphanies and astonishments in the daily round of our lives.

Last week I introduced you to Richard Bruxvoort Colligan who is a modern day psalmist. Listen now, as he introduces and then shares his take on awe and wonder with his music, words, and images inspired by Psalm 29.

My hope and prayer for you is that in the days ahead your heart will be filled with holy wonder and awe. Thanks be to God. Amen.