

# Keepers of Wonder

As if parents don't have enough to do, being the primary teachers, ministers and coaches for their children – there is yet another role. They are called to be the essential ones who will help their child to enjoy the sense of “joy and wonder in all God's works” that is so beautifully prayed in the baptismal liturgy, (BCP p.308).

Indeed today parents are becoming more aware of the importance of helping the child to be at home in God's world. Actually, the young child is already at home with all of creation. The challenge of the parent is not to block this natural desire, but rather to encourage it. Yes, to be keepers of wonder.

These simple delights might range all the way from allowing the child to feel the soft cool grass between their toes, to seeing the twinkling starry host that would appear to sing out praises accompanied by rhythmic cricket sounds.

As a young child, this for me was an assumed reality. I really did think the stars sang; and deep down I still do believe they lead a chorus in the hymn of the universe. Then one day my older and more learned sister burst my bubble by informing me that, “Silly, no! there are these little black bugs hiding in the bushes” and of all things, “rubbing their hind legs together!” Fascinating, but hardly as romantic or mystical.

I hope the parents who take the time to be present to these mysteries with their children realize the far reaching implication and what a great gift they are giving their children in these simple pleasures.

In recent research being done on the connections between spiritual and psychological realities for children, one voice, that of Roberto Assagoli (actually a contemporary of Sigmund Freud) is being heard in a new way.

In his psychological system of *Psycho Synthesis*, Assagoli suggests that the need to experience sensation, wonder, awe and mystery is so deep in the human psyche, that if this craving is not met during the sensitive period of childhood, it visits again during adolescence in a negative expression of sensationalism, the macabre, and dark mysteries. There is a need to be in touch with the powers or some energy force that is greater than the self.

It doesn't take much imagination to see this scene acted out on America's street corners with crime, violence, drugs and gangs. Random acts of violence and senseless crimes, in decaying inner cities, was something that we saw on TV shows, or heard about in the national news not too long ago. Now, our local paper lets us see familiar names and faces of victims and villains in our suburbs and small towns.

Certainly there is no easy answer or simple solution to the monstrous mess in which we find ourselves. But we can't help but shudder when we realize the growing impact of light pollution in all of our major cities and moving ever outward in its scope. Will there be a whole generation of children, especially those trapped in the largest cities, who may never see the stars! The very

lights that would bring them safety has created a canopy of artificial lights that blocks the view of these distant beams of hope.

I wonder, could Abraham have had hope had he not been able to see the stars? I wonder too how essential they are to our deepest selves in our relationship to the Divine.

*Genelda Woggon has been ministered to and by children for over 40 years in her professional work as a Christian Formation Leader, most especially through the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for the past 20 years. She coordinates the work of the Catechesis at St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Asheville, NC and also serves as Consultant for the Catechesis in the Diocese of Western North Carolina.*