

## WOW! Our Amazing Creator!

Chatham Mission talk #1

December 3, 2023.

### Introduction

- saying “Wow”: touches our very core: wonder, awe, amazement, joy → uplifting
- today’s Church: “no” to organized religion/un-catechized/boredom and indifference/secularism
- social media: I-phones: a third arm/constant chatter/about what?
- need a fresh perspective to begin: “the Transcendentals”: ever old, ever new; (Bishop Barron)

### Truth

- creation is amazing: *Netflix* documentaries:
- “*The Universe*” (David Attenborough): photography/music/life and death/global warming/resiliency
- “*Our Universe*” (Morgan Freeman): 2 moons/water/synchronicity (black bears in Alaska)
- “*Unknown: Cave of Bones*” (2017/19/22) cave in S. Africa/bones: 250,000 - 300,000 B.C./fires/hash marks on wall = 60,000 B.C./stone tools/young corpse with tool in hand/= *homo nedali* (new species)/buried dead with great difficulty/culture?/love?/ burial rituals?/ brain: 1/3 of ours/afterlife/capacity for spirituality?
- *Unknown: The John Webb Telescope*: 2022(?): new technology for telescopes, etc./perfect launch/ 1,000,000 miles in space/stunning pictures/seeing beginning of our universe 13.8 billion yrs. ago? need to change whole way of describing things: e.g. some measures faster than others?
- *Black Holes* (2019): most mysterious objects in universe/Seven “Event Horizon Telescopes”/10 yr. project /“soft hairs”/conference of Nat’l Science Foundation/weight: 6.5 billion x weight of sun/ “Normal matter” = c. 4%; dark matter 27%; dark energy 68%/ evolving laws of physics;
- **constants**: – “Creation is God’s first revelation.” (Fathers of the Church) → truth
- “Nature is spiritual.” (= not just physical/interconnected/levels of meaning)
- new ways of telling stories about universe: “Participatory universe”
- “revolution best way?” Copernicus: heliocentrism/Darwin: evolution/Einstein: relativity/today: “multiverse”: upends faith in common sense ideas re. time
- humility: accepting our humanity within creation; “stay real” vs. imagination only
- documentaries do not speak of “God” or “spirituality”:no need/they yell out: “Creator!”
- “**Wow!**” = a trigger to praise, adore, and thank God, our Creator; recall them daily!

### 2. Beauty

- traveling: look at scenery, churches, art, cultures/Gordie Howe Bridge: all: **Wow!**
- sports: Olympics: e.g.: figure skating: Moir + Tessa Virtue/many = wow!
- cathedral in Chartres: blue (chartreuse)/windows/frieze over front door/why final judgment?
- *Panes of Glory*: “detective work”/St. Jerome/St. Ephrem/surprises/tours: Wow!
- *Panes of Mercy*: Christ the King Cathedral/Basilica in Hamilton: 2016+ :Wow!
- *Panes of Courage*: Brescia/ new discoveries: Ursulines/14 Holy Helpers
- human person: image and likeness of God/new baby/aged person/our genders/beautiful!
- liturgy: both old and new: beautiful
- **constants**: – “Beauty will save the world, and that Beauty is Jesus Christ.” (Dostoevsky)
- beauty = right brain activity: instinct and intuition/unifies and harmonizes/inspires
- challenges our creativity, perseverance, and need for silence
- daily need for “mini oases” of beauty;

### 3. Goodness

- our parents and grandparents: *Dandelion Wine – The Louis and Emily Prieur Family Story (as told on Celestial Netflecks)* (2022); inspirations for us/creative memoirs
- teachers/ priests/deacons/religious/coaches/handicap persons, children
- lives of the saints for today: Mother St. Teresa of Kolcatta/Catherine Doherty/Pope St. John XXIII
- value of witnessing: e.g. story of crucifixes at SJHC: Chet Sing/ propose/not impose
- World Youth Days
- everyday “Saints”
- PD day at St. George Parish on MAiD: witnessing: Deacons Sebok/Quesnel/Waechter/= return of disciples and “reporting in to Jesus”: joy of H. Spirit
- **constants:**
  - nothing like personal stories: irrefutable/touch hearts/do it more often: e.g. parish witnessing after parish liturgies?/meetings?
  - notice what *moves you to tears*: TV, stories, actions: this is “heart” material: **Wow!**
  - work this in at end of day: “review of consciousness”: five steps:
 

i. Calm down	iii. sins and faults	v. so what?
ii. “Finger of God”	iv. Sorry and forgiveness	

### 4. The One

- our world: polarized/no time/boredom and indifference/lonely/afraid/lack of sleep + silence
- we are not at peace in ourselves/unhappy/on a treadmill/not at one with self, others, God
- youth: disillusioned with world/structures/the Church/even marriage and family life
- need some unifying images: symphony orchestra/our human bodies: never lies/nature bats last/
- seek what we have in common
- stress what is good in others *before* the bad
- learn from what uplifts our spirits and what depresses us (Pres. Zelinski: home/hugs)
- we all have an immortal soul (C.S. Lewis and atomic bomb dropping right on him)

#### Application to our spiritual life

- i. The transcendentals surround us every day: wake up/stop, look, and listen/turn off i-phone
  - Morning knowledge and evening knowledge: what gives us true peace
- ii. Small is beautiful! Value of awareness/affirming what is right in front of you
- iii. “The glory of God is man (*homo*) alive, and the glory of man is the vision of God.”(St. Irenaeus)
- iv. We have an amazing God who loves us so much that he became one of us and died for us to bring us back to him for all eternity!

#### – But: keep our Wows in a much bigger perspective...

- Seeing God in the transcendentals is only a *first step* in discovering God:
  - beware Deism (only transcendence, no imminence) or Pantheism (only imminence)
  - beware equating God with Buddha (stressed doctrine) or Judaism (no divine Jesus)
  - other religions are “kindergarten” compared to Incarnation of Jesus + his overcoming death
- The really big Wows: God comes directly to us: Jesus → R. → Church → Eucharist...amazing!