



## Week 7 | February | Stillness of Winter

Some winters, we need to surrender to the holy Earth, to the rhythms that sustain us, move us forward even when we don't believe we've the energy to lift a weary foot.

Mother Earth comes to comfort us. She offers hope. Trust the invisible stirrings just beneath the surface.

We look back at our study of Wonder, with a focus on the Holy within and the Holy all around, we have learned to pay close attention to the blessings of winter, the coldest time of the year. This time of year, when the days are shorter and the nights are longer. We began just after celebrating Christmas, with one year ending and a new one beginning. We have traveled together through January and are now well on our way in February. Along the way, this "gentle-souled companion that we've cozied up with," *Stillness of Winter*, written by our friend Barbara has been a "field guide to wonder, certainly and wisdom, perhaps." She has taught us that from the natural world of winter, we can experience everything around us with joy and curiosity. And the aim has been to hold the holy hour up to the light and see the everyday gospel.

From scripture, we notice the sacred in the sacraments, the gift of being able to edit our stories, wrapped in God's love – permanent, complete, supreme love. We see a vision, not lost but made new and set before us with imperatives guiding our daily life. The intimate, gentle whisper of God opens to the heavens declaring God's majesty. Despite doubt creeping in, growth occurs, and we add our voices to all creation singing blessing, honor, glory, and power for the one seated on the throne. When worn, when tired, when laden with concern for the cold and hungry, we know to abide and are strengthened then to bear good fruit. This leads us to experience joy made complete.

Here we are now, not at the end of our wonder, but instead at the start of our paying attention, taking notice, quieting ourselves, entering stillness, watching, waiting...before declaring triumph at the first sign of hope. Here comes the Spring!

### Discussion/journal prompts –

1. How do you enter into your day? Do you experience the morning "like an old friend?" What helps you to "tiptoe softly into this day"? Share with each other what the first moments of morning are like for you.
2. Our book describes a morning prayer as, "You breathe. You inhale blessing, breath after breath, and then you let loose, your morning's litany, petition spiraling atop petition." How would you describe the way you pray? Does prayer come easy to you? How do you pray?
3. Is there a spot in your home that feels like a sanctuary? Is this your cozy kitchen, sunroom, your chair that fits just right?
4. Dusk and dawn offer "a time that is not a time." How might you consecrate these as sacred hours? What actions could you take to mark them as so?
5. What blessing have you discovered during this winter season? What blessing has come from this time together exploring Wonder?