

Discussion Questions:

"[Wonder, delight, and admiration]...comes over us when a person we had not known before opens up to us, or when we come to know something more of someone we had known already, so that our life here is a continual adventure of discovery in which tenderness and delight are constantly at play, and the strong emotion of love infuses the whole." (p. 91)

1. Do you have Hannah's same openness to seek the gift of otherness? Do you have this attitude about Well-Read Mom, about the books, about the members of your group, about the commitment of what the group asks of us to read together and to read well? Have you ever been on a trip with a group of travelers who complained about everything different and were disappointed that it wasn't the "same" as at home? What happened to those travelers and their fellows as a result of their attitude?
2. What is the virtue of faith? Does San Foy's earthly or supernatural life reveal more about what faith is?
3. What do you make of the dolmen? Hannah describes how they are placed at ancient pagan sites that have been sanctified by the Christian faith (p.148-149). This whole book is a conversation about a culture that is full of life as it is centered in San Foy. Consider the following questions: What does God make of culture? Do we look to only things that are religious in nature to bring us closer to God? How can we recognize what is beautiful around us as a way of awakening hearts to Christ?
4. Which relationship in the narrative do you enjoy? Does San Foy take part in some way?
5. What is your favorite part of the Tympanum? Why? (Look at pictures online, if you can, to see more details.)
6. In the early 1000's a scholar named Bernard visits the reliquary of San Foy, and he is initially appalled but then changes his mind about the purpose of it (p. 17). What has been your experience of relics? Do you appreciate them differently now that you have read the book?
7. When the narrative of this book takes place-the 1970's-many aspects of the culture are seemingly about to be lost. However, they don't have to be. Was there something that the people of Conques did like gardening, art making, crossing the bread, singing, language, travel, celebrating the liturgical year, foraging, or storytelling that you would like to make a part of your own life and that of your family's?