Windows on the Soul

In what ways do these pictures mirror me?

'By the second half of life, you learn to tell the difference between who you really are and how others can mirror that, or not'
Richard Rohr, *Falling Upwards*.

What thresholds am I facing? Marriage, starting a career, retirement?

Am I alone as I face thresholds in life?

What compassion does God feel for me as I transition in faith?

What does He want to say?

These pictures are powerful windows on the soul in different stages of life

For private reflection and group discussion:

• Imagine what the girl and the old lady in the pictures are sensing (e.g. warmth/cold, dark/light, smells, sensations, happy/sad etc).

• Notice their body language, and the objects included in the pictures.

• Consider in what ways the young girl and the maid are looking, physically and metaphorically (e.g. forwards or backwards in time, inwards or outwards?)

• What do the two portraits have in common? How are they different?

• The old lady in the portrait by Cezanne is a former nun. The painter took her in to be his maidservant after she left her convent, unsettled by religious doubt. What doubts does the younger girl have, and how is this a universal experience?

• In what ways are these pictures mirrors of your own soul at the present time, or perhaps at a certain time in the past?

A Prayer for Awareness

Thank you, O God,
For seeing beyond the surface of my life
to the child sitting at the mirror.
Help me to be aware of the pictures in my life
that are everywhere around me and at all times.
Help me look beyond those pictures to see windows.
Give me eyes to see, ears to hear and a heart to receive
what You are offering me through those windows.

Top: The Girl at the Mirror by Norman Rockwell

Bottom: An Old Woman with a Rosary by Paul Cezanne

Reading material:
Windows on the Soul by Ken Gire

The Coracle Trust - Helping transition in faith through the life stages