

53. *Thanks for being you*

I can't remember where I read that Fr. Charles de Foucauld experienced immense joy in singing to God this verse of the *Gloria*: "*we give you thanks, we praise you for your glory!*"

We Christians of every denomination give thanks to God for his gifts, his help and his munificence. And too often, like the nine lepers in the Gospel, we forget to say even a plain and simple Thank-you!

Where the saints are concerned, it is the splendor of God, his infinite majesty, and immeasurable goodness that release the well-springs of thanksgiving in their hearts. They are filled with wonder and satisfaction, not so much by what God gives them, as by what God is. Even if they were to receive nothing from him, their praise would be no less fervent and their happiness no less ecstatic.

This is surely one of the most delicate, most refined, and rarest sentiments (in the twofold sense of being infrequent and of great value). There are persons so totally unconcerned with themselves, who have so completely overcome every instinct of possessiveness, that they do not need to receive a favor in order to be filled with gratitude. For them, it suffices that something beautiful *exists*.*

Such an attitude of soul requires a long apprenticeship of unalloyed love and renunciation. And yet it is sometimes seen burgeoning in the heart of a child, like the early primrose that anticipates the coming of Spring.

I am reminded of a little girl who was close to appreciating and adopting the verse of the *Gloria*. Her mother told me that the child had said to her, "Thanks, Mommy." "Thanks for what, dear?" "For being YOU."

* *Translator's note*: Ralph Waldo Emerson expressed a similar thought: "Never lose an opportunity of seeing anything that is beautiful, for beauty is God's handwriting—a way-side sacrament. Welcome it in every fair face, in every fair sky, in every flower, and thank God for it as a cup of blessing."