

## Living the Spirit Praise and Thanksgiving

In previous writings I have written of the themes of adoration, blessing and glory. In this insert I will finalize the overall theme taken from the words of the *Gloria* of the Mass and write about praise and thanksgiving. “We adore you; we bless you; we glorify you; we give you thanks.”

### **Praise**

How often have we actually used the word? I hope you have managed to use it often enough to encourage others in their goodness, especially their good works. As a nation we praise the heroes who keep us safe. Parents wisely praise their children for their accomplishments. We have come to know that a little praise goes a long way. It goes much further than harsh words of disappointment in the actions of others. In many ways we can see how in many ways we are doing what Jesus would want us to do, which is to love others according to His command.

Sometimes we find that praise is offered for less than good and moral reasons. If we are the recipients of such false praise, often in the form of flattery, we must see it for what it is. Sometimes we must be on guard against its morally dangerous effects. Pride can take root which is easily turned into sin.

I looked to my book of synonyms and I saw at once that the word praise, both as a noun and a verb, has many meanings. Many refer to what is considered archaic usage of the word. One soon enough finds that this is because we find other ways to extol, eulogize, dignify, honor, magnify and even root for. I am noting this because the word is best used when it refers to God. Then it encompasses such ideas as veneration, reverence, devotion and glorifying.

“We praise you.” Why do we praise God? The *Gloria* tells us for his great glory. God is supreme in every thing. He is worthy of our veneration, adoration, and similar acts and we proclaim that worthiness by our praise. As I think why I should personally praise the Lord, I cannot remove from my thoughts how much I need to thank Him. Praise and thanksgiving seem to just go well together when we pray and speak to God.

If we look about the world around us, we find many reasons for giving praise to God. All creation demands our praise of God and our thanks to a loving Creator. I have always liked the psalm which says how wonderful God’s name is in all the earth, and how God has made man a little less than the angels.... So many reasons to praise God

I am sure, dear reader, that you desire on your best days to praise and thank God for His many gifts to you. If you are well on your way to holiness, you may even praise and thank God for the illness you have, the difficulties of your life, the suffering that reminds you of the Cross of Christ. Praise of God has many degrees and many qualities in our prayer. We must strive to be sincere in what we pray, and speak from the heart with love of God in all sincerity and truth. If you find you need help in this, pray to Mary. Who could better show you how praise her Son? For she prayed: “My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior!

## Thanksgiving

We use the word “thank” in many different ways. No doubt, it is a word we learn early on. I am not able to recall when I was told to say “thank you” as a child, but it must have been quite soon. Somehow I came to see it as one of the magic words, just like the word “please.” Magic? Why magic? Because many good things came my way after using them. I have every reason to believe that my experience was hardly different from yours.

Sometimes when we use this magic word, it can mean many different things, describing different intentions and reasons for our speaking. It can mean that we acknowledge something good, we may be showing appreciation, returning a favor, making recompense for something given us. Sometimes we use this word out of a sense of duty. Perhaps we do not use it often enough in this way. And thanks goes further than just using words; how many deeds of thanks we have been party to our lives.

It is a very human quality to be thankful. We should see it as a gift of God to be thankful and able to express our thanks well. I think here of how even animals can seemingly show their thanks, but they cannot do so as humans do. When the pet dog gets a treat he may give a good lick to the face, but he cannot say words of thanks. Yet, even there we see the desire of one being to requite the goodness of another.

Let us reflect on how thanksgiving is owed to God and how we may give it to him. Certainly, you will not deny the many reasons why you should be thankful to Him. We owe God thanks in the first place for our very individual lives. Someone has said many times that God has made each human being unique. Each of us is His exclusive creation. One could even say each person is His work of art, valuable and irreplaceable.

In the Mass we hear and pray words of thanksgiving again and again. It is right we do so, for the Mass is even called the sacrifice of thanksgiving, Eucharist. [Sometime it seems people can't wait to hear the deacon proclaim that the Mass is ended, so they can have their last words “Thanks be to God; *Deo gratias!*”] There is a danger in our spiritual life of saying our thanks often without serious thought about what we say. If this is due simply to our human weakness, we must at least have the intention to being thankful. What we must not be is thankless.

Our relationship to God is a relationship in which we receive so much that any recompense of ours pales in comparison. Jesus tells us clearly that He has come to give us life in abundance. Haven't we found this to be true? Again, I would note that it can happen that in advancing spiritually we can begin to understand that we need to pray our thanks for things other than what we see as good, joyous, and happy. Many time we learn from the lives of the saints how they came to thank God for every challenge facing them, every suffering even they had to endure. How else could many of them endure the martyrdom they faced?

Know that you can be a grateful person. It is not very hard even to be creative. Let married couples show their gratitude to each other in simple ways, but why not a surprise once in a while. Teach children to write those thank you notes. Be grateful, too, for the greatest gift you have received, your faith. It is easy; it just a matter of love.

*God love you always!  
Monsignor Morrison*

**Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; His mercy is everlasting!**