



Give Thanks to God!

Dear Friends,

G.K. Chesterton, the wonderful British author, philosopher, poet, dramatist and lay theologian, had a delightful and profound attitude towards giving thanks. He said,

I would maintain that thanks are the highest form of thought, and that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.

"Happiness doubled by wonder" is such a powerful line and a reminder to all of us that gratitude is always grounded in a sense of awe and wonder. The objects of our thankfulness may be many and varied - family, friends, abundance of food, a peaceful society, etc. - and on one level, it may seem quite easy to offer the words of thanks. What Chesterton expresses so beautifully, however, is that true gratitude finds its foundation in a sense "the wonder of it all."

One of the most extraordinary expressions of wonder that I know are the words of St. Francis of Assisi, known most commonly as *The Canticle of the Sun*. It is a hymn of praise suffused with wonder and gratitude. The first section was composed in 1225 when he was sick at San Damiano and cared for by Clare and the Poor Sisters. It is adoration is pure and simple, offering praise to God through all that God created, and its words resound with the gratitude and thankfulness of its author.

I have included it on the flip side of this letter so that it might be a resource for you at this season of Thanksgiving when we offer our thanks and gratitude to God for the many blessings of our lives. As we read in 1 Chronicles 16:34, *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever*. The first blessing given to us is the gift of Creation. This gift is a gift of love and it is the source from which all other gifts flow. At this time in our history, when our relationship with Creation is worth our scrutiny and our attention, the words of adoration offered by Francis might be a vehicle through which we can see the presence of God in all of the blessings of our lives, directing us to offer thanks grounded in wonder.

Perhaps you might pray this Canticle. Perhaps you might spend time in reflecting upon each verse. In so doing, perhaps you might enter into the thankfulness of Francis that oozes through each word and find through the prism of these words "that gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder." And as we celebrate God's bounty at our 10 a.m. Thanksgiving service at St. Mary's on Sunday, October 9, may we bring something of the spirit of St. Francis with us to our worship; and may this spirit spill over into all facets of our daily lives.

Blessings,

The Rev. Bruce Chalmers
St. Mary's, Sorrento

Canticle of the Sun *(1st Section)*

Most high, all powerful, all good Lord! All praise is yours, all glory, all honour, and all blessing. To you, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce your name.

Be praised, my Lord, through all your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and you give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendour! Of you, Most High, he bears the likeness.

Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens you have made them, precious and beautiful.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which you give your creatures sustenance.

Be praised, My Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure.

Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom you brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong.

Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs.

- translated by Bill Barrett

