

Words to Live By

"Behold God beholding you . . . and smiling."

-Anthony deMello, SJ

During my workday, I often glance at the photos of family, friends, and the people I have served, which reside on the windowsill over my desk. I pause and behold these people who sustain and energize me in ministry: I long to be reunited with them at the end of the day, week or even at the end of time. Beholding them with love and longing often brings a smile to my face. Through these photos, the people I love smile back at me and call me to be a person of integrity, joy and hope.

If we pause long enough in prayer to behold God, we will notice that God is beholding us. We might even notice that God is smiling at us. The more we learn to pay attention to God by beholding God in the people we encounter and the work that we do, the more we realize that God is constantly beholding us with great love and longing.

The Eucharist and other explicit moments of prayer help us to be more aware of the God who is constantly gazing at us with love, seeking to meet us, as St. Ignatius says, in all things. If we prayerfully reflect on those times and places where God's smile seems most present in our life, we will notice patterns that help us to discern God's call to places of even greater life and love. Finding our vocation is not so much a matter of discovering some secret, static blueprint for our life; it is more a matter of growing into a dynamic, mutual relationship with the God who longs to walk with us and behold us with love and longing.

*-Fr. John C. Wronski, SJ, Director of Vocations,
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What you have received as gift, give as gift.

- Matthew 10:8

We often think of others as being gifted - Olympians, Nobel Prize winners, the communion of saints or even Hollywood stars, but not ourselves. Yet, each of us is made in the image and likeness of God. He used a masterful blueprint and assembled the package with love. He carefully selected the gifts that make us who we are. He did the hard part. All we need to do is use these gifts to the best of our ability to serve others.

No matter how big or how small, how public or private, how profound or ordinary, each of our gifts plays an essential role in God's design for the world. Is your gift a smile? Then shape the world with your smile. Is your gift to listen? Then listen with love. Do you have a gift for humor? Make us laugh! Do you teach? Give your students enthusiasm. Are you gifted with children? Quick, bring them into your life! Are you a reader? Don't wait to share your knowledge. Are you older? Find the young and enlighten them.

Rejoice in your gifts and watch God's garden grow.

*-Sheila Cavanaugh, senior vice president for Fidelity Investments and
graduate of the College of the Holy Cross*

