

GIVING THANKS

by Nancy Cramer

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From the title of this story, you may think I am jumping ahead on the calendar and referring to our holiday, "Thanksgiving." Wrong. I am writing about the simple words we use to respond to everything from the simplest act of holding a door open to the most complex one. (That latter covers a lot of things, so I will let you fill in what that act might be.)

I am constantly saying, "Thank you" for this or that, perhaps my white hair and bent over back engenders a response in others to help me cross the street, leave or enter a building first, or pick up my cane which I forever seem to be dropping. I also give "thanks" when Niel says the blessing – be it in Swedish, mumbled English, or clearly spoken American. I silently say, "Thank you, God," when a problem I've been struggling with is solved; or when the answer appears as if by magic (and it is the majestic magic hand of Spirit that has befriended me.)

Today, however, I had an unique reason to express my gratitude. First, let me remind those of you who are faithful recipients of my little stories, you will recall that I have written several ones about the rose bed that fronts my apartment. You have heard my trials with Japanese beetles, struggles with cutting off dead branches the width of my thumb, and witnessed the product of my labor almost every Sunday morning in the flowers at the altar. Here is a story that tops them all.

I cut roses for the occasional neighbor walking her dog when I am outside, or take a small bunch in a creamy white pitcher to a shut-in, so sharing "my" roses is second nature to me. Well, I have a neighbor whom I seldom see, but on two occasions when I have met up with her, I have given her a rose. About two weeks later, she came down with the rose, dried and pressed on a heavy card. I just happened to have the perfect old frame for that rose, and it hangs on the wall over my Japanese tea set which rests on a small antique old table. Perfect.

Then one day after having given her another rose, she takes only one at a time and it is still in the budding phase, she had left me a laminated book mark with the dried rose and tied with an olive green ribbon. Again, perfect.

But today a gift tops it all. I found nestled behind my big pot of artificial flowers on an old metal cart from the Thrift Store that I had painted black—a tiny pot with two miniature roses in it. No sign of the donor, but I bet you can guess. So how do I thank her? She is gone a lot so a phone call is not viable. A visit to her door would bring the same results. Therefore, I made a large sign with a black marker and taped it to the cart with the pot of roses in front. It says in big bold letters "THANK YOU."

Now I am covered, just in case she was not the anonymous giver. But whoever it was, she has been thanked. I have been blessed with two special roses that truly are all my own- 100 per cent. What more can I have asked for? I don't know. Do you?