Know that patience is the one virtue which gives greatest assurance of our reaching perfection, and, while we must have patience with others, we must also have it with ourselves. Those who aspire to the pure love of God need to be more patient with themselves than with others. We have to endure our own imperfections in order to attain perfection. In truth, we have to admit that we are weak creatures who scarcely do anything well; but God, who is infinitely kind, is satisfied with our small achievements and is very pleased with the preparation of our heart.

I don’t mean that we shouldn’t head in the direction of perfection, but that we mustn’t try to get there in a day. In order to journey steadily, we must apply ourselves to doing well the stretch of road immediately before us.

We are sometimes so busy being good angels that we neglect to be good men and women…Practise those ordinary virtues: patience, forbearance toward our neighbour, service of others, humility, gentleness of heart, affability, tolerance of our own imperfections, and similar little virtues. I do not say that we are not to ascend by prayer, but that we do so one step at a time.

St Francis de Sales