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All Right

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All Right

When we say “all right,” we speak in a positive way about whatever we are designating, whether “everything is all right with the car” or “she is all right after that accident.” Sometimes we talk about external conditions, such as visible appearance, and at other times we speak more of interior feelings, such as personal condition. Almost always, we refer to specific conditions or circumstances, as in answer to a question about our health we might say: “I’m all right.”

In all but formal situations we are free to adapt spoken and written language in various ways, expressing different nuances of meaning according to our intentions. For some helpful post-Thanksgiving reflection, we might consider how we could say of our lives that they are all right. Or, in a full and gracious spirit of gratitude, we could ponder the factors supportive of an honest belief that life as we experience it is all right.

We all have much for which we can rightly give thanks, but we also endure suffering, setbacks and painful experiences that do not elicit gratitude as an immediate response. If we are to say that our lives are all right, we will not be able to use mere physical and emotional well-being for adequate measurement. Also, we do not want to give a shallow meaning to “all right” by using the expression to convey, as people sometimes do by the tone of their voices, “matters are all right, but could definitely be better.” We want a realistic assessment of life as being more than worthwhile, even though we all encounter many challenges.

Believing that life is all right even with the ups and downs that occur arises from an attitude of trusting optimism, and is not a blind ideological statement. We are able to reflect upon our experiences and find in them the verification that all things work for the good. We might be surprised to find ourselves accepting that even our mistakes as well as all that we suffer from accidents, health issues and the negative words and deeds of others, cannot alter our belief in the goodness of life.

“Right” has to do with what is, not merely what we might want at any particular time. Not every thought, action or plan is “right” in the sense of correct or good, but our life is right when we are where we belong. In choosing to accept this life as we have it, the life that God has given us, we acknowledge that our life is all right not because we have made it so, but because God is faithful. God has given us this life – not another one – and will accompany each of us in the unique movement of our lives right into eternity.

We did not decide whether or not to enter this life. On a bad day, we might not be particularly pleased about our lives. But when we take God's perspective, which is that of an ongoing creation of all individuals solely as an act of love, our lives are all right.