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Expectations

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Expectations

If a woman says that she is expecting, we know that she looks forward to the time when she will give birth to her child. Usually, we indicate in particular what we are expecting, such as a phone call or the delivery of mail or a package. But, like the pregnant woman, sometimes we do not identify what it is that we are expecting, because we do not have adequate words to name it.

Even when parents are expecting a child, they cannot know much about their daughter or son until after the infant is in their arms, and as the process of parenting unfolds over time. If we reflect on our expectations of ourselves and of those closest to us and also of everything that comprises our lives, we do not know very much of what will actually take place until it happens. However, if we are expecting things to work out for the better, our experiences will certainly be different than if we carry within us the expectation of mostly negative possibilities. Even if we do not have a specific idea in mind, we can choose to maintain a positive attitude with regard to what we are expecting in life.

The basic expectations we bear with regard to life are deeply spiritual. Our lives are not just a series of events that somehow take place. Rather, we are able to actively and consciously participate with our minds and hearts as well as our bodies in almost all that affects us and in all that we say or do. We are sometimes more passive than active, and we take time for sleep, but always and everywhere, the progress of our lives is directly related to the kind of expectations that we choose for guiding our interpretations of reality.

Most of us have suffered from thinking, or even acting, based on some unexamined expectations that we failed to bring to our inner spiritual "direction pointer" where we discern the difference between authentic and inauthentic, between better and less good as well as between consonance and dissonance with our truth. We might have held on to unexamined expectations of how others should behave, or entertained imagined or presumed expectations that others had of us which we tried to meet. Frustration, anxiety and other forms of distress generally accompany false or inappropriate expectations that are not checked for their validity within our hearts.

God does not decide for us our expectations, but God is always ready and desirous of helping us to recognize the mode of expecting that is most conducive to our well-being and that of others. Expecting that everything will work out for the better reflects trust in God's active involvement with us, just as expecting that all the events of our lives depends wholly upon our

planning and expertise reflects trust in ourselves alone. It will become natural for to ask for and to have expectations of encountering surprisingly positive turns of events if we have reflect on our previous experiences of relying on God and recall the difference between what we feared might happen and what actually took place.

Graced expectations are far more realistic than those based on fear.