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Glasses

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Glasses

One word represents two related objects that differ greatly: we do not take a drink from a pair of glasses and we do not try to affix a couple of drinking glasses to our heads in order to see more clearly. Both can be made of glass, which is a common substance that is appropriate for containers of liquid as well as for eye glasses.

Grace is another one of those words that names a reality touching upon our lives in ways more common than drinking glasses but more significant for seeing than eye glasses. Glass itself is a gift, though inanimate, while grace is not a substance that we use for our purposes, but a personal gift: the intimate presence of God that empowers us, enabling us to be more fully ourselves and so to accomplish our purpose in life.

We can live without glasses, but our lives are greatly enhanced with their availability to meet our needs. Glass is one of the many materials we find in creation that are particularly adaptable for human use, as though set forth with us in mind. Grace, however, is not created. Available always and everywhere, more than air, water, or any of the elements found within the universe, grace is entirely beyond all that we can observe with our physical senses. Yet we all have graced experiences, often in and through material creation.

Glasses that are containers can hold any kind of liquid, whether of the finest crystal or the plainest form of glass. Graces make us capable of holding our own lives in our hands, in the most challenging of situations and in the most ordinary circumstances. We can recall, if we choose to do so, some of these experiences. We might bring to mind one of the most significant events as having been painful or enlivening or perhaps both, which we handled well. And in our recalling, we might also recognize the interior supportive movement that we might call grace. And we can easily think of a recent every-day interaction in which we acknowledge the gentle but real movement within our hearts that helped direct us to choose a kinder or more helpful manner of speaking or acting than if we had proceeded contrary to that grace.

We know that love is not a quantifiable substance, but is rather a reality existing within persons, and most often between or about persons, however much we might talk about our love for pets, life-work, hobbies and the like. Grace is one of the ways we talk about the particular, individual, and also abiding consequences of God's love present in us and around us. For purposes of understanding the mystery of God's love which leaves us completely free to respond or not, we use the word "grace" to describe the

various experiences of the effects of God's love within us. But when we reflect upon the reality, we might see with simple clarity that God who is Love is personally present within us, rather than somehow outside us, and whose activity we might call "grace."

We use glasses, but grace enfolds us.