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Fire

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Fire

Fire can heat or burn, illuminate or cause smoke. Experiences of interior fire can vary from energizing warmth to injurious passion, from bright clarity to cloudy confusion.

During an ordinary day, many thoughts cross our minds. Some are creative ideas, some are contrary to our values and others are of no consequence. Creative thoughts, and also those that are disordered, evoke feelings, sometimes surprisingly strong feelings.

The heat generated from creative impulses is usually accompanied with peaceful energy to sustain us when we put an idea into action. For example, we might receive the idea of arranging a party to please a family member or friend, and we find that we are able to do all that must be done with clarity of mind and peace of spirit. We might say that we were "fired up" to accomplish our desire.

Another kind of fire might burn within us when thoughts about real or imagined injustices come to mind. At such times, feelings can run quite strong, and move us in directions that would cause harm to us or to others if we allow the feelings to rule us, or the thoughts to multiply, adding more and more fuel to the fire. We have a right to our feelings of anger, which are wholly appropriate responses to perceived injustice. But if we do not take care in the management of such fire, injurious burns result.

When interior fire is paired with creativity or inspiration the results are like those that occur when a person is exhilarated, even if exhausted, after having accomplished a worthy goal. Someone wants to be of help for a friend who is ill, but at first does not know what to do. But if a thought comes, surprisingly appropriate, the fire of excitement makes the deed possible of accomplishment and also satisfying. Likewise, the internal blaze that arises in the presence of injustice, when informed and channeled in accord with our values, provides us with the energy required to act appropriately, even in the presence of fear or hostility. When we know that we must act, anger can support our words and deeds in ways that reasoning alone cannot supply.

We know that a fire can be arranged safely in a fireplace, campground or other containment, and we know of instances when an uncontrolled fire has been extremely destructive. We do not deliberately set a fire within ourselves, but we have experiences when a spontaneous blaze provided the heat we needed to speak or act rather than to remain passive. Perhaps we have also been through a different sort of incident, when a blaze went out of

control for a time and caused some kind of burn. We can best deal positively with the heat of anger or a seemingly ungovernable passion by first acknowledging to ourselves that this is our fire, ours to use for purposes of heating or ours to damp down to prevent injurious burning. While no one else can manage our fire for us, we can consciously invite God to inspire our thoughts and imaginations so that we will be able to bring heat and light rather than burning and smoke to all that we say and do.

“I came to bring fire to the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled!”
(Luke 12:49)