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Light Hearted

Fr. Randy Roche

Loyola Marymount University

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Light Hearted

Someone is considered "light-hearted" when he or she appears to be without cares and is generally optimistic. We probably have no difficulty in recognizing the opposite mode of being: "heavy-hearted. But what if we were to consider our hearts as light for others, and also to consider our hearts as recipients of light?

Every smile that is sincere, every word we speak that is true, every deed that takes into account the value of another person, arises from our hearts, not just our minds. We could think of ourselves as the light of the world and yet never give a word of thanks to the person who steps aside to make space for us in a crowd or who hands us the item we request. But from our hearts, where we make all our decisions, we can indeed provide light for others in what we say and in what we do.

From our hearts arises light in both the sense of illumination, so that others might see their value as a result of our attention to them, and in the sense of lightening their burdens by lifting their spirits through our thoughtfulness of them. We can tell people of their worth in our words, but we are more likely to show it by the way we listen to them, especially by reflecting to them our appreciation of the real meaning behind their words and expressions. We can suggest reasons for hope, but quite often we make lighter the weights on others' hearts when we show them that we believe in their capacity to deal with whatever challenge they might be facing at the time.

If we reflect upon the ripples of genuine goodness that extend from our hearts, we will experience gratitude. We were made for this: to be light in the world. The more we think of ourselves as being "light hearted" for others, the more we will act accordingly. And, we are not only a source of light, but we are also recipients of light. When we open our hearts to being light for others, we are correspondingly open to receiving light, and light indeed enters our hearts.

Some of us have come to recognize that we became capable of being light for others almost certainly because family, friends and mentors were light hearted for us. Giving consideration to the possibility that all good begins with what we have received does not diminish what we do in loving others, but provides more opportunities for gratitude. We are rightly pleased to be a positive force for people around us, and can also be fittingly thankful for those who have enlightened us through their care, example and guidance.

We might be aware of the expression that "he (or she) is all heart," which would seem to be another way of talking about being light hearted. But we could also consider God as "all heart," whose love fills our hearts, illuminating and enlightening us, and so enabling us to do the same for others.

Light heartedness leads to gratitude, which in turn further illumines and enlightens our hearts, both in giving and in receiving.