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Year of Faith

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Year of Faith

What thoughts and images arise at the words, "Year of Faith?" Information can easily be found on the web, but if we engage in a reflective and imaginative exercise, especially if we choose to be open to the movements of inspiration, we might very well find some pleasing and even surprising possibilities.

To think of a whole year of some kind of additional exercise or work might not appeal to already fully occupied persons. But if we imagine that we have the leisure of many months for encountering light in the darker episodes of our lives, and deeper joy in the lighter incidents we experience, we are free to proceed without any burden at all. Exercising faith is not like going to the trouble of putting on more clothing for a cool day, but like turning up the collar of what we are already wearing as all that we need to keep our necks warm. We already have faith; we have only to use it to see more clearly the benefits that are present in the events of each and all of our days.

We can start anywhere we want with faith, looking around with expectations similar to children on an Easter egg hunt: something is there, waiting to be found. In our care for children, we place treats where they may be discovered, and which cause momentary delight in the finders. But faith uncovers realities that have always been present, and once we recognize them, we are liable to change for the better, not just for a moment, but for life.

For example, we all need love, not merely to be happy, but in order to live a meaningful life. If we exercise our faith to the extent of believing that we are loved, we can look at our interactions with all kinds of people and recognize some of the ways we are loved, which in turn supports us in loving others. We do not "invent" such a belief. Rather, we admit to ourselves that we cannot honestly support the opposite proposition, that we are not loved. The more we reflect on the many small ways that many people care for us - some who are friends, but many who hardly know us but treat us with respect - the more our faith will enable us to acknowledge the various expressions of love that are a part of our lives.

Faith is also the means to recognize the presence of God in the ordinary events of our lives and in the many interior movements that affect us. Without much difficulty we can believe in an all-surrounding creator. Exercising that belief can enable us to see signs of a loving presence in all that scientists and researchers, artists and food-providers as well as writers and teachers continually make available for us to consider. We do not

impose something on reality that is not there. Rather, we become able to enjoy the fullness of all that exists when we exercise the faith we have.

We might want to imagine a year for expecting that we will find positive meaning and purpose in the bumps and bruises as well as in the naturally acceptable encounters that occur each day. Our faith enables us to trust that God will be with us in good times and in those that are difficult. We live in this world which is God's gift for us, if we choose to believe in such love.

A year of faith is not for the sake of worrying about the absence of leaders who could somehow make everything fine for us, but for recognizing, in many details of our lives, that which really makes the world go 'round: not money or power, but Love.