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A Year

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A Year

We live one day at a time. On some days we might reflect on our experiences, especially the blessings, gifts and positive interactions that we have initiated or have received. But what thoughts and feelings do we have about a whole year having passed, one day after another?

Any single day might include extraordinary, even life-changing consequences, but we are used to the succession of days, and often look forward to a better day if one has been particularly difficult, and we are not troubled when a really fine day passes; we will usually have more days ahead of us, and so we keep on with one day at a time. But when a year is past, never to return, and we are a year older, we might want to reflect on that much time as a whole, and enquire of ourselves whether or not we want to make one or more adjustments to our habitual ways of thinking, believing or acting.

Rather than merely writing up some resolutions for a new year, we can take an affective and therefore effective look at some of the lights and shadows of our year that become clear upon reflection. In opening ourselves to such an inner exploration, we are liable to notice that we are assisted or inspired, moved by intuition or grace, and so become aware of some personal realities of significance that we might not otherwise have perceived. Even if we have been reflecting on a daily basis, noting especially the events and decisions that elicited gratitude, we still might profit from a brief review of a year's worth of experiences.

We can choose a time and place to consciously revisit some particulars in our past, but if we do so with the understanding that we look inside ourselves in company with God as friend, we will profit far more than if we insist on making a mental exercise that is entirely of our own construction. Our best option is to carry on a kind of quiet conversation about persons and events that come to mind, and to do so gently, without anxiety. The purpose of this exercise is to become aware of those attitudes and consistent manners of deciding and acting that seem fitting, so as to cherish and continue such behavior, and to acknowledge the unpleasantness of those that did not prove to be of any real benefit to anyone, so that we might not so easily repeat them.

We have changed in some ways over the period of a year, physically, emotionally and spiritually. Some of us might recognize a clear need to make an age-appropriate modification to our eating and drinking, physical exercise and perhaps spiritual exercise. We might know that we have to put some things into our personal calendars or they will never happen, such as

taking a walk, reading a book that feeds the soul or taking time to be with others even without an "agenda." With the help of honest evaluation, and from the perspective of a year, we might see more clearly those actions that are more important and those that are of less value to us, and find that we have the inclination to decide on at least one habit that can be set aside in favor of a practice that our hearts tell us is more reasonable, appropriate, and desirable.

Whatever is truly helpful to us is at the same time pleasing to God, who loves us all year, every year.