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2012

Waiting

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Roche, Fr. Randy, "Waiting" (2012). *Spiritual Essays*. 205.
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Waiting

When we say to people, "in a minute," we are not suggesting that they wait exactly sixty seconds, but we do wish them to pause for a short period of time. If we want to gather some equipment before leaving the place where we are, or if we have to complete a phone call before moving on to another task, we need to wait, or have others wait, until we are ready to take a new action.

If we do not have other persons to consider, and are completely free of external responsibilities, we might think that we no longer have need to wait even a tiny bit before progressing from one involvement to another. But unless we are capable of performing two completely separate activities at the same time, we do well to reset our intention between concluding one engagement of body, mind, and spirit, and beginning another. Without a pause, even if less than a second, we can become the equivalent of a passenger even when our actions appear to be those of the driver. Most of us have experiences of going from one room to another, but forgetting why we did so. Perhaps we moved so quickly from thought to action that we lost track of our objective.

We do not need time for a lengthy reflection before making a transition from working in an office to leaving for home, but the quality of our experiences in each of the two modes depends upon the moments, however brief, in which we decide what we are doing, and why. Everything worthy of our attention deserves also a purpose that is our unique contribution to each effort we make. If we do not take the millisecond or more that is required for connecting motive with action, we might be engaging in "value-subtracted" behavior.

We have heard the saying, "think before you act," but there is more than thought involved in making decisions that fully utilize our ordinary everyday exercise of spirituality. While we do not want to be considered as irrational, we know from experience that reasons alone do not adequately explain our behavior. We even have a word, "rationalization," for describing willful setting forth of mere reasons, when our hearts, our spirits, or whatever word we use to describe the interior power by which we recognize right from wrong and better from worse, witnesses within us to our truth.

When we pause before speaking or acting, we might be waiting for an inspiration, or for an interior indication of an appropriate attitude, or for a sense of what might be a more loving approach, or for a tiny but perceptible movement of our spirit that inclines us one way rather than another. Whether we hear within us a call to wait, or have developed the helpful habit

of taking care that both mind and heart are in agreement about the thought, word, or action we are about to take, experience confirms the practice of waiting, as eminently beneficial for us and for the world around us.