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Writing

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Writing

Those who send text messages decide on the abbreviations or words they will use for conveying their intentions to their contacts. For those of us who write notes or send email messages, we also make many choices in selecting the words and turns of phrase that best deliver to others the thoughts, and perhaps some of the feelings, we wish to communicate. No matter how rapidly we compose with a pen or type on a keyboard, we make many and frequent decisions about both the content of our message and the means for communicating it. Sometimes, we might pause before sending a message, permitting us to consider whether or not we are satisfied with our composition, however brief or lengthy it might be.

From one perspective, writing is hard work when compared to placing a phone call, where our voices can carry as much meaning as the words we use, and where we have the benefit of audible cues from the recipients while we are speaking. But as most of us have learned from painful experience, there are times when face-to-face or telephone conversations are liable to increase misunderstandings rather than dispel them. When powerful emotions of anger, hurt, or love are present, writing is sometimes better than immediate contact with another person.

We can prepare ourselves beforehand if we are going to meet or speak with someone about a very sensitive topic, and there are times when we are certain of our responsibility to talk, not write. But when we choose writing as our channel for sending a particular message, we have the options of being able to select some words rather than others, of placing one expression before or after another, and for closely attending to the authenticity of what we say. We also can put as much time and effort as we wish into our writing.

We understand that our best efforts at communicating our intentions may not obtain the results we would like. We are free to decide what we will write and when we will send our message, but we are not in charge of any results, we do not determine recipients' thoughts or emotions, and we do not control whatever responses they might make to us.

Writing usually allows more opportunity for reflection and prayer than does a conversation, though it only takes an instant to listen for guidance or inspiration when we are speaking with someone. Still, when we write, we are able to pause for as long as it takes to find the manner, tone, direction, and specific words that seem to us appropriate for our needs as sincere communicators.

Whether we speak or write, we seem to be solely responsible for whatever we communicate. But when we are engaged in writing, many of us consciously open ourselves to inspirations, and seek them, even more than when we are speaking. We share the task of writing with God.

Writing is an opportunity for direct communication with God, since our desire to "say the right thing" coincides so very well with God's desire that we love one another as we are loved.