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Keys

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Keys

We have keys for cars, houses, and storage areas; pianos have keys, and music is played or sung on-key (or sometimes, by some of us, off-key ;) we also use common metaphors that relate keys with interior realities such as insights, beliefs, and decisions. Keys usually signify ready access to material objects but also to matters of the spirit, as in the expressions "keys to the kingdom" or "the key to my heart."

Some of us have many keys that open locks. Usually, a few of them are used quite frequently and kept close to hand, while other keys, though they might be related to possessions of great value, are only rarely employed. Some keys lie forgotten in a drawer or box with no apparent present connection with our lives.

Reflections on keys of any kind can lead to gratitude. If we call to mind whatever is ours to do, to use, or to open with keys, even the fact that we have some keys can elicit thankfulness.

The physical keys we have are small, yet they represent significant parts of our lives: homes, places of work, transportation, and stored goods. How many gifts, benefits, or even privileges our keys might signify for us! Whether few or many, whether "master" keys, or a multiplicity of individual keys, all of them symbolize our ability to satisfy a number of our needs and wants. Looking at our keys, considering the advantages we derive from their use, and usually take for granted, allows us to "see" with the eyes of our hearts far more than is present in the grooved pieces of metal that we can hold in our hands.

Some keys we think of as for our use exclusively, as in "mine," others as ours inclusively to be shared with one or more other persons, but we might consider all keys as representing gifts of God for our use as stewards, either as individuals or as members of small or large communities. The ideas of gifts and of stewardship add, rather than detract, from the value of our keys, because both words indicate the Creator's love for us and trust in us.

Though pianos have many keys, they are all closely related rather than unique or exclusive of one another. And if we play music or sing in a particular key, we can, no matter where we are in the world, all "unlock" the same tunes that are notated on paper. When we make good use of musical keys we do not open physical possessions that have been locked away, but rather we experience our hearts being opened to combinations of thoughts and feelings that lift our spirits. If we reflect upon the spiritual nature of keys in music, we can easily come to thankfulness.

All of us have some key insights into life that enable us to navigate encounters with new information, differences, and even some apparent contradictions. These keys, and ones like them such as key beliefs we hold and decisions we have made, are highly personal and practical means of unlocking and opening up our capacity to integrate rather than be pushed and pulled by the effect that persons, events, and experiences have upon us.

When keys are used in conjunction with others, trust is always a factor, even if we are only trying to sing in the same key. With reason, we are careful in selecting those to whom we might give the key – ready access – to our hearts, those whom we choose to love and whose love we accept. I think that the Creator of all keys is worthy of being handed the keys to our hearts.

The key to God's heart is always available to us: any and every person we treat with respect, including ourselves.