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Personal Inspiration

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Personal Inspiration

Inspiration is a personal experience, an experience of someone, not some thing. When we become aware of a new possibility, a potential solution to a problem, or a wider perspective on a situation, we are not the subjects of a physical, chemical or biological reaction, but of a personal encounter with God.

The effects of inspiration are greater and more significant for us than the thoughts and ideas themselves. For example, we could be concerned about how we are going to get from the place we are living to a meeting across town, and suddenly we recall that a friend mentioned that he or she was going to the same meeting. The thought of a possible resolution brings relief, but there is more. We might recognize in the thought that came so quickly and easily to mind, a hint of the love that caused it.

We enjoy inspirations because they are more than ideas; they are manifestations of personal love. We all appreciate being loved – really loved – with respect and appreciation for who we are. We cannot help but respond positively when we are valued and appreciated, with no expectations or requirements placed upon us. Such love is what we receive in every inspiration. God trusts us in a very particular way in each idea or impulse that helps us to choose and act for the better in our present circumstances. Most of us find these moments to be enjoyable, and cause for gratitude if we reflect on them.

To heighten our awareness of God's activity in the many ways we receive inspirations, we can ask ourselves: "Am I the direct, conscious cause of this thought that came to mind, or did I receive it?" "Did I create this new possibility by my own efforts alone, or did I experience it as a discovery from within?" Of course we learn much from all that we observe, remember, admire, and believe. But many an "aha" moment, if we consider it honestly, has something of "gift" about it, not simply the result of our own capabilities. Most inspirations take place within us, and come to us in our own thoughts and images. But rather than being spontaneously grateful to ourselves on the exercise of our own powers, we rightly associate our joy and gladness with God's love and goodness.

Inspirations are not hap-hazard, even if we do not make them happen. Our openness, and the expectations we have of receiving inspirations, are important factors in our relationship with God. We can become so used to the daily process of inspired writing, speaking, and acting that

we take it for granted. But, on a day when we experience nothing but circular reasoning, absence of creativity, and the beginnings of frustration with ourselves, we might recognize the source of what we need, and ask God to help us. In seeking assistance, we do not expect that God will do the writing, speaking, or acting, but that we will receive within us, the intuitions, thoughts, and fresh images that will enable us to accomplish far more than we could if we were left to ourselves.

When we breathe, we take in a breath of air, we "in-spire." We hardly notice what we are doing until we have a respiratory ailment, and become quite conscious of drawing in the air we need. When we receive an inspiration, we take in more than a breath of fresh air; the Spirit of God moves in us wholly according to our personality. The more we recognize that the Holy Spirit is personally involved in our thinking, feeling, and acting, the more we experience our lives as inter-active rather than solitary. We can live unconscious of inspiration, or we can choose to invite and look for the movement and activity upon us of the Holy Spirit - personal inspiration.