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God of Surprises

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God of Surprises

If we try to arrange a surprise party for a family member or a friend, keeping all the plans a secret is usually quite difficult. Attempting to surprise one person takes the cooperation of many people, and always includes the possibility that some word or accident will reveal what we wanted hidden. But when we give or receive a real surprise, joy is almost always part of our experience.

We surprise one another with more than parties. When we wrap gifts or enclose notes in an envelope, we do so to enhance the element of joyful surprise that is part of what we intend for the recipients. If we think of some of the best surprises we have had, even though the events might have been long passed, we might again have feelings of joy as we recall the occasions. We value good surprises for ourselves, and want others to experience them too.

God loves to surprise us, and is the undisputed master of the art of surprising. God can organize a "surprise party" with no danger of the secret getting out. Though there might be a small or a large number of people involved, God does not have to explain the plan or state the necessity of secrecy to anyone. All of us have been involved in God-given "surprise parties" for others, without knowing ahead of time that we were involved. For example, several of us might have made an independent decision to visit someone, and have come together within the same time-frame, and so to have affirmed and confirmed an individual in his or her sense of being valued and valuable: an unlooked-for, joyous gift.

We might look into our own past, and consider whether or not we have been the recipient of a joyful surprise that was ours, and at the same time a surprise to those who were the givers. Perhaps a group of people gathered together for a particular event, and discovered that we or someone else present was concerned for a sick relative or friend. Suddenly, almost everyone spontaneously made an encouraging or supportive comment: a surprise gift, pleasing to all who gave, and to the one who received. God delights in bringing people together who are open to inspiration and have exactly the previous experiences that enable them to provide a joyful surprise for an individual and themselves. Without the need for committees or myriads of email messages, God brings together terrific surprise parties.

We have been the beneficiaries of many individual surprises from God. Some we recognized for what they were, and felt accompanying joy and gave spontaneous thanks; others perhaps gave us some small pleasure at the time, but we moved on so quickly to the next event on our personal agendas that we did not appreciate them, and so did not fully receive them. A "best practice" is to take a few moments in the day to look back at the sequence of our experiences with the eyes of our hearts. We might be surprised (a present joy) when we recognize some of the gifts we had received but not acknowledged at the time they occurred. A gift evokes joy at the moment of recognition and acceptance. Once we have become aware of some of God's surprises, we might reasonably expect that more will follow.

When we express gratitude to our friends for a gracious surprise that they planned and accomplished for us, they are pleased. Bonds of friendship and care deepen as we freely give and receive. Giving thanks to God for the "surprises of the day" gives us pleasure in the remembering, and surely pleases our Creator.

Each of us is a unique "surprise" in all of God's creation.