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## What Do You Want?

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## What Do You Want?

Much depends upon the attitude of someone who asks "What do you want?" We know that the question can be a direct request for information, accompanied by a willingness to comply, as when parents seek to meet some needs of their children. The question can also express irritation, as when someone believes that a request is misdirected or unreasonable.

What is God's perspective in asking us "What do you want?" We might be surprised to imagine God asking us what we want, when it would seem far more appropriate for us to be asking what God wants. But if we are capable of desiring to meet the needs of others, we can believe that God is both the source of such an attitude of caring in us, and is the model of such concern. God indeed asks about what we want, and does so in a variety of ways.

God can ask the question – and so can we – in order to help us reflect, and to become more consciously aware of the significant issues in our lives rather than some of the mere wishes, fantasies, or inconsequential thoughts that might come to mind. God inspires us to consider more deeply what we want so that we will readily discover within ourselves the directions and manner of living that are most fulfilling for us and helpful to others. God acts, as would a dear friend, leading us to consider what for us is our vocation or calling: what we really and truly want in life. Leading and inspiring us to reflect on such a question is not at all the same as taking responsibility for the decisions and actions that belong entirely to us. In this way, our desires, and God's desires for us, are very often found to be identical.

When we enquire about another's needs or desires, we do not always fulfill their requests. In deciding what to do, we take into account our own capacities and motives, and we also make a considered judgment as to what would be truly helpful to the individuals with whom we are relating. God wants what is best for us, and likewise does not always immediately give us what we might want.

"What do you want?" can be asked about a small particular, as when an ice cream sales person suggests to a customer that he or she make a selection of a flavor. But we often use the question in a broader sense, as when someone might knock on the door of our office or home, and we do not know why the person is coming to us. God does know everything there is to know about us, but for our own self-knowledge, wants us to consider frequently what we want in life, in

our relationship to God, and in our relationships with others. When we reason, reflect, and pray over the important aspects of our lives, we are much more likely to become consciously aware of the better options before us – those that are in accord with our deepest values – than to let ourselves be unduly pushed and pulled by passing thoughts, shallow impulses, and mere surface attractions.

Whenever we are ready, we can imagine that God looks at us with great love, and asks us an open question: “What do you want?”