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## A Good Mystery

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## A Good Mystery

Some people enjoy reading mystery stories, in which crimes are solved, mostly through the use of skillful reasoning and openness to inspiration. Mystery stories are fine entertainment for those who like the challenge and the clever twists and turns of the plots, as well as appreciation for the humanity of the characters the authors have created.

We use the word mystery in another sense when we refer to puzzling facts or situations for which we have no explanation: everything from the disappearance of a set of keys, "They were here a minute ago; it's a mystery how they could be gone," to our inability to understand fully another person, "She's a complete mystery to me." We might have incomplete knowledge, as of the origins of human life, and admit that some aspects are still mysterious: "We know we are here, but cannot explain fully how we came to be."

Almost everything about God can rightly be called mysterious: The mystery of God's love for us, the mystery of faith, the mystery of the Eucharist, and many others. Also, every event in the life of Christ can be considered as a mystery: an event to be looked at with reason and reflection, open to inspiration and ever-new discoveries, without any one of us ever fully comprehending all that God does in even one small portion of the life of Christ.

When we think or talk **about** God, we might use the word mystery in the sense that there are many things that we cannot possibly know or understand. We also talk about the mysterious ways of God working in us and in the world. We notice and learn some of God's actions and movements in our lives, much as we can enjoy reading a mystery story that, when we have finished, leaves us in admiration of what we learned and experienced. We are incapable of comprehending God, eternal and infinite. God is a true mystery to us. But we can appreciate the cleverness of the Author of the seas and skies and earth and all created things, as we keep learning more about the mysteries of creation. Pondering the mystery of God is a pleasurable and profitable activity that does not "grow old" no matter how often we engage in it. And, for all who engage the Jesus stories of the Gospels, there is no joy quite like that of experiencing directly and personally the mystery of God-as-human relating with us.

When we talk **to** God, we also enter a process that is somewhat mysterious. We know what it is to pray; we have experience of

meaningful communication with God. But how this takes place, how much is "us" and how much is "God," how much is our initiative, how much is God's we cannot measure or know for certain. Yet, the mysterious aspect of prayer is often consoling and interesting, and a significant quality of our relationship with God. We can almost take for granted the easy access we have to God, at any time and in any place, but we can never explain fully what takes place when we pray.

When we consider that we creatures are able to not only converse with our Creator, but to partake of never-ending friendship with God, we have encountered a very good mystery.