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Saving Experience

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Saving Experiences

We can recall and savor some experiences of being saved, but we cannot save experiences the same way as we can a collection of photographs. Which is more important: being saved, helped, or assisted when we are in need, or having a complete understanding of how it takes place? Whether or not we know why we were given aid when we needed it is not as immediately significant as the experience of relief when someone does for us what we could not do for ourselves. Gratitude is a worthy response to saving experiences.

Saving experiences occur more frequently for those who seek help when they need it. Some of us are more prone to wait until someone whom we believe cares for us figures out what we need, and responds. I have found that God is more likely to help me when I directly ask, rather than to tell myself "God knows," and keep my concerns to myself. With all relationships, knowing is not the same as experiencing. Someone might know what we need, but when we ask, we bring to the relationship our gifts of trust and honesty, so that the experience becomes interpersonal rather than one-sided. God delights in responding to us in those instances where we cannot, by any skill or power of our own, take care of our present requirements.

We might find within us at times a kind of "shadow" that insists on knowledge as being of more importance than experience. We can get caught into thinking about how or why neither God nor anyone else would help us, to the point that we deprive ourselves of the opportunity for a saving experience. Our concepts and plans can oppose the reality that "I cannot, but someone else might be able, and willing." Facing the experience of need is the opposite of denial, and allows us to open ourselves to the authentic use of a concept that is underappreciated by supposedly self-reliant individuals: "I need help."

A gift is not much of a gift unless it is accepted. We honor those who help us by graciously accepting what they give to us: a word of encouragement, a helping hand, or a supportive presence from a fellow human; a spiritual shift in attitude, the sudden reduction of anxiety, or a clear intervention from God.

If we have accepted an incidence of being saved we might want to spend some time in grateful reflection on the personal nature of the gifts that have been given to us – the generosity, thoughtfulness, or completely spontaneous kindness that lay behind the response to our needs. Seeking multiple causes for gratitude is the exact opposite of

proclaiming ourselves to be weak and dependant. Rather, expressing appreciation for what we have freely been given is a fitting expression of honest self-respect as well as respect for those who have been gracious to us.

Most of us who turn to God in times of need have become aware that some forms of significant help are given to us in an on-going manner. With good reason, Jesus taught us to ask, "Give us this day our daily bread." We might follow the same rule in our daily concerns about patience, care-giving, or any aspect of our lives that we seem not able to set in place by a simple act of the will. God has never asked or expected us to be God. Since we are created in the image of God we are in the privileged position of being family members, who can expect help – always based on infinite love – at any moment that we are inspired to seek it.

Saving experiences are all about living life fully, in love.