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Winds

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Winds

When the wind blows, the temperature usually changes – if not according to measurement by a thermometer, by the sensation of heating or cooling that it causes in us. When the Spirit blows, we cannot measure the consequences, but we can feel them in our hearts and recognize them in our reflections.

We cannot see the wind itself, but we are certain of its presence by its effects: the swaying of tree branches, the movement of clouds, of dust, sand, and other objects, and the many different sounds that we hear. We are able, with or without measuring devices, to recognize not only the wind's direction, intensity, and other qualities, but to make reasonable, helpful decisions based on our perceptions about the motion of the wind.

We do not see God's Spirit, yet all of us are quite capable of detecting the direction towards which this wind would move us: greater trust in God, more expansive hope, and deeper love. If we decide to move in the direction the Spirit indicates, we will fulfill the purpose of our existence; if we choose otherwise, we gain nothing for ourselves or anyone else. We do not need weather reports or gauges to notice how God's love moves in our minds and hearts.

What happens when the Spirit blows where it wills, and we not only notice the activity, but accept? Only good things: inspirations to try new ways of praying, of relating with others, of doing ordinary things gracefully; prompts to take on responsibilities together with the courage to carry them through; encouragement to take risks that are founded on hope; support for words and deeds that are based on love rather than fear. Weather-winds do not take us into account, while God's Spirit blows always for our benefit.

Winds can be dry, as in a desert environment, or humid, as in a tropical climate. We talk about the "wind chill factor" when the weather is cold, and about the danger of fire when the wind is both hot and dry. Though we can to some extent moderate the effects of wind by our selection of clothing, means of transportation, and buildings, we do not control the force and direction of the winds.

We do not direct the Spirit of God, any more than we control the weather, but we can invite God to move in and around us, to great effect. The life-giving breath of God is more powerful than the strongest wind, and also as delicate as the gentlest breeze. Though we

might think that our needs at the time of our asking are for “just a touch of air,” we might find ourselves and our environment caught up in an ongoing whirlwind of new and necessary movements. God remains Creator, and we the non-controlling beneficiaries of all-knowing Love. We do well to seek the grace of God in our lives, but we cannot know ahead of time, where it will lead.

Just as many of us grow accustomed to the winds of nature, and habitually make adjustments related to them, we also become familiar with the changing movements of the Spirit in our lives. At one time we can be moved to tears without knowing why, and in another moment filled with a powerful desire to act on behalf of justice. Physical winds can chill or warm us, depending upon their source in nature. The breath of God might cool the heat of anger for our well-being, but never chill us to our harm. The one Source can also warm our cold hearts, but never enflame us to destructive thoughts or actions.

Winds will blow, we will choose how to respond.