

## [23] FOUNDATION: FACT AND PRACTICE

God who loves us creates us and wants to share life with us forever. Our love response takes shape in our praise and honor and service of the God of our life.

All the things in this world are also created because of God's love and they become a context of gifts, presented to us so that we can know God more easily and make a return of love more readily.

As a result, we show reverence for all the gifts of creation and collaborate with God in using them so that by being good stewards we develop as loving persons in our care for God's world and its development. But if we abuse any of these gifts of creation or, on the contrary, take them as the center of our lives, we break our relationship with God and hinder our growth as loving persons.

In everyday life, then, we must hold ourselves in balance before all created gifts insofar as we have a choice and are not bound by some responsibility. We should not fix our desires on health or sickness, wealth or poverty, success or failure, a long life or a short one. For everything has the potential of calling forth in us a more loving response to our life forever with God.

Our only desire and our one choice should be this: I want and I choose what better leads to God's deepening life in me.

*Note:* This consideration is to be read over by the retreatant a few times each day during the first few days of the retreat. The statements here are truly a foundation for us believers in how God, the world, and ourselves are all related in Jesus's imagery of the reign of God. The prayer of the retreatant at this time may well be guided by scriptural texts which will enlighten or reinforce the notions contained in this foundation (see the suggested Scripture texts, A, numbers 1-13, at section [261], below).