

April 10, 1981

- *Faith as a function of the soul*
- *Understanding as a function of the mind*
- *Response to evil (e.g. the shooting of President Reagan)*

God rejoices that you again turn to God with your lights and direct your prayers for help.

Since your last meeting as a group, so much has happened in the public eye which can only confirm God's presence, accompanied by the constant reality of the powers of evil. Both God and evil are a part of life. What you experience in observing the events of the past two weeks may be unusual and disturbing to you, but the truth remains that such events occur daily throughout the world. It is only when these events touch the lives of those in public view that humanity stands up and responds with indignity and rage and profession of faith.

Human life, very naturally, elicits such extremes as rage and faith. The rage or anger or bitterness, while natural, does not emanate from God. It comes from your sense of understanding that certain expected conduct is directly violated, and it is perfectly natural. God's placement within these events is not in the form of protest or anger. God's placement becomes visible more clearly when the negative emotions of the moment subside, and individuals become aware of the opportunities for growth out of the events.

Of course, you are opposed to killing, but that opposition can only be constructive when you view the opportunities for change. By examining the changes which result from some distance in time, God's presence becomes evident. Already you may have expressed a sense of relief in the realization that those who are injured will recover. The news reports claim it is a miracle, but it is an act of God. A miracle cannot be explained. An act of God is its own explanation; there is no reason to seek more. God's presence, therefore, can be viewed even within the short perspective of a matter of days or weeks.

The events which took place, we have said, occur daily and in so many ways unknown by you. Because you are not aware of them, you tend to lose sight of their occurrence, and you also have a diminished view of God's working in the world through the results of such occurrences. Of course, God's presence is as strong for each of those of which you have no knowledge as it is with the events which have been made so much a part of the collective consciousness in the country.

Because you cannot be aware of God working in the world through people in a direct sense, it must be accepted by faith. Faith is not only the placing of yourself in God's hand; it is also an ability to accept the reality that God responds. The strength of your faith varies. There are times when you feel God's presence in your lives, and you say you have great faith. But faith is really exercised when you do not see God's

April 10, 1981

presence and must only believe that it is there. The recognition of God's working is just that, a recognition. It is not a belief in something which can be seen.

Your faith may be strengthened by these events of the recent past when you accept the fact that God is here with you, that God is with all people. It may seem a platitude to say that God is everywhere, for indeed you have heard that many times, but after experiencing so much turmoil, God's presence becomes a more recognizable fact, and you have more cause to strengthen your faith in God's power through the realization that what has transpired is only a microcosm of what takes place in human existence.

You face opportunities requiring you to exercise faith. You are placed in events which find no easy solutions, and yet you are given the capacity to be stable, to be calmed and assured through the exercising of faith that God is present. Although you are growing in your knowledge of the workings of God and the importance of your soul, the real growth in your faith is slow. It is difficult. You need confirmation of God. It is like being fed. You need the nourishment of being reminded by God's presence. If you had no reminders, if there were no communions, if there were no books and other materials attesting to God's working in a human life, your faith would grow more slowly. Indeed, it might stagnate. God understands that. It is for that reason that you are drawn together in your desire to learn more about God and the importance of your human life. It is a confirmation or a support which gives strength to your soul, enabling you when the time arises to have faith in an unseen God.

God spoke through us to you about the need for you to recognize God's presence in another. That, too, is an act of faith. Can you readily see God's presence in the man who shot the President? Can you see evidence of goodness? Can you recognize a divinity, or do you feel he is an agent of evil forces? The truth remains that he is divine as you are divine. That takes faith to accept, for you cannot see that divinity. You cannot see evidence of it. You are aware only of the evil. You must exercise faith. He is divine. He was motivated by forces out of his control, but he still has the spark of God in the same abundance as each one of you.

Pray for him and for all others who do harm. Pray for those who do not reflect God's light strongly. Pray that through all of this their souls will be strengthened, and that evil will have a weaker grasp upon the actions of the body.

The legal solutions to the problems of crime respond to the actions taken, not to the individuals' souls. It is for you to respond to those souls. It is your act of faith. Exercise it, strengthen it. Seek more opportunities for exercising your faith. Look for ways of giving it growth, for nourishing it, and testing it. Don't expect that faith only comes through a kind of intellectual understanding. Faith is a function of the soul. Understanding is a function of the mind. The soul and the mind are vastly different, so do not confuse the actions of one with the territory of the other. Through understanding

April 10, 1981

you may gain a sense of confidence, but it is rightly the growth, the strengthening, the brightening of your soul which contributes to the broadening of your faith.

Such strengthening, such growth, cannot be accomplished without your effort. Therefore, look for those opportunities. You will see the confirmation of that faith at some later time. Remember those instances when faith was your only response, and then recognize, yes, God did answer the prayer. God was the justification for that faith.

We bless you as a reflection of God's love. God holds you in protecting care and strengthens you and gives you that faith that you need throughout your life.

Amen.