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- *Suffering*
- *Violence and fear*
- *All humans are innocent*
- *Capital punishment*
- *Transform imbalance to balance*
- *Commandments to love*

[Note: Recent current events include terrorist bombings of subways and a bus in London, and a suicide bombing that killed many children in Iraq, as well as increased violence in Afghanistan]

God, your Spiritual Center, Father, Mother, whatever you wish to identify the Spirit Center of All, is with each of you—with you as you are together, but equally importantly, with you when you feel most alone, for your lives are never fully alone, regardless of how you may feel. You may sense a loneliness in the company of many. You may sense a loneliness that is not shared in the presence of others. Nevertheless, you are always with God and you are always a part of what God is. You are always with your guides. There is no time when you are truly alone. You may feel lost at times—lost in terms of wisdom, lost in terms of health, lost in terms of spirit—but you are never lost. You are always connected to God. You are always with us; we are always with you.

Human life is filled with the challenges that we speak of frequently. These challenges are essential. It is why you experience human life. It is why each of us experienced human life. There are lessons and experiences to be shared. There is wisdom to be drawn from all that you encounter, both the bad and the beautiful.

You are only too well aware of the random aspect of human suffering as a result of continued violence around the world. You may wonder, “Why must such lessons be present that result in such terrible agony? Aren’t there other ways of learning the lessons of human life beyond those that create pain and endless suffering, death?”

As you know from previous messages, these events of great tragedy do not come accompanied by the wishes of God. It is not God’s intention that anyone suffer, excruciatingly at times. You often speak about the suffering of innocent people, but it is limiting when you express your sadness at the suffering of innocents, for in reality the tragedy that you see is the tragedy of suffering. It is not an issue of talking of innocent children, innocent people, for all are innocent if one measures innocence by what one deserves. No one deserves to suffer...*no one*, whether military or not, rich, poor, evil-doing or devoted to what is good. No one deserves, for deserving implies a punishment of sorts, a retribution, an earning of what is received. The truth is, all human beings are innocent.

All human beings share in the need to live. There are many characteristics associated with that life. For some, life can be independent; for others, life is clearly dependent upon the loving presence and skills of others. Whatever the nature of that

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life, it is the tendency of life to wish for continuation. There are, of course, events in life—illnesses, emotional events, psychological states—which interrupt the desire for continuity, but the natural direction of life is to live. All life comes to an end. There is no need for you to be reminded of that. But life is a cycle, a cycle of continuity and a cycle of completion, fulfillment.

Part of the challenge to living is responding to those events that interrupt that continuity. Some of those events are self-inflicted, some of those events are the result of others, but nevertheless, it is part of life that interruptions to the continuity belong to the human experience. It is God's intention that life be lived, that it not be interrupted, but there are many reasons why life is interrupted. All these reasons can be described in terms of balance.

We've spoken of illness as being an imbalance and that life seeks to maintain or to recover balance. When there is imbalance emotionally, the results can terminate the life of an individual or the lives of many. When there is a physical imbalance, it may lead to physical illness. That illness may be closely related to an emotional or psychological illness. Imbalance belongs to, has a place in, the experience of human life. Human life can be seen as an effort to transform from imbalance to balance.

Your meeting together over such a long period of time is an attempt to convert what you feel is an imbalance in your lives, and thereby to achieve a spiritual presence that provides for the balance that you seek. Your lives are ultimately for the purpose of spiritual growth. That is the balance, that is the goal of all human life.

For those who are ill and for those whose illnesses are manifested in destructive ways toward others, the imbalance is evident and challenging. It is discouraging that it may even become inspiring. Each of you has experienced encounters with others who are out of balance. Each of you has experienced moments in your own lives when you have struggled with balance and imbalance. Your spiritual search is an outgrowth of your own personal structure, your own personal struggles, your own personal demons, your own personal needs, your own personal physical conditions.

In your path on the way to balance, you cannot be fully consumed by a sense of self, for your path that you follow contains more than you alone. Your path is adorned and graced by the presence of many others who also share the journey. Consequently, you have a responsibility and an opportunity of finding appropriate means for serving those in need.

We have said that you must experience love to become loving, and you must experience compassion to become more compassionate. That is very true, but the challenge is yours to find ways of going beyond what you see around you in order to respond to what you *know* is around you. You see tormented beings, you see destruction, you see suffering, but learn to see beyond that, to acknowledge the love which is capable of being experienced and, in turn, expressed by others. When there is physical suffering, there is always an individual with the same potential to connect to

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God as one who is filled with rejoicing. When you are aware of those who create such suffering, you may feel a sense of injustice or anger, but get beyond that to see the beauty of what lies within another.

What are the implications of this deeper vision of another? First, never judge the value of another human being. You might not like what that individual does, but you cannot judge that individual. Second, respect the right of all who experience life to continue that life. The practice of killing someone who has killed, for example, only results in more lives being terminated. You cannot approach those who create suffering with anything other than compassion and a desire to provide what is needed for balance. Punishment is not the answer.

For those who are the victims of suffering, they need a particular sense of not being alone. They need to know they are being supported. They need to sense at some level the presence of many who wish to uplift and sustain. How is that expressed? It is expressed most effectively through prayer, because when you listen in prayer, you will learn, you will know without a doubt, what it is, what place you have at the table of support, what gift you can offer in support. For each individual, the answer to the prayer will be different. For some, the commitment may be medical; for others, financial; for others, loving prayer and an effort to open those who suffer to a clear vision of the Spirit Center of God as a comforting presence in their suffering.

Events such as the world has observed can serve to bring many together in the need for understanding. There are reasons—they are not justifications—but still causes that lead people to bring harm upon others. It is appropriate, not merely to deal with the actions, but rather to understand the causes. Violence is caused by fear; fear leads to anger. Fear is experienced by all human beings. Fear belongs to the human experience. It is how you deal with what you may fear that brings growth and light to your souls.

These challenges that create such negative energies in a human life are there for you to respond to. We, your guides, are with you to help in that response. The nature, direction, and character of your response has a direct influence on your spiritual growth. Your spiritual growth has an immediate impact on your relationships with others. All are intertwined together. Your life brings strength and light to your soul. Your soul brings character to your life. The interdependence between one and the other cannot be mistaken, for your human life and your spiritual life are two parts of the same entity. You cannot separate your physical from your spiritual. What is physical impacts the spirit; what is spiritual impacts what is physical.

Human suffering, whether inflicted by others, whether caused by physical imbalance, cannot be rejected. You may not wish to experience these challenges, but if you accept their importance and the grace that they bring to your life, then you have gone to great lengths to provide meaning and direction to your life.

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Love all that you come in contact with.
Love all people. Respect and honor human life.
Love all of nature. Respect and honor nature.
Love what is inanimate as well as what breathes.
Love all forms of energy that are positive.
Love all forms of energy that you identify as the creation of God.
In so doing, you embrace all of God's creation.

Life has meaning, life has purpose, and life is never defeated. Your life continues, although your physical life ultimately will be completed. Your life continues, for what is life but the spirit, the soul, the part of the God or Spirit Center that you acknowledge.

Embrace your own spiritual center. Embrace what life offers. Be willing to reach out in prayer, in understanding and respect, and acknowledge your place in all of creation.

You are blessed by God's presence. We are blessed by your awareness of your capacity to listen.

Amen.