

December 15, 1991

- *Human dignity*
- *Revising the Golden Rule*
- *The response to prayer is always human*
- *December's opportunities to remember those in need*

The creation which is God surrounds each of you and all that has been created with love and light. You are God, each of you. It is the fundamental bond that holds you together. We communicated to you during your last gathering about the importance of recognizing unity. We would like to further that by emphasizing the divinity which you share. You know that you are divine because you share in the spiritual unity which is God, but more important than recognizing that divinity is the exercising of it.

Each of you has before you concepts of how you imagine God to be responding to what transpires in your lives. Each of you has a vision of the place of God when you experience joy. You also have a vision of the place of God in your lives when you experience tragedy, frustration, or loss, depression. Because each of you is divine you have an understanding of how God responds and a sense of how you must respond. Recognizing the response of God because God is divine means that you recognize your own responses because you are divine.

The Golden Rule which you have known since childhood should actually be revised: Do unto others as you would have God do unto you. It is you as an individual and collectively as well who actually bring about God's response within the human world. God does not simply respond in some objective distant way. When God responds through prayer, that response is brought into existence through human response. If one prays, for example, to be cured of an illness, it is not God who provides the cure. It is human beings who issue the response. If you pray to be cured, it is you who ultimately respond. It is you who accept the condition and grow as a result. It is a combination of the efforts of others that may ultimately bring about a physical response to an illness.

Whatever it is that you pray for, the response will always be human. You respond or another responds to needs that you have. When another prays for help, sustenance, encouragement, a lightness of spirit, it is you who provide for those responses. Each of you therefore is essential to God's care within the world. You may pray for strength of the spirit, but it is ultimately through human life that those prayers are answered.

God is not an abstract figure. As we have said God is an assembly of all that has been created and all that will be created. God is not an abstract power. You are a part of that creation. You are the response of God. It is because humans share a mutual divinity that humans also share in the divine response. When another is in despair, it is

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up to you to reach out. When you are in despair, it is up to you to be open to the giving of others. It is up to you to be willing to accept the help of others.

How many times have you noticed individuals in great need of help who refuse that help on one grounds or another? They wish to go it alone, as you would say, and yet it is perfectly clear the extent and intensity and depth of those needs. The person who suffers and refuses help from others is rejecting the help of God.

Each of you must become more sensitized to the divine response. Each of you must feel inwardly what it means to be divine. Those who feel themselves to be separated from God and have God only as an external abstraction do not recognize their own divinity. Denying that divinity means that they lose the opportunity for divine response.

This is a time of year when much emphasis is put on the hope of joy. The hope often takes the place of joy. The emphasis on the ideals of the holiday season, the goals of the holiday season, cloud the reality that there are many for whom this season brings great pain. As you share your lives with friends, with family members, you must remember also those who suffer during this season. The joy that you seek is not achieved by all. The spirit of giving and sharing is too often superficial. Rather than considering merely the joy of giving and sharing with those you hold close, make an effort to give to others who are in need. We do not speak only of financial need. Most important is spiritual need. It is a time to focus energies on those who feel deprived, those who feel alone, those who experience depression, alienation, anger, discouragement. These are the people for whom the spirit of giving is meant. Giving to these in need is the divine response.

Celebrate life, but at the same time recognize what life includes. You do not celebrate one part of life—you celebrate all of life. It is a celebration of light. Lightness needs no illumination. It is the dark which needs the light. It is the dark in life which needs the illumination which you can each offer.

Yes, you are God. Your response to all of life can be God-like. You share in your unity a sense of divinity, and we urge you to exercise your true divinity in all aspects of your life, both in this season and throughout the months and years ahead. Recognize that divinity. Ask yourself, how would God respond, and then make that response your response. It is you who bring the light of God, the love of God, the peace of God to life. It is you who help to illuminate the creation of God.

We bless you with the light that you offer the world and the love that you have to give to others.

Amen.