

November 1, 2001

- *Making a difference in the world*
- *The difference between action and reaction*
- *Appropriate action begins with listening*

God is with each of you. God responds to your concerns. God responds to what is important in your lives.

There are times when you are all faced with questions for which you have no immediate answer. You understand the severity of concerns that are shared by all, and you wonder where you belong in the midst of such clamor. Your discussion this evening expressed essentially your desire to understand more fully where you go, what you do, what you say. It expressed concerns about whether others in authority fully understand where they are going, what they are doing and what they should say. We would like to devote our collective energies as your assembled guides together to a further understanding of where each of you is in the process of dealing with these very real and worldwide issues—issues that threaten your own sense of security, issues that threaten the lives of countless people throughout the world.

Each of you is a small part of the whole, but that small part is small only in numbers. You are not small in your spiritual presence. You are not small in your commitment to act in a way that is responsive to God's presence worldwide. That Presence is identified by many different names, but those names are ultimately of little importance. What is important is a recognition of a Spiritual Center.

Your place in these events that shape the world is an important place. It is a place characterized by a sincere desire for an enlightened path. Such a desire is never small. It is essential, it is crucial toward achieving a future reflecting God's loving brilliance among humanity. You should never feel insignificant in the face of enormous events of great consequence. You are not insignificant, you are not a small component. There is nothing diminutive about the search for God. There is nothing inconsequential about the commitment to finding what is good in another. There is nothing small or limiting in your commitment to God. There is nothing small in your commitment to your family, to your neighbors, to those with whom you work, to those across the world whom you have never met and yet identify with. So your position is anything but really small. Size obviously is not what we are referring to. Importance is what we seek to identify for each of you.

We have spoken to you about the importance of listening, but you must understand what your opportunities and responsibilities are for acting upon that which you hear in your listening. On a local plane rather than a national plane you immediately recognize the need to act, to reach out with a compassionate, nonjudgmental love. The importance of this on a local level cannot be overstated.

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You are, in the end, how you act. You are, in the end, as you reflect your deepest beliefs. The beliefs are important, but the trick, the challenge, for all is how to bring those beliefs into a reality. You are being asked to bring witness to your beliefs. You are being asked to bring life to your beliefs. For some, that action, that witness, involves visible action. For others, it is a quieter, more contemplative action as in prayer. Prayer is active, prayer is commitment, but prayer is also, for most, very private. We would like to discuss action which goes outside the circle of prayer, but action that is guided by prayer.

How do you respond in your community to what you feel is unjust, unwhole? Do you fret and wring your hands and say “that must not be,” or do you find yourselves being drawn into a direct, visible commitment to bring about that which you so deeply hold to be right, to be just, to be godly? We wish to give you the courage to act committedly based on your understanding, on your faith, on your perception of what reflects God.

If you witness injustice in your own community, in your own family, you must stand up and be willing to speak out for the forces of a loving justice—a justice which is based on love, not a love which is based on justice. It is love that is the center point, the place of gravity from which justice and compassion spring forward. Being committed to a loving relationship with your own society, you must act with courage when those around you who are not so committed raise their voices in opposition. It is not in the best interests of the community to which you belong to merely complain about what has not happened or what is happening that is wrong. You must feel the presence of God in your strength to stand up and speak, to stand up and act, to stand up and be a reflection of what is good and whole.

Your commitment locally becomes the starting point for commitment on a larger stage. You cannot stand for what is right in the midst of those who may not see clearly without receiving criticism that may at times be painful to hear. Progress in society, progress in any culture starts with a group that is numerically small, but a group that has a clear vision of what is ultimately right. That group grows in influence by its own witness. The message becomes its own validator. The validity, the truth ultimately is there for all to see.

How do you know when your position is indeed the appropriate one? You know through prayer, you know through the quiet, silent listening of your soul. When the time is right and you are open through prayer to guidance, you can believe, you can have faith that what you support, what you profess, how you live are appropriate for you.

We have spoken of the difficulties of not listening. There are far too many who are committed to a belief who have never really listened. Listening comes first. Out of the listening, love is strengthened. Out of a strong love comes a commitment to what is just. Out of a commitment to justice comes appropriate action.

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The challenge for all is to hear God's presence in your lives. It is to act with a clear and faithful understanding of what that presence means. Such a foundation for action, for a response to your fellow humans does not come quickly. It takes time to develop. Insight is not instantaneous. Insight is the result of much effort and a commitment to the importance of that insight.

Where do you fit into the global efforts to resolve such difficult conflict? First, you belong to an attitude of listening. Listen to your soul. Listen to God. Listen to your conscience. Be open to what feels right, not necessarily what sounds right. It is a listening to the feeling. When you see your path, you will then know where next to move.

It serves no purpose to be active for the sole reason of being active. There must be a center to the purpose. When you reach out with love to another, you are centered on your soul's connection to the spiritual unity of the entire creation. You must allow that to happen, to unfold, to blossom in its own time. When that moment arrives, you will know the action to take, for each individual response to your neighbors, to your family, to your society, to world events will be clear and will be different from the response of another.

Started by prayer, there is no wrong response. There is only a response, an action that is appropriate for you. This takes patience, it takes courage, it takes bottomless faith on your part. You can never be pushed into a corner of irrelevance when you are centered through prayer.

There are many in the world who oppose violence, whether it be the violence of military or the violence of the political quadrant. There are good responses for each of you. We urge you as strongly as we can to find a silence in your lives that allows you to listen to God and to be open to the path that is made available to you. Being filled with despair and frustration and sometimes anger does not put you in a position to listen. You become preoccupied with the need to do something rather than being occupied with a quest, a search for what it is that you as individuals can be doing. It all begins with prayer—prayer for your own openness, prayer for your ability to listen and to understand what you hear.

You are not insignificant. You are part of the web that connects all human life together. You **can** make a difference. You **are** important. You are given human life for the purpose of your spiritual growth, and it is that growth that is given form and character through your interactions with those around you and those further away. It is a spiritual journey you are on when you act as a result of hearing God in your life. It is not merely a human reaction. You are not **reacting** to others; you are **acting** as a reflection of God. Consider this difference—the difference of action and reaction. When you act through a clear view of God, you are taking the initiative. You are making a difference. Reaction—you are responding to what others initiate. That is more passive and it tends to be personal rather than spiritual in its genesis.

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Have no doubt, the peace that you seek will be achieved. It will be achieved because of human beings who are committed to the importance of peace and the sacredness of life. It is a goal that will be achieved. It is a worthy goal, but one that is not reached quickly. Feel that each of you is part of the process of unifying one life with another. Feel your commitment to that unification. You will gain insight in time about how that commitment can be brought into your actions, your behavior, your attitudes, your way of life, your values. It is a tall order, it is an enormous challenge, but it is precisely to meet such challenges that your souls have been given a human manifestation.

Life is valuable, it is sacred. There is nothing that reflects God that leads to the destruction of life. There is nothing intended by God that leads to the destruction of anything that has been created. Affirm life. Affirm that sacred reality. Be willing to stand up and demonstrate that affirmation through your own personal commitment. Retreat to prayer and commit yourselves to the listening that allows that prayer to grow into a strong voice, fostering a life that reflects God.

You are blessed by your abilities to listen. You are challenged to listen ever more deeply and you are urged to find responsible, meaningful, appropriate ways of bringing what you learn through your listening to fruition in the life you all share.

God's light *is* your light. God's path is available to all who turn with prayer toward that great Spiritual Center which is shared by each one of you. Rejoice in God's light, have faith in your prayer, and in the outcome of your work in the world.

Amen.