

June 29, 2000

- *Growth through choice*
- *All humans are related spiritually and genetically*

God is with each soul, with each physical life as well as spiritual. You all walk within the presence of God's light. The path is not always easy to recognize, but it is always illuminated. Each of you has much to bring to the development of your own spiritual selves, but you also have much to provide for everyone around you.

We spoke about choice—the importance of choice and the exercise of choice as a witness and acknowledgment of God. These choices involve your own particular lives, but they also have great impact on the lives of others. You are spiritually connected. You are indeed spiritual brothers and sisters. You are spiritually one family. All of humanity is spiritually a single unit, a single family. Just as there are differences in the patterns of living among human families as you recognize them to be, such is the case when viewing the entire family of humanity. In the more limited view of family, brothers and sisters approach life from different perspectives. They have different opinions. There is difference in pacing, of how one reacts as opposed to another. But despite those differences, there is an underlying recognition that the other is nevertheless a sibling. The other is related to you. The other is significant because of that relationship.

It is exactly the same relationship we speak of when we refer to *all* humanity. Being members of a single family is not merely metaphor; it is a clear statement of truth. You are *all* related to one another. If you were to travel back in time far enough, you would recognize that relationship more clearly, but in spite of the fact that the family has grown and expanded and developed branches which have in turn developed more branches which have in turn further divided and developed, the fact of your relationships being a single family relationship remains the same. You are related spiritually; you are related genetically. You may live in different societies in different nations with different customs and beliefs, but that relationship is undeniable.

When you choose to acknowledge that relationship, you are in turn creating more choices about how that relationship to all others can be manifest. How is it brought to light? What is the impact of acknowledging that relationship on your own lives? There is much to be said on this very subject, but we will take the first steps at this time.

If you recognize and accept your relationship as family with other individuals, you cannot deny their existence, their worthiness, their beauty, their grace, their spiritual essence. You may or may not agree with what another does, but those recognitions serve as an umbrella covering everything that you could possibly perceive as being negative. You can love your brother and sister but despise what they say. You can abhor what they do. You can disagree with their viewpoint, their politics, their behavior, but you cannot deny what is essential about them. This willingness to accept all humankind as equals

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expands further, for it gives rise to an understanding and acceptance of the differences that you do observe. Differences are not to be avoided; differences are not to be denied.

Emotional pain and suffering are part of what it means to live a human physical life in the presence of others and with a sensitivity to a wider perspective than one directed solely to oneself. The individual who is thoroughly self-absorbed is not aware of contrasting perspectives and so can feel no tension, no pain, no remorse, no anger. That is a very empty life that one should never consciously seek to pursue. When you are confronted by such differences and that confrontation is painful, you should welcome it, because it brings with it the opportunity for divinely inspired choices to be made.

The conflicts that we speak of between human beings are not at all unlike the conflicts that one experiences with issues such as illness. When a sibling is ill, a sensitive family member will respond to that illness through prayer motivated by love. When you experience illness as human beings, you must confront those challenges with the same love. You are not given human life to be free of pain, whether that pain is physical in nature or emotional, whether it is biological or interpersonal. Pain, imbalance as it were, belongs to life. It is in your approach to those challenges that you are presented with the choices of which we spoke.

You grow through choices. You grow through the decisions you make that impact your lives and the lives of others. You cannot make decisions for others; you can only make your own decisions. You can create an environment that may affect the decisions of others, but you do not make those decisions. You cannot by yourself change the course of illness. You can affect the environment in which that illness exists through medical and prayerful intervention, but you directly do not alter the state of that physical challenge.

You do, however, have complete control of your own response to such physical challenges. You can control your response to illness. You must first recognize you have a choice in how to respond. You can respond with despair, with anger, with self-pity, with fear. You can also respond in such a way that leaves no room for those reactions. The choice is yours; it is everyone's choice. When events happen in your lives, whether they are health events, interpersonal events, personal crises, you always can control your response.

If something naturally creates fear in another, it is obviously understandable that an individual experiences that fear. But that individual has a choice of remaining fearful or going beyond fear. If you are confronted with events that elicit worry and great concern, you can choose to hold on to that worry, or you can choose to release it and replace it by faith that all will work out according to what is best in the grand view and light of God. If you experience frustrations, fears, anxieties, you can choose to place those in God's hands and step back from them a bit, not to become uninvolved, but to enable you to become indeed involved within the illumination of God's presence. There are no

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challenges to individuals, communities, nations that are beyond the ability to be positively influenced by God's presence.

When you are concerned about the health of another, you can pray on behalf of another, you can offer the hand of support, you can offer loving presence, you can offer to go the extra mile, you can be loving, you can be compassionate, you can respond as you perceive a godly response—all of this you can do. You are not victims—you are not victims of disease, you are not victims in your relationships with other people, you are not victims of a relationship with another nation, you are not victims to acts of nature. You are fully empowered by God to take charge of your own responses. You cannot prevent something from happening, but you have full control over how you react and what its ultimate impact is on you.

You have the gift of choice in order to be in control of your own lives. You have the gift of choice in order to have a beneficial effect on the lives of others. What greater calling is there? Look upon your challenges as opportunities to exercise choice. Be willing to step back from those challenges in order to see and hear and feel God's presence within that interaction. By recognizing your kinship with all humanity, you are recognizing the kinds of choices that are appropriate. Deny that relationship with another person and you are cutting off the very choices which are the most beneficial to everyone. You must acknowledge your kinship with every human being. It is a large family, and there are obviously many relatives you will never know about. But what is essential is that you accept each person as one of your own.

It is important to recognize that the challenges you face physically, mentally, emotionally, medically are all presenting you with ways of acknowledging their belonging to the human experience. The family experience in the end is not just between people. The family experience is accepting all that happens within the family. Affirm your kinship. Act out that kinship with prayer, with love, with compassion, with faith, with confidence in God's presence without fear, without anxiety, without worry. It is a great challenge, but all are empowered to accept and succeed. Your guides are continuously present to enable you to grow through your interaction with life as you enjoy it and experience it at this time.

Our blessings are for your continued strength, for your acknowledgement of one another and of all that happens as you experience your human lives. You are surrounded by, you are bathed in God's eternal brilliance.

Amen.