

November 20, 1982

- *When your vision of God dims, be open to experiencing God through actions of humans and guides*

God is with you at this time as at all times, but it is at times like this that you experience a greater sensitivity to God's presence. It is easy to say that you believe in God being a part of your daily lives, but it is quite another matter to feel that presence. When you gather as a group, you present yourselves with an opportunity of widening your vision of what it means to recognize God's presence.

For some in the group, it is a time of reaffirmation of belief in God. For another, it may be an attempt to really see God for the first time. And yet, for another, it is the hope of receiving much needed strength. You all come together in a reflection of different hues. You are joined from different perspectives, and therefore you bring different meanings to this opportunity. That is common for all who join in an attempt to focus more clearly on God. No two people approach God from an identical perspective, for no two lives are identical.

Despite this disparity of experience, there is a common bond which unites that experience and gives it an identity which can be considered a single unit. This bond, this common goal, is the seeking of a vision of God. It may be the first vision. It may be the desire for a continued vision, or the regaining of a lost vision. But the vision of God is central to each of you. That is our objective too. We exist at many levels of activity. We serve you, but we also serve each other and ourselves as individual souls. Recognizing the difference of service, one still must acknowledge that the purpose of that service is a vision of God.

When you face discouragement, you do not see God clearly. There are many who reject God outright because of discouragement. There are many who acknowledge God only when things are going their way. There are many who seek a recognition of God as a means of bargaining for their future. How many times are stories told of so-called "foxhole conversions?" When all seems lost, one suddenly says, "God, if you will do this, then I will respond in such an appropriate manner."

That is not a vision of God, for God does not make deals. God does not strike bargains with humanity. You do not strike such a bargain with a child by saying, "If you do something, I will love you." Nor does the child really feel that she or he can love a parent only if a parent responds to the child in a particular way. The child may say that, but the meaning is not really centered on such fact. For though the child may say, "Do this and I will love you," the parent's love for the child remains unchanged. It is the child's perception which is at issue here.

And so it is with a vision of God. Whether or not God is seen in one form or another, God is still present. When it is dark outside and you cannot see the trees, the trees do not disappear from reality. They remain. They remain in their full character and

November 20, 1982

beauty. It is only your perception which is dimmed. Each of you should accept the fact that there will be times in your lives when your view of God is dimmed, when such view is totally absent. If you accept this as a part of life, then there is no opportunity for guilt, for a sense of failure at somehow having forgotten God's presence. There is no need for guilt, for you are human and your experiences are human. Your reactions to experiences are human. There is no failure if you view your life as being lived in a human manner according to the intentions of a human life. What can you be guilty of? You are living human life as a human. You are not failing in any way.

Therefore, if you lose the sight of God's presence, it is not a matter to be taken with guilt, but to be accepted. You may not accept it as desirable, but yet you can choose to accept the experience as natural. When vision is clouded or needs strengthening, help comes not just from prayer but more importantly from others. If you find it difficult to see God during a particular moment in your life, all the preaching that is done about the presence of God will have no meaning. You achieve your vision of God not by being told of God, but by experiencing God. Such experience is achieved only through another. It may be through another person or through another aspect of nature, but your vision is reinforced through the experience.

Therefore, each of you has the potential for providing the light of God to another. That light is offered more by who you are than by what you say. How is this experienced? You may say, "I am a good person, but I can't go around telling people such a statement. How is another to recognize the God in me?" It is through your actions, because what you are is shown to others by what you do and not by what you say. The deeds are the tip of the iceberg. The tip is supported from beneath. What you do is supported by who you are.

Although you are always changing in your growth and outlook, you are still in control of what you do—the way you respond to strangers, the way you respond to those within your immediate family or to those with whom you worship or work. What you are as a person comes through in this response to another. You may meet strangers that you have never seen. Such strangers may be in great need of the recognition of God. They may not say in so many words, "I need to see God in life," but their needs are ultimately supported in whatever fashion by the need to experience God, and you have that potential of demonstrating the presence of God to those strangers.

Such demonstration may not be through what you say. It may be a smile, it may be in the kinds of things you are doing, it may be a direct interaction, or it may be an observed action of yours. There are so many ways that you can reflect God's presence. But that potential is there, and you must be willing to accept the responsibility, for if God is a personal reality in your lives, then you readily accept the responsibility of living your life according to that recognition. Of course it is a choice, and you may choose to neglect your understanding, but in so doing you do not fully see God's presence. Even

November 20, 1982

for us, whose vision of God is clearer than yours, we do not see God in a complete sense.

If we were suddenly given such a complete view of God, with all of the understanding of that sight, we would have no more choice. We would be incapable of choosing to ignore God. If you are given such complete understanding of God, there would be no choice left for you but to be drawn toward God. Choice is important, and for that reason you and we are kept from a full vision. Recognizing your limited vision of God, you may still reflect your understanding in your lives as they relate to others around you. That is an important reason why we reflect God to you, for it is in your response in living among others that we see the fruition of our efforts. We make possible a vision of God, however limited, but you give that vision meaning as you live your lives. When that vision becomes dimmed or somehow obstructed, you must be willing to recognize God as seen through the actions of others.

Note we say a willingness to recognize, for though others may reflect God, if you do not recognize their reflection, then you cannot be helped by them. It is a mutual relationship which takes conscious effort. When you have a vision of God, you must be willing to display that vision by your actions. When you need a vision of God, you must be willing to keep your eyes open to such display. So both in the seeking and in the offering of God, there is a responsibility.

We pray for you as you offer your prayers for us. We pray that your vision may be strong, but when it is obstructed, we pray that your eyes may be opened to others and through them you may be given the sight of God. We pray for your vision, and we pray for the vision of all souls. We pray for our own and for those of souls who have progressed to an even higher plane, for their vision is certainly greater, but not yet complete.

Be open to God, and be open to others as a reflection of God. Such openness provides a richness to your life's experience beyond any attempts we might make to clarify for you the purpose of your lives. The presence of God's light is brilliant and penetrating. Be willing to let that penetrating light bathe your souls from within.

And now we bless you with God's love and with our prayers for your continual growth in your perspective of God within your lives.

Amen.