

THE PULSE OF SPIRIT



EMISSARIES
OF DIVINE LIGHT

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE AND PRAYER

14 APRIL 2008

I'd like to speak this morning about the nature of unconditional love and the nature of prayer. There are various ranges of prayer, and those ranges tend to be emphasized at different stages of our life.

We live in a world where, generally speaking, human beings take the attitude that something ought to happen, something ought to change, maybe somebody ought to do something. Maybe the passage of time alone will do it; maybe somehow God will intervene, or some angel will come and change things. Or maybe those people who are near me will get off the dime and do what I think they should.

The kind of prayer I'm talking about is the kind of prayer that is a deep realization that there is something in me that has to move and has to change. That is the nature of true prayer. It involves change and involves movement. When we first touch something that is high and wonderful in our life in some way, whether we call it "God" or something else, we feel the value of it deeply. In some way, we say to ourselves, how wonderful is this thing that I've touched; how precious, how sweet. That's a kind of worship and a kind of prayer, when we touch something that is higher than we are and that seems somehow separate from what we are, and we meet that with unconditional love. We give ourselves to it, at least in that moment.

There's another kind of prayer when a person says to themselves, "Well, I've touched something that is so beautiful and so wonderful, so precious." And the person says to themselves, "I want to have that with me in my life. I don't want to just touch it sometime. I want this to be a reality that I know every day." And a person asks, "How could I have this reality with me in all things and at all times?"

A person may realize that if they're going to have the reality that they've touched with them all the time, it won't do to just turn to it halfway, or sometimes. And while up to that point spiritual things may seem to have been a choice—one choice among many—a person may come to the realization that if what they have touched is to become something real and pervasive and ongoing in their life, it can't just be a choice, as if it were another hobby or another activity, another interest. "Let's see, I like bowling and music, I like my job, and I like God." Obviously, what we're talking about is in a different range. A person may come to see that if they're to have what they've touched with them all the time in all things, it has to be everything to them. And it may look like they're giving up some of the other things in their life at first.

We have a beautiful choir piece we sing sometimes. It's called "One Shall We Worship." In the depth of prayer, we come to see that when we worship one thing, when we value one thing above all else, in all things, first and last and always, nothing is taken away. Even though that's how it looks to a person at first, nothing is taken away. It means that there's something that transcends it all, that gets to be present in and through it all, through whatever it is, that gives it all value. And all the things that had gotten old and dusty and tired in your life all of a sudden take on a new glow.

As a person moves on their spiritual path, this way of having what is higher with them is not enough. It's not enough to have spirit present with us, perhaps like a still, small voice. Ultimately, in the roar of the world that we live in, on that basis the still, small voice seems to be overwhelmed at times; it seems to be small and delicate, something that has to be protected in a person's experience. Somewhere along the way, a person may come to the realization that they don't just want to have what is sacred to them *with* them in some way—that that's not enough. It's not enough to live in a world where that whole world seems to be claimed by something else, some other experience, while the person just keeps this small, little container of sacredness.

There's another kind of prayer that comes into a person's heart. I was with somebody the other evening who was commenting on a person they loved and respected greatly. They quoted what somebody had said about this person, which was, "He was a lion." They were referring to exactly this kind of prayer that I'm speaking of, because this isn't the prayer of someone who is somehow pleading to a God that's somewhere else. This is the prayer of someone who is bringing a prayer to their world, who is praying to their world in a powerful way, saying to their world that this which I have touched, this which I have loved, this which I do love, is who I am, and I will be this in my world and I will bring this into my world.

There is unconditional love that is at play through all of this. It takes unconditional love for what we have touched to invite it to be where we are—no conditions. Not asking God to change, not asking other people to change, not asking our circumstance to change.

Unconditional love implies another kind of unconditionality. So I want to use a phrase that maybe doesn't quite convey the whole thing but gives some idea of what I'm talking about. If we are to know unconditional love, there has to be the complement of unconditional love, and that is unconditional surrender. No, I won't ask God to change. *I* will change. I will open. I will put no conditions on my welcoming of what I love—no conditions. I will welcome what I love no matter what. And if I have that unconditionality on my openness, I can know the unconditionality of the love that is present.

If we have that experience, we have the opportunity to be unconditional love in our world. Now, I think for many people, the phrase "unconditional love" might bring up images of what that would mean. I could love everyone; everybody would like me because I would be such a

loving, wonderful person—wouldn't that be great? Certainly on a human basis, it's impossible to love that way. It's not really meaningful to love unconditionally that way. There are all kinds of conflicts that develop on that basis, because the people you will be trying to love will have conflicting demands on how you love.

But there is a way to love unconditionally. We know something about people who have brought unconditional love. There was a measure of that brought by Martin Luther King. I think he was probably in a learning process in the whole matter, as most of us are, but there was something of unconditional love brought by the man and touched by others because of him. And he was loved by some, he was feared by others, and hated by others.

Unconditional love—could we bring that without having exactly the same attitude of the One from whom we receive it? Do we think that we can receive unconditional love *our* way, on *our* terms? "I'll give you the terms: Here's the annual income, here's the kind of house I'm going to live in, here's the kind of person I want to have in my life, here's where I want to live—now give me the unconditional love." Can you have it that way? Oh, no. You can't have it that way. You can have it, but you have to be in the place in which unconditional love is received, which is unconditional openness.

And how about the people in your world? You may know unconditional love, but how are people to receive it? By being unconditionally open to the truth of that love. Those are the universal terms, the terms of surrender, the terms of receiving unconditional love: the truth—not my truth, not the Emissary truth or anybody else's truth. But apparently there are terms, because if there weren't some terms, I would think everybody would be receiving unconditional love fully all over the world. Everyone would always know it. And that's not what's happening. So if people aren't knowing unconditional love, why? They haven't accepted the terms.

We find out what the terms are when we take the attitude that is expressed in that hymn: "One shall we worship only." In other words, in all things, the one thing that is valued above all others is the highest and the finest that we know. That has to find expression and manifestation here. Those are the terms: unconditional openness to the highest and the finest. When we are dedicated and committed to that, our whole capacity, which is built to know what that is—to knowing the truth—comes online, and we learn and we know.

The learning and the knowing of the truth isn't given to just anybody. It's not given to the person who does not come in an attitude of unconditional openness. You don't even *enter* the university of life without that. No, you start to learn when there's unconditional openness. On that basis, we begin to live a life where we do create in our world what we love. We could well say, "I love what I love so much that I will manifest it here on earth. I will live in this world, in the name of what I love." That is a demonstration of love.

There comes a time when that is what's called for from us. That was what was being portrayed in the story after Easter when one of the disciples, Peter, came to Jesus and they were saying, "Lord, Lord, you know how much I love you." He had asked the question "Lovest thou me?" Peter protested: "You know how much I love you!" And the answer came back: "Feed my sheep."

I think that's the portrayal of a time in a person's life when all the worship of something separate from oneself isn't enough anymore. It works for a while, it's wonderful—you touch something beautiful and it's sweet and you can savor it. But after a time, if you want that with you in your life, you can't have it just for yourself. You have to give it to other people if you want to have it. You have to give it to your world. You can have it that way. You can have it because you give it, not because you hold it close to yourself.

"Feed my sheep." Feed my sheep, feed my lambs. Feed those who are beginning to awaken to something beautiful and sweet inside themselves. Provide a surround, an environment where they can savor that and begin to value it and know it deeply. Feed my lambs. And feed my sheep, those who are coming into a fuller experience of who they are.

So I'd like to quote Zechariah, who said this: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." (*Zechariah 4:6*) Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit. I think this is the spirit of the lion.

This Wednesday, Kevin Bottero was speaking about the creative commons, which is the creative space that we share between us. What is our attitude towards that space that we share with other people? Of course the commons, in times of old, was the space in the middle of the town that was shared in common, where they grazed cattle and who knows what else. But I'm talking about the commons of consciousness in which we live. What's our attitude towards that commons?

The loss of the commons had to do with an "every man for himself" kind of attitude. With that attitude, the sanctity of the commons is lost. This has to do with what deserves to be held safe in the commons of consciousness that we share together with others. In that commons, there is something to bring of the spirit of the lion for the good of that commons, to claim the commons not only for the common good but for the highest good and the highest purpose.

I'd like to read another line from the Old Testament: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain." (*Isaiah 11:9*) In the spiritual commons, they shall not hurt nor destroy. What is your attitude toward *your* spiritual commons—not only your personal space but the common space, the space you share in common with others? Do you take the attitude "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain"? In this vibrational space in which I work, this spiritual space in consciousness, they shall not hurt nor destroy. It is here in this spiritual space where I will act. It is primarily, firstly, this spiritual space, this space in consciousness where

we bring our spirit, where we take our action spiritually.

I began talking about movement. There is something to move in consciousness—for *me*. There is something for me to surrender and let go of. There is something for me to give expression to, something for me to do. There is a spiritual action for me to take. And I repent of any sitting on my spiritual duff that I've done.

So thank you for being present for this time of spiritual radiation and action and this time of prayer, this time of unconditional love, that love which is all-forgiving, that love which doesn't wait for anything but is present, always available—unconditional love. May we know it more fully in our attitude toward what we love, and know it more fully as it comes through us and into our world with other people, filling that world with the expression of spirit.

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