6 August 1958

_Sweet Mother, what is the effect and value of collective prayer?

We have already spoken about this, about collective prayers, the use that has been made of them. I believe that it has even been published in the _Bulletin_.

Besides, there are different kinds of collective prayer, just as there are different kinds of collectivities. There is the anonymous mass, the crowd, formed by chance circumstances, without any inner coordination, impelled by the force of circumstance, as for instance when a king or a person who attracts public attention is in a critical situation, either ill or the victim of an accident, and the people gather to obtain news and also to express their feelings; and through chance circumstances people have collected there, that is, there is no inner link except that of the same emotion or interest. There have been cases of crowds spontaneously beginning to pray to ask for the recovery of someone in whom they were specially interested. Of course, these very crowds can gather for a completely different purpose, out of hatred, and their cries are also a sort of prayer, a prayer to the adverse and destructive forces.

Those movements are spontaneous, not organised, unexpected.

There is also the collectivity formed by individuals who have gathered together around an ideal or a teaching or an action they want to carry out, and who have an organising link between them, the link of the same purpose, the same will and the same faith. These can gather in a methodical manner to practise common prayer and meditation, and if their aim is high, their organisation good, their ideal powerful, through their prayers or meditations these groups can have a considerable effect on
Questions and Answers

world events or on their own inner development and collective progress. These groups are necessarily far superior to others, but they don’t have the blind strength of the mobs, the collective action of the crowd. They replace this vehemence, this intensity by the strength of a deliberate and conscious organisation.

At all times there have been on earth groups organised in this way. Some of them have had a historical life, a historical action in the world, but as a rule they have not succeeded better with the crowd, the mass, than exceptional individuals. They have always been suspected and subjected to attacks, persecutions, and often they have also been dissolved in a very brutal, obscure and ignorant way.... There were those semi-religious, semi-chivalric groups, gathered around a belief or rather a creed, with a definite aim, which have had a very interesting history in the world. And certainly, they have done much for collective progress through their individual effort.

There is an ideal organisation which, if fully realised, could create a kind of very powerful unity, composed of elements all having the same aim and the same will and with enough inner development to be able to give a very coherent body to this inner oneness of purpose, motive, aspiration and action.

At all times centres of initiation have tried this, more or less successfully, and this is always mentioned in all occult traditions as an extremely powerful means of action.

If the collective unit could attain the same cohesion as the individual unit, it would multiply the strength and action of the individual.

Usually, if several individuals are brought together, the collective quality of the group is much lower than the individual value of each person taken separately, but with a sufficiently conscious and coordinated organisation, it would be possible, on the contrary, to multiply the power of individual action.