

October 11, 1993

- *Experiencing loss as gain*
- *What gives life meaning*

God is with all of you. God's radiance surrounds your lives with a loving brilliance and comfort and love.

In a very special way tonight you have each touched one another in meaningful and substantive ways that enrich all of you. It is a time of transition. You have been experiencing a number of these transitions. It is through such experiences that you sense a closer presence of God within your lives. Your lives are meant for rejoicing, but rejoicing does not mean an absence of difficulty, an absence of challenges or losses. The rejoicing comes from a recognition that life is indeed far greater than you are aware of on a daily basis.

The power of love as expressed in your human lives is so much greater than your perception. There are expressions of love which go unnoticed and yet serve to benefit all. These expressions benefit the giver and the receiver. Such love may be offered without recognition by another, but that does not lessen its effect. Each of you in your lives experiences moments when you need others. That need can be poignant, the need can be subtle, the need may be occasionally evident, but not on a daily basis, for it is quite normal to feel that during long stretches of time you can all function very well on your own.

Society puts much value on independence and self-sufficiency, but very little effort, relatively speaking, is devoted to serving others. Very little emphasis is placed on asking others for help. You look upon individuals as being strong because they stand alone, but you must recognize that no one stands alone. No one exists completely separate from others. No one achieves a particular level of success without the support of others. No one becomes strong in dealing with challenges and adversity without the support of others. No one can receive love unless it is offered by others. No one can express love unless there are others to whom it may be expressed. The collective humanity is essential for the practice of love as God would wish. If there were no God, there would be no perceived example to follow in understanding selfless love. Without human beings to express love, there would be less meaning to the existence of God. You see, all is possible only when one acknowledges another.

The soul of your deceased loved one is flying in freedom. She is with us, she is with you this evening. She knows of your rejoicing and sense of relief and joy in her release. She learned much during the last years of her life. Her soul became stronger, and the souls of her family were also strengthened through the ordeal. For that you may all rejoice. She is surrounded by her family who had gone before and you can draw comfort from that realization.

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Experiencing this kind of loss again underlines the importance of your understanding of the continuity and connectedness of all human life. By losing one who is loved, you learn to love those who are with you. Just as one learns to appreciate something after it is no longer there, you can continue to learn about the value of life by experiencing the transition of individuals you have known from human life to strictly a spiritual life. Life takes on greater significance, not as something to grasp onto desperately, covetously, but as something to be cherished and valued and recognized for the opportunity that it presents to you.

Life is sacred—not because it is life—it is sacred because of what it affords you in opportunities and challenges, avenues for growth, avenues for development...that's why it is so valuable. What is worth giving value to is whatever serves to strengthen your spiritual self. If what you experience and do has no apparent value to your soul, that activity is ultimately meaningless. We are not saying that you cannot enjoy something which is entirely pleasurable within the physical life, but whatever that may be, find a means of drawing that experience into your soul as a kind of nourishment for it.

Going to church and saying prayers and singing hymns are not the only ways of providing strength to your soul. Reaching out to others, sharing joy with another, sharing sadness with another, sharing frustrations with another, sharing celebrations of love with another, pursuing activities that affirm the value and dignity of all human life—all of these activities provide strength and depth to your soul and are therefore important.

Look upon your life as an opportunity to enhance and strengthen the meaning of your eternity. Affirm the dignity of your own life by supporting the dignity of all others. Avoid judgments for they are not confirmations of another's value. Think positively in spite of setbacks, for life indeed moves forward and upward. Life never moves backward. You may be happy today and sad tomorrow, but that does not imply your life's moving in a reverse direction. You may be healthy today and ill tomorrow, but that is not a setback in the direction your life must be taking. Your life moves forward ever constantly toward God and toward a greater understanding of what it means to love and to be loved.

We rejoice being in the presence of God's light and in the opportunity we have of reflecting that light upon each of you. Life is for rejoicing. Value it, affirm its strength, and serve as the hand of God reaching to all who are around you. We bless your souls and those of all others, both in human life and in spiritual life on our side, with God's light and love always.

Amen.