

September 25, 2003

- *Celebrations* [Note: Message received as a friend's birthday is celebrated]
- *Loving and being loved*

God shares in your joy, in your celebration of life and the upholding of the value of human interaction—love, care, compassion.

You celebrate what is truly good about the human experience. It is important to celebrate, it is important to find grounds for rejoicing, for affirming evidence of God's presence. Celebrations do not negate concerns, but rather they strengthen your capacity to respond, your capacity to reach out. Celebrations are a kind of food for the soul, for in celebrating you reaffirm, you give strength, you acknowledge, you give thanks, you express love, you share—you share emotions, memories, values, impressions. You share the very substance of what it means to be alive.

There are some who shun the experience of celebration, surrounded by a shroud of guilt that says in effect, "How can we celebrate when so many suffer?" But there is never loss to sharing joy. There is nothing superficial about acknowledging what is good, what is valuable, what is important. The opportunity to celebrate, therefore, is an important one and should always be welcomed. You celebrate when you affirm.

There is a difference between celebration and gloating. There are times when you may feel the desire to celebrate which is, in effect, at the expense of another—another individual, another group, another nation or culture. That is not true celebration. That is a kind of self-congratulation that is directed towards the negative results that have impacted another people or another person. There is never justification for a kind of celebration that elevates an act that puts down others. Life is not like a game where there are winners and losers. You cannot celebrate when you win and others lose. You can only celebrate when all are winners. The game of life is finding ways for everyone to win.

Your relationships with others are never guided by winning and losing. That is not what you are given human life to do. When another loses, it means that you prevail. Prevailing is not the goal of life. It is important that you direct your lives in ways that cannot be marked or identified as prevailing. Certainly there are ideals, standards, principles for which you stand with the hope that they are shared by others. But when events evolve that seem to vindicate your own perspective, the most appropriate response should be one of understanding why so many held a different perspective to be equally valid.

In placing yourselves in the position of others with whom you disagree, you are in fact affirming that other position. We make the distinction here between affirming and agreeing. You are not asked always to be in agreement with everyone, but you are asked at the very least to affirm the reality that others hold certain beliefs which are as valid to them as yours may be to you. That is reaching across a divide that separates

September 25, 2003

individuals, communities, nations, groups. That is a great lesson to be learned in human life. You are given human lives to affirm. You affirm by loving, you affirm by listening, you affirm by trying to understand, you affirm by being compassionate, you affirm by placing yourselves in the shoes of another. It is that very affirmation that provides the greatest growth for your spiritual selves, your souls.

It is easy to repeat the commandment to love your neighbors. It is very difficult to develop the skills to actually carry through with that love. You know it is important and yet you also know its difficulty. By acknowledging its importance daily, you are thereby lessening its difficulty daily.

You are given souls so that they may grow. Your connection to God is a connection of potential. All human beings share the same potential. All human beings have within them the potential to acknowledge a spiritual entity beyond human experience. Whether or not individuals develop that potential depends to a large degree on your ability to serve others. Human beings learn more about love by being loved than through any other means.

You know it is important to be loving. That can never be denied. But some individuals seem to be more successful at being loving. Why do you suppose that is? No one is given the blessing of being more loving than someone else. The difference is that those who are loving have personally experienced more of what it means to be loved.

What does this hold for each of you? If you want to know the power of love, you must be receptive first to those who are loving. If you understand the importance of love, then you understand how essential it is to be loving. If you wish to extend the impact of love in the world, it means you must be more loving. By acting with love toward another, you empower another with the potential to be, in turn, loving to someone else. The way to expand love in the world is to be loving. But in order to be loving, you must be willing to be loved.

There are many who find the willingness to be loved a difficult trait to acknowledge. There are those who feel they are not worthy of being loved. There are those who feel forgotten, expelled from society. Tell the individual who has lost a job held for a lifetime because of economic conditions that that person is loved and you will experience the resistance to that reality. It is often difficult to allow yourselves to be loved, despite the fact that every human being wants to be loved. There is nevertheless a barrier that many assemble around them that effectively blocks their experience of love by others.

Your responsibilities as human beings carry, therefore, two huge burdens. The first is the willingness to be vulnerable and therefore to be loved. Without being vulnerable, love has no chance of entering. The second is to be willing to be loving. That is a difficult challenge for many who may be filled with hate or resentment. It is not easy to be loving toward another if you are feeling resentment at the same time. But

September 25, 2003

both conditions must be met. It is for these reasons your souls are given the opportunity to share in the human condition. Life is not intended to be easy, but it is intended to be loving. It is intended to be vulnerable, to be open to what it means to be loved.

Your relationships with one another that you share when you gather are loving, even though you may not see each other during the period between meetings. You gather, you share, and you exchange ideas, thoughts, concerns, and rejoicings. That is an act of love. When you can be touched by what someone else shares, you are being vulnerable and in that condition of vulnerability, you have the greatest potential for learning what it means to be loved.

Celebrations are food for the soul, for they intensify your awareness of the potential that love provides. The warmth, the comfort, the closeness that results can be found in no other kind of forum. Be open and receptive and vulnerable. For those who are vulnerable, there is the greatest of strengths. Too many resist being vulnerable and in so doing erect a bridge that is broken in the middle and does not enable communication to flow. The bridge is the potential, but the potential is not realized until one is willing to be vulnerable.

Construct your bridge outward to others and complete that construction. Allow it to be strong so that you are able to receive the love that is offered, and you are able to communicate the love that you have received beyond your own limited circle. Life is a process of building those bridge relationships with one another.

Your guides are the engineers that help you design that bridge, but it is you, individually and collectively, who gather the materials of your own lives to make a completed bridge a reality. Continue to affirm the sacredness of everyone around you. Look for the beauty of every person. Find ways of accepting the affirmation of others, and cultivate your ability to be affirming in return.

You celebrate life, but you are also celebrating the grace of affirmation. Each of your guides joins with you as you uplift your spirits in harmony in an acknowledgment of the beauty of human life. You are blessed far beyond your awareness. Your blessings are no more plentiful than those received by anyone else, but your awareness of those blessings continues to unfold with grace and spiritual peace and with a brilliant acknowledgment of the importance of others in your own lives. We join in your joy and in your celebration. It is all in God's will, and God's will is done.

Amen.