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- *How to anticipate the future*
- *The wedding ceremony*
- *Accepting the good and the bad*
- *Respond to life with love*

God joins the assembly of your souls and binds your souls together with loving warmth and radiant presence.

This is indeed a time of marked transitions for many of you. It is a time expressed through joy, gratitude, anticipation, sadness, regrets, anxieties, and all sorts of concerns. You share with one another the anticipated celebration of a wedding and the sadness experienced through the loss of someone close.

The experiences and approaches to life which you shared this evening reflect the great variety of what is experienced throughout an entire human life. These experiences collectively develop the character and strength of your souls and provide a perspective for your human lives. They are not to be feared, they are not to be dwelled upon in pride or anguish or worry. It is these experiences which characterize human life, and they can only be experienced in the lives you now experience together.

You exist at this moment as a group, but there is nothing which is experienced in this group that you do not also go through and deal with and rejoice with as individuals. There is a great advantage in contemplating life as a group rather than alone, for in a group where there is such sharing, in one moment you view the expanse of much of the human condition. When you are alone it is too easy to become absorbed with the matters at hand. If they are joyous concerns, joyous thoughts, it is easy to lose sight of the balancing experiences of life. If those thoughts and concerns are worrisome or anxiety creating or tragic, then it is all too easy to become surrounded by that darkness, and thereby lose sight of the brilliance and light which are also present. Human life has balance, but it is more through group experiences that you can perceive the variety which is so essential for balance.

So often it is that one anticipates an event in the future more negatively than positively. It is common for you all to frequently think more of what can go wrong than of what can go right, and that creates enormous pressure upon you and colors your perception of life around you. Life, even for those who seem to experience so much more turmoil than others, can be a positive experience. There is something to be gained out of being challenged. The challenges of life do not serve to weigh you down, but to elevate you through new strength. It is more appropriate to approach the future with positive thoughts and a sense of confidence.

The upcoming wedding provides occasion to look forward with pleasure to a successful and meaningful experience for the entire family. There is much work, but there is much satisfaction to be derived from seeing the fruits of those labors.

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In the end, it is not so much the specifics of what happens in a wedding, but rather what that wedding symbolizes. It is a reinforcement of the importance of relationships in life. It is a ceremony that sanctifies relationships, not just the relationships between those who are getting married, but it brings attention to God's presence in all relationships. One is reminded in marriage of the importance of honesty, of the importance of love and giving and sacrifice and sensitivity. It is a reminder of the importance of listening to another. It is a reminder of the importance of taking a stand on what you believe in.

The wedding ceremony differs between cultures. The experience throughout the world is so full of variety, but the bottom line, as you say, is the emphasis on the importance of relationships. In such a ceremony each who is present should reaffirm in his or her own mind the supremacy of human relationships, for it is in the carrying out of those relationships that your souls are nurtured. You know that it is through your giving of yourselves to others that you grow most meaningfully. What you receive in spiritual strength is directly related to what you give out in spiritual support. The two are equal.

Viewing marriage, the wedding ceremony, as an opportunity for reaffirming the importance of meaningful relationships means that no such ceremony can really be a failure, for relationships in themselves are never considered failures, only differing in degrees of intensity. The work involved in preparation for that celebration will be rewarding for all.

Life is indeed full of transitions, getting married, going to school, finding employment, reaching milestones in one's professional development, overcoming handicaps, physical ailments, emotional burdens. All of these elements are reflected even within this small group. Imagine the breadth or diversity of the elements within a community, within a nation, between peoples throughout the world, and you understand more fully the breadth which is entailed in human life.

Your guides have much work for them to accomplish. We see these transitions more clearly than you. We are aware of their challenges, we are aware of the potential they offer for your growth, and we are intimately aware of how it is that you deal with these moments. But our function as your guides does not stop with awareness on our part, for it is important that we help you to become more sensitized to the necessity of this variety in life. If you completely embrace such necessity, then you can more easily accept what you view as suffering by others, certainly not rejoicing in their suffering, but accepting the reality that suffering is a part of life and recognizing that what is essential is how you respond to that suffering.

When you observe others who seem to have a charmed life, it is not appropriate to wish them otherwise but merely to acknowledge that such experiences are also part of life. You accept the good and you accept the bad. It is not to rejoice in one or the other but merely to accept the necessity of both—that's what's important. Challenges will be a part of your lives until you have completed your earthly phase. Challenges that

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you observe in society and around the world are essentially a part of the human experience worldwide. Take away those challenges and you deprive your soul of experiences which are so necessary for its development.

Yes, life is a school and each course in the curriculum is essential. You cannot focus on one area to the total exclusion of another. You cannot seek joy without being willing to accept pain. You cannot experience pain without the faith of a joy to come. All belongs to life—that is the balance of which we speak.

There are such great benefits to your meeting together. We also encourage you individually to find time for quiet reflection, because in so doing you are more conscious of those elements affecting your life at this moment, and you will see in greater relief the contrast of those experiences that you are working through and the experiences that others must also deal with. There is only variety if you recognize what you are going through and what others are going through. If you are unaware of the depth of your own experience, then you are unable to perceive the breadth of life experiences. To understand the depth of your own experience takes quiet reflection, so you see there is balance here as well, a balance requiring quiet reflection as well as group reflection.

We on our side of life grow through our interaction with other spirits. We do not live alone—we live in community. Life as you experience it must also be lived in community. Be sensitive to others, but be also observant to what life incorporates. Being sensitive allows you the possibility of being responsive, for you can only respond to what you perceive. If you perceive life to be essentially as you experience it, your response to life is greatly limited. Be aware of all that is around you—people, suffering, rejoicing, celebrations—all that is a part of life you must be aware of.

Your response can only be in love to what is around you. To one who is rejoicing you can also respond in the same manner. Share that joy, make that joy part of your own. You then have that as a kind of reservoir to draw upon when you are challenged in difficult ways. When another is suffering, respond with love through your compassion and your presence, by listening and being there and comforting. That strength that you receive from such a response you will need when you do your own grievings and sufferings. Your response of love therefore can take on many different characteristics—rejoicing with someone, suffering and comforting another. It is this outreach which provides the potential for strengthening your souls and helps give meaning to your life. Welcome the transitions that you experience, and take in the transitions that others deal with and make them your own as well. You will all be strengthened enormously by such activity.

Your response to life is love. Your response to all that takes place in life is always love. When you rejoice, we rejoice with you in love. When you suffer and are discouraged or anxious, we respond to you with compassion, guiding you with love. God's response to all that has been created is pure love. There is no anger, there is no

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impatience, there is no critical response. It is all positive, it is all warm, and all embracing. It is with God's embrace that we bless your souls.

Amen.