

# Dedication Ceremony of Lili S.

November 2004

## Opening Words

The ceremony in which we now share is both ancient and timeless. It is tradition to welcome our children into the larger community of fellowship and faith. We recognize that each child is a special gift to us, an individual person in his or her own right, a reminder of the ongoing promise and creative power of life. And each child is precious, with a right to a warm and loving reception. Little children in particular are magic. They unite us all; parents and non-parents, old and young, boys and girls and women and men, all are brought together by the arrival of a child. This is a special occasion, shared by parents, family, and friends to mark the fact that we all have a responsibility for the care and nurturing of this child. At this time, we wish to recognize this child by her given name, for it is her name that is symbolic of the individuality that we wish to affirm.

Lili...you were born into this world on May 7, 2004. Your parents have brought you forward among all those assembled to celebrate your dedication, to celebrate the joy they have that you are part of their family and count themselves blessed.

In the loving and watchful embrace of family and friends, you will learn to count the number of your days and to weigh their meaning, to gather into your mind the wisdom of your ancestors, to know why we call one thing right and another wrong, to treasure beauty, mercy and justice in the deep places of your being.

Every family is different, and every family has its own gifts and strengths and stories to give to the children entrusted to their care. R & F, who present their daughter Lili here today obviously have the greatest and most difficult and most important task. You are her parents, you know that she depends on your love and care. Your attentive love will cradle and shelter her for many years.

But the larger world, as you have yourselves already learned, is not always so gentle. You must prepare Lili to find her own special strengths to face the world and to live in it bravely and well. Your own family and friends will help you so far as they are able, but it is your difficult and sacred and loving responsibility to be Lili special teachers of the ways of the world, the meaning of love, the worth of individuality, and the courage of growth.

## Parents Affirmation

F & R in presenting your child at this service, you invite all of us to share some of the joy and responsibility that is yours, as parents. You seek our support in your dedication to the task of fostering with love and guidance, the fullest unfolding of the personality of your child. Do you now promise that, to the best of your human abilities, you will help this child to an appreciation of truth and beauty, show her love and nurturing, and instill values to help build strong character? If so, say, "We do."

F&R , would you please face Lili and repeat the parents' affirmation?

Lili

I love you.

I am your parent; you are my child.

There is no more sacred bond.

In all the days and years to come,

I promise you my loving care,

Providing you both roots and wings,  
That you may feel safe, that you may one day fly.  
I am glad you have entered my life.  
I love you.

### Granparents' Affirmation

You grandparents, (names here) also have a special responsibility in the nurturing of Liliana. It was you who taught your own children what it means to be a parent, and it is probably to you that your grandchild will turn when she is not quite pleased with how her parents are doing that job. Such is traditionally the way of grandchildren and grandparents, and all in all, it is a good and happy way.

As you love your granddaughter, remember also your love for your own child and for your child's spouse. Respect them for the choices they have made; support them in their work as parents, assist them so far as you are able, and above all trust them to do well the work that you have in your own time also done.

At the same time, rejoice in the special, sacred relationship that exists in love between grandparent and grandchild. If you are indeed willing to stand in love beside your own children, will you turn to them and say the words of the Grandparents' Affirmation?

I love you and I have confidence in you.

I know you will raise my grandchild well,

And I will always be beside you with my support and love.

### Godparents' Affirmation

Lili has also been blessed with two loving godparents, ( names here) A & D, in our complex world, it is not possible for even the most loving and capable parents to raise a child alone. If Lili is to become a loving and independent adult, she needs the wisdom, counsel, love and support of many adult friends. You have been asked by the parents of this child to accept a special honor and responsibility because you have both been special people in their lives.

Do you then, to the best of your abilities, intend to supplement the care and love of these parents, both in the day-to-day development of this child, and especially in the event of an extraordinary need? Do you promise to help be "parents in reserve," grownups who can be trusted to help Lili through the rough times that are an inevitable part of growing up? If so, say, "We do."

### Assembly Affirmation

Do you, the beloved friends and family assembled, take upon yourselves the privilege and responsibility of helping to nurture the heart, character and spirit of this child? Do you affirm your role as one of loving support and encouragement? If so, say, "We do."

### Readings (Chosen and read by parents from resource packet)

Dear Children of the Future by Angela Arrien

Now this is the day, from the Zuni Indian tradition

## Child Dedication Ritual

F & R, by what name is this child known?

(child's full name here)

(Name), I dedicate you to the service of goodness, beauty, and truth. I touch you with this rose, a symbol of the beautiful unfolding life we wish for you.

I touch you with this water which symbolizes the purity with which you were born and will carry throughout your life. I touch you on your brow, your eyes, and your lips, that your thoughts, your vision, and your speech may be dedicated to the love and service of all humankind.

Let us join our hearts in reflection:

By this Service of Dedication, we have committed ourselves to Lili . We will love and cherish her always, in times of struggle as well as gladness. Spirit of Life, thank you for the birth of this beautiful child into this world and into this family. We offer ourselves this day as caretakers of her spirit and her higher mind. May we fulfill with strength and joy our role in her life and the lives of her parents. May the spirit of this family, from generations past and into the future, burst forth to bless and sustain Lili.

Amen. ( as parents recess with baby, we sing) “Go Now in peace, Go Now in peace. May the spirit of love surround you, everywhere, everywhere, you may go.”

