

REFLECTIONS

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the greatest of these is love.

1 Corinthians 13:13

A Blessing of Love

“I love that kid,” I heard her say of me as I left her room. “I know you do,” her companion replied. I fought back tears as I walked down the hallway toward the front door and to my car. It was a day dedicated to saying goodbye.

Mildred Hamrick was her name, but she was Millie to everyone that knew her. She was in the delivery room when I took my first breath on this earth. She was in the operating room when I had my tonsils removed; and she was there to attend me as I was rushed to a distant hospital after a serious fall. She was the first person we went to see after I presented Janice with her engagement ring. Millie was a true blessing in my life.

Millie was a blessing to many others too. Unable to have children of her own, she just adopted every child in town as hers. Trained by the doctors that she worked for, Millie was a nurse for 50 years. She loved life and she loved the many people in her life.

Several weeks ago, I paid my last visit to Millie. I knew it would be the last time and so did she. Her body was so weak that day, but not her mind. We recalled our fond memories of days gone by; we talked about the future, and of my children and grandchildren. We laughed and we cried and we expressed our love to each other.

She tired quickly, so I made several short visits that day instead of one long one. It was when I was leaving one of those visits that I heard her say, “I love that kid.” She was the only person alive that saw me as a kid, and I knew that those words would live in my heart for the rest of my life. What a blessing of love.

As I kissed her forehead and walked from her room the final time, I knew that we had said goodbye. I walked to my car unable to keep tears from streaming down my face. Then I sat in my car and shamelessly cried uncaring if I was seen or heard. I would never see her again.

Life brings with it difficult choices. The service to honor Millie’s life was set at a time that conflicted with a significant time in my walk with my oldest grandson. My choices were to honor a life I loved or to express my love for a young man whose life is before him. I wanted to be present at Millie’s service to honor her life; but I felt a greater call to honor a life that lies ahead. I know that is the choice Millie would have me make.

I will miss Millie because I loved her. But I will forever carry with me the blessing of love she so simply summed in her words, “I love that kid.” The blessing Millie gave to me is the blessing I pass to each of my grandchildren. “I love that kid.”

Like the gift I received, it is the greatest gift I can give them.

“You are the light of the world,”

Richard +

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