

REFLECTIONS

January 16, 2005

**In the same way, let your light shine before men,
that they may see your good deeds and praise your
Father in heaven.**

Matthew 5:16

A Shining Light

He didn't know how he was going to touch my life that day, but I remember it as yesterday. His name was Richard, the same as mine, and he told me of spending the day with his dying grandmother. "We told stories to each other, we laughed, we cried, and we hugged each other," he said to me. I must have expressed some kind of surprise at the openness with which they were facing death because he replied with passion, "You need to tell people how you feel about them while they're *alive!* Too often you see someone in the cemetery talking to the ground and it's too late then." Then he softly repeated, "You need to tell them how you feel while they are *alive.* " And he held on to that last word as only a Mississippi man could, and its emphasis and passion still ring in my ears today.

Since that day, I have told this story to others; but more importantly, I personally experienced the importance of his encouraging words. I was so enlightened and inspired by Richard's story that afterwards I made sure that I told my dad how much I loved him every time I saw him. Even with the suddenness of his death I knew that Daddy knew how I felt, and I knew how he felt too. Our relationship was whole; there was closure and I felt at peace. My times with Mom were focused much the same as she lived out her final days, and with the same warmth of fullness. I miss them both dearly; but I have no regrets about anything left unsaid.

Richard was a shining light to me that day, and I praise God that from of his example I was better able to say goodbye to those so very dear. Yet, Richard had no idea how he was touching my life then.

He *certainly* didn't know how he might also be touching yours.

You are the light of the world

Richard +

Permission is hereby granted for reproduction and redistribution of this edition of Reflections provided all applicable copyright laws are properly observed.

Your comments are welcomed and encouraged. Richard may be reached at richard@reflectingthesavior.org.