

# ***REFLECTIONS***

*December 3, 2006*

**But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people**

*Luke 2:10*

## **Blessing in Disguise**

Almost everyday Max would roll his motorized wheelchair out the front door of his assisted living home to enjoy the freshness of the outdoors. At a relatively young age Max had suffered a massive stroke that had reduced his very active life to the confines of a wheelchair. But we would soon learn that the stroke and the limited life that he led after it did not dampen his joy for living, nor was he the least bit inhibited to engage us in conversation when we came to visit Mom as she lived out her final days.

It was a particularly difficult time in our lives. We all knew that Mom would not be with us much longer. Those visits with her were precious to us and to Mom also. Mom was the one that delivered us into the world and who nurtured us and loved us unconditionally all of our lives. Watching as she faced her final days left us with heavy hearts. We needed a diversion from our pain and we found it by spending time with Max.

In these interludes we would visit with him to keep him company, make him laugh, and distract him from the sense of helplessness we were sure he was feeling. We did our best to help him feel good about life. Little did we realize then that Max was helping us much more than we could ever help him.

One of God's special gifts to us in the world is found in the messengers He sends when we are troubled by heavy hearts. In his own way, Max was God's messenger. He may have been a man passing our way along his own journey; or he may have been an angel placed in our path just for that time. Either way, Max was a blessing in disguise that lifted us during those difficult days. Through him came the message of God's love.

After Mom passed away, I drove by occasionally to see if Max was in his usual place outside the front door of his institutional home. He was there once and I stopped by to say hello again. Then he was gone. We don't know what happened to Max, but I'm sure he is right where God wants him to be just as he was when he was there for us. At the time, we thought we were taking care of him. We know now that Max was there taking care of us. We know Max now as one of God's messengers timely placed to lift our heavy hearts and to bring good news of great joy that is for all the people—the good news of God's love.

God calls us to be messengers too.

*"You are the light of the world."*

*Richard* +

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