



REFLECTIONS

November 15, 2009

**Dear friends, since God so loved us, we
also ought to love one another.**

1 John 4:11

Toto

“Jesus loves the little children, all the children of the world.” These words from an old Sunday school song still ring in my mind when some of God’s “children” intersect my path in the walk through life. Many are common folks like me, but others come with life experiences I do not share. One of those was a man named Joe Arredondo. Most people knew him only as Toto.

I knew Toto as a golf caddy and in that role I have found no other like him. No one could help but notice his spray-painted yellow cowboy hat complemented by boots coated with the same yellow paint. Splashes of yellow spray paint often adorned his other clothing too, so he captured the attention of everyone within eyeshot. But his dress was but one of his eccentricities.

Most of the time, Toto carried a set of plastic tools on his belt for use if players encountered problems with their equipment. Of course on those rare occasions when such tools were needed, his plastic version was not sturdy enough to help, and even if they were, his ability to use them was suspect. But no matter his attire, the unusual tools of trade he carried, or his ability to use them, Toto was a man dedicated to his work.

He arrived at the golf course early every day. Every day! He was there even on days when golf was not possible to play. There are photographs of him sitting alone near the first tee gazing across a snow covered golf course. His dedication was an admirable trait, but for many, his dedication was offset by his distracting behavior.

Toto’s behavior was misshaped by an emotional disorder. Though it was medically treated, his manner was frequently distracting. A major role of a golf caddy is to offer encouragement to his player. Toto was not known for that. Rather, he often offended them by rolling his eyes in disapproval or making disparaging remarks about poorly hit shots. Although Toto was dedicated and sometimes entertaining, his flashy dress and distracting behavior caused most players to avoid his services.

Yet, Toto is a memorable character even if it’s for his eccentricities. His life experiences were those I do not share; but he was one of God’s children. They include the common folks, but they also include the mentally challenged, physically disfigured, and emotionally imbalanced. Some are blessed with loving hearts; others are possessed by evil spirits. And it doesn’t take a trained eye to find them.

But it takes a trained heart to love them all.

“You are the light of the world.”

Richard +

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