

The Greatest of These

By Nyx Martinez (A teenaged missionary of The Family in the Philippines)



Uncle Jo

In ninth grade, there was one teacher who stood out to me more than all the rest. We called him Uncle Jo. Uncle Jo was a funny guy, aging in years but a kid at heart. He made those boring history books seem exceptionally fun and put the sparkle into everything about life.

Uncle Jo cared for a boy named Mikey whom we called “the special child.” Mikey was indeed special, for he was handicapped with autism, which left him unable to care for himself. So it was our teacher, Uncle Jo, who fed him, dressed him, walked him, and read him stories.

I admired Uncle Jo for his love for Mikey, but a few weeks later, I was proud of my teacher. Because those were his last days on Earth, and he had spent them for somebody else. Shortly after, Uncle Jo slipped into a coma that would seal his life. I later found out that he had been battling a deadly cancer.

Uncle Jo taught me many subjects in school, but for all those lectures, it was his sample of sacrifice that taught me the biggest lesson. Here was a dying man who spent his final days not making his atmosphere a more comfortable place for himself, but for a helpless child.

A very great man made his mark in history then, and engraved that mark in my mind, to remember for many more years to come. I realized at that early age how precious one’s life is, and how short its span may be. One day Uncle Jo was up and about, and the next ... he was gone. He understood that the present day was all he had to make the most of, so he

put his best efforts into that day, no matter how lowly the task.

Today, I close my eyes and think back at the time that was, and then ... it’s as if ... I see the image of Uncle Jo’s face and the twinkle in his eye as he smiles, “Life is too short to spend it on only yourself.”

The matter of *how short* is trivial, because what lives on in the hearts and minds of others never dies. It is the deeds you do, the words you speak, the love you give, and your greatness-of-lowliness that will be treasured forever.

He that is greatest among you shall be
your servant (Matthew 23:11 ASV).

I used to think that God’s gifts were on shelves
one

above
another,
and the taller we grow,
The easier we can reach them.

Now I find that God’s gifts are on shelves
one

beneath
another,
and the lower we stoop,
The more we get.

Love is the key—having love, living love, desiring love, giving love, being loving! You can’t do it on your own, but the Lord can do it through you. And in order to have that love—real love, the Lord’s love—you have to learn humility.—Maria David