She Loved Me Best

Grandma personified unconditional love.

By Kenna Roberts, Flint, Michigan

WE ALWAYS SPENT the holidays and vacations in the 1950s and ’60s with Grandma in Evansville, Indiana.

She would greet us at the old porch door of 311 Reis Avenue, wiping her hands on her homemade apron.

When she smiled at us, my brother, two sisters and I each knew we were the most important person on Earth to her.

Her silver hair, cut short, was like a crown on her head. Her short, plump body was just right for squeezing and hugging. She opened her arms wide as we all rushed to be the first to greet her.

Throughout our visits, we spent much of our time in the kitchen. Her kitchen always was fragrant with the aroma of freshly made barley soup and a chocolate angel food cake baked from scratch, just for us.

With yolks left from the cake, she would help us make fresh egg noodles. She never used a recipe, just a pinch of this and a smidgen of that.

After dinner, we’d rock on the front porch swing and play games. “Riddle-dee, riddle-dee, riddle-dee-dee, I see something you don’t see, and it’s red,” Grandma would start off.

We’d look around and try to find what she was thinking of. Laughter filled the air as we guessed her secret.

She’d also tell of times gone by, events and activities that we city

folk couldn't imagine. She had favorite stories she'd tell over and over at our insistence. The one about the goose chasing her around the barnyard, complete with her sound effects, was a favorite.

She had fun stories about each of us and delighted in sharing them.

In one, she recalled how I seemed upset once. As she tucked me in that night, she had asked what was wrong.

"Grandpa wouldn't let me meth with the cards," I had pouted, with my childish lisp.

She knew she couldn't laugh out loud, so she covered her mouth to stifle her amusement.

"Grandma, are you cold?" I asked as the bed shook from her efforts.
I can't count the times she shared that story and others with us. She'd laugh and we'd laugh, and we knew she loved each one of us the best.

When evening rolled around, she'd pray with us and kiss us good night. We each had our special phrase or motion that was just between Grandma and us. She remembered it every time, and we'd smile again at her beaming, lovely face.

In the morning, when the house was still quiet, we'd try to sneak down the stairs to Grandma's room. The stairs squeaked with each step as we tried to descend without a sound.

First step left, next step center. Then skip a step and land on the right side for two steps.

Try as we might, she always had an eye open when we reached her room.

“I was just thinking about you,” she’d whisper, and we knew she was.

As the years rolled by and I started sharing these same stories with my own children, they began to fall in love with Grandma, too. Despite her advancing years, her love and kindness always shone through.

Grandma lived to be 105 years old. Through the years, she was the most important person in my life and came closest to showing God’s unconditional love.

I can see her smile, even in Heaven, as she whispers, “I was just thinking about you.”