By Pat Haggerty

This week I attended the funeral of my husband’s Uncle Franny. Franny was a wonderful individual who passed away at the age of 87. He had lived his whole life in Lebanon, New Hampshire. He was a man of integrity, generosity and simplicity. He was extremely proud of his French-Canadian heritage and loved sharing stories of his early childhood and of his mother and father. He loved making French-Canadian pork pies (tourtières), and he loved spending time in his expansive garden. More than gardening, he took great joy in sharing his produce with family, friends, and the Senior Center.

During the liturgy celebrating Franny’s life, the priest talked extensively about how Franny had been a good, decent, kind man. He spoke of Franny’s love for his family, his church, and his neighbor. I’m sure this has been said about others, and I am sure I have heard it before. However, knowing Uncle Franny and being a part of his life, I knew how sincerely these words rang true.

It really hit me---this is what life is all about! It’s not about what degrees you have acquired, what high-paying job you possess, what material possessions you have accrued. It’s about something very basic. What kind of person have you been throughout your days on earth?

We perhaps hear that question so often that it doesn’t affect us. We hear it in the gospels; we hear it in our ministers’ homilies; we hear it in our liturgical singing (“Whatsoever you do for the least of my brothers, that you do unto me.)

Mother Teresa, through her actions, told us the same thing. She even said, “We need not do great things---only small things with great love.” Therese of Lisieux from her French convent told us: “little things count.”

When will we heed the message? When will we get off the roller coaster of our lives to realize that Jesus is central to everything we do? Maybe we need the life and death of someone like Uncle Franny to make that a reality for us.

Thank you, Franny, for helping me with this realization. Rest in peace.