

## James Cook

When Sonny Bono died, Cher was asked to give a eulogy. She started by saying that Readers Digest used to have a section called “The Most Unusual Character I Ever Met”. For Cher, that person was Sonny. For me it was James Cook. James was a perfect boy who was born with an imperfect body. How many of you have ever known a person who has never sinned? Even when you read the lives of the saints...most of them had some imperfect moments. Well, if you knew James Cook, you knew a sinless person.

I first met James at his baptism. After he was cleansed of his original sin, he was clean forever. He never lied, he never stole, he never coveted what his neighbor had. He never intentionally hurt anyone. He never gossiped, he was never cruel. He was a perfect soul, and for those of us who took the time to know James, we realize, he taught us all so much.

He couldn't speak, yet we all knew pretty much what he wanted or needed. He couldn't see very well, but maybe he saw things we never could. He couldn't read, we never knew how much he could hear or interpret. I'm sure we never knew all the times he was in pain. He had difficulty walking because of his balancing problems yet that's what James loved to do. James was all about move-

ment...swings, wheel chairs, boats, buses and cars. Yet, with all these imparities, he caused someone to change the direction of her life, as we just heard from Karen. He taught others of us compassion. He taught us gratitude. He taught us patience. He taught us to care about someone other than ourselves. He gave us all the opportunity to be better than we ever thought we could be.

It is unusual for someone with James' diagnosis to be able to show love or get close to others. Yet the 1<sup>st</sup> thing James wanted to do was get close to people. He never met a stranger he didn't like. His little crooked smile will forever be imprinted on my mind.

One thing James did have, was great parents. Bob and Sharon, I don't know if you know it or not, but for myself and many others, you've been our heroes. When others would have given up...you perservered. You were always loving and kind to James. You always put his best interest above your own.

While we are sad, and we will miss James, I personally am happy for James. His imperfect earthly body, that held him captive for so long, is gone. He is as free as the breeze. He is probably playing tag with the angels at this very moment. If I may, I'd like to share a poem I found, and altered, to suit James:

Read poem.

I like to think of **Jesus** going to meet James as he enters the gates of heaven. I know James gave him a big hug and his cute little smile. I know **Jesus** gave James a big hug back. I like to think of Jesus turning to the angels with James still in his arms and saying: "Say hi to James Cook, my son, in whom I am well pleased."

Thank You