

January 10, 2006

Benjamin (Ben),

By now, you (and the others) may have received a package...at least I hope that you have received this package even though the contents are very modest. As is often said in a situation like this, *it's the gift the counts* - and not the value of the gift. So please accept the package with my deepest and sincerest love for you, your brothers and, of course, Abby.

In the passing of a week or a few days, my thoughts are with you. Reminded by a boy about your stature or something you use to say; or my thoughts just get carried away by the fact that I miss you and long to see you again. In my thoughts, I wonder what a soon-to-be 11 year old is learning in school; I think about your day and your activities and interests; and I ponder on how you look, your expressions, and mannerisms. These are things that capture my thoughts about you (and the others) on occasion...and I wonder, think, and ponder. I pray that as God loves you, he knows these things and much more about you, about Benjamin Christian Rainer of St. Augustine, Florida.

I want you to know that I am here for you and that I love you very much. Of all my experiences with you, the most profound was when you were born and when I got to hug you last - the first time that I saw you...and the last time. How I miss our excursions to a park or to other place of interest - one of which is just down the road from where you live.

To further remind me of you, I have given you the color green. Green, as with your T-shirt and file folder, is to remind of nature and that which is beautiful, growing, healthy and alive. In the spring and especially during a wet period, the forest is a brilliant emerald green. It is this scene of the forest that reminds me of green and it also reminds me of you, Ben.

Ben of the color green, take courage and surety in the Lord for he loves you and knows even the depths of heart and the thoughts of your mind. God made the forest, the color green and, to my delight, he made you as my child.