

**The Eulogy of
Joseph Anthony Hunt
(August, 1954 – February 8, 2007)**

**St. John's Lutheran Church
15808 Manchester Road
Ellisville, Missouri 36011**

February 13, 2007

Joe Hunt can surely draw a crowd. I should have had him preaching midweek Bible classes for me.

I'm glad you all could make it for this celebration. I say "celebration" because this is exactly what Joe Hunt is doing right now so why should we be left out.

Joe Hunt had such a winning personality, always smiling, always greeting people with such phrases as "Who loves ya, baby?" and "It's another day in paradise." Joe's family is so solid spiritually they don't need a lot of comforting words from me nor if Joe were here would he want this to be a lachrymose occasion. So what say we dispense with sad faces and remember Joe for who he was: A fun-loving guy.

Right after Joe and his family joined our church I was invited to one of the ubiquitous Hunt family gatherings with all five brothers in attendance. It was around the summer of 1986. You've heard of Type *A* personalities? These guys are Type Double *A*'s.

My wife and I show up and we're instantly welcomed into the tribe. It's not long before the ladies and the men have separated and I get my first close-up of Joe Hunt in action. The brothers have decided to tell stories. But the stories they tell are told in a really strange way.

You may have heard the joke about the guy who lands in prison and on the first night he hears a voice ring out, "Number 17" and everybody just dies laughing. Then another voice chimes in and shouts, "Number 41," and again all the inmates roar with laughter. This goes on for awhile and he just can't figure out what's so funny and decides to ask his cellmate to explain.

He answered, "Well, we've all told the same jokes so many times we finally decided just to give each one a number."

That's close to how the Hunt's tell a story. They all know the details so all Joe had to do was start talking. He only got out half a sentence and everyone is suddenly howling. Once the laughter dies down Joe continues with another sentence fragment. He'd say about five words and die laughing and the other brothers, knowing the rest of the sentence, would howl back. This went on for five minutes. I was laughing, too, but not at what Joe was telling because that was incomprehensible. I was laughing at the bunch of brothers going down memory lane on sentence fragments. I later learned they don't number their stories, they just tell them in code. When Joe hit the punch line everyone, red-faced and drooling, started back-slapping, and bending double with laughter. By this time, I'm in convulsions, too. And I'm thinking, "Wow! I'm sure glad I didn't understand what he said or I might have busted a rib laughing."

So it's been a hoot knowing Joe Hunt. And I think the timing of his death is a testimony not only to God's grace but also His sense of humor. I've often told my congregation that from the human viewpoint the perfect time to die is in February after the Super Bowl is over but before Spring Training begins. That way you don't miss anything. And Joe got a bonus: before checking out he was able to enjoy the Cardinals win their tenth World Championship.

So just as if it were scripted, Joe goes home to be with the Lord on February 8th and we are here to celebrate his transfer.

When I do a funeral or a memorial I often begin by comforting the family. But I don't need to do that for Joe's family. They rightly grieve his absence. It is appropriate that they are in sorrow. This is the result of a sudden realization that there can never again be a time for earthly fellowship, companionship, or rapport.

Yet, although sorrow and grief are normal and legitimate emotions, they do not overwhelm those who have placed their trust in Christ. Stronger than these emotions is the clear testimony of biblical truth that applies to Joe's death and these doctrines provide for his family and friends a source of great joy and thanksgiving.

Joe's wonderful wife, Dee, his daughters, Kelly and Nicole, his son-in-law, Ryan, and his mother-in-law, Rosie, have done their due diligence. They have followed Joe's lead and pursued the objective of acquiring maximum knowledge of the Word of God.

For over twenty years they have attended every Bible class they could and when missed they caught up on the Internet or through tapes. As a result, this family is prepared for this moment because they understand that we are here at the courtesy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. "It is He that has made us and not we ourselves. We are His people and the sheep of His pasture."

God determines the timing of both life and death. When we are born physically He chooses to select us for human life by imputing a soul to our physical body. Without a soul there is no life. Further, no one dies unless and until God signs off on it, at which time, for the believer in Christ, his soul is removed from the body and transferred to heaven.

Some people die right after birth; some live to be over a hundred. The timing of a person's death is God's business. Joe Hunt was in excellent physical health until the day he died. But he was susceptible to cancer and he got the worst kind, a Grade IV astrocytoma. One day he's living a normal life and the next day he's riding down the Death-Shadowed Valley. The good thing about Joe Hunt is that he had prepared himself for the moment and he responded like a good soldier for Christ.

He's left behind three heroines of grace. His wife, Dee, has been magnificent during the time of Joe's illness. She has supported him, cared for him, protected him, and loved him. Dee and Joe were married for almost 29 years. Because of their decision to follow the divine guidance of the Word of God they structured their marriage on biblical standards. This brought them both great happiness and they established a home life defined by tranquility spiced by hilarity.

Dee, you are familiar with the doctrine of blessing by association. Joe advanced in the plan of God to enjoy the sophisticated spiritual life. Because he reached spiritual maturity his legacy to you is the "grace overflow" of blessing by association. Even though he is gone, God will continue to provide for you in every possible way.

As David said in Psalm 37:25, "I have been young and now I am old, yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken or his descendants begging bread."

You have done your duty as a faithful and loyal wife. The biblical principles of marriage have been upheld by you and Joe. This is therefore a testimony to the divine standard of marriage which must be upheld if a client nation is to remain functional and free. You have been tireless in your efforts to support Joe through his illness. When his illness affected his clarity of thought, you reminded him of a doctrine that restored his confidence. Now you may spend time enjoying reveries of a life well-lived full of love and laughter. I know you are grateful to God for the way Joe lived his life. And we observed how you rode the Valley with him when he needed you most. You never complained; you were always there; you were the model wife. We salute you for a job well done.

Nicki and Kelly. You are a pair of cultured pearls! Joe Hunt loved you two and he took good care of his ladies. What you have become as adults is a testimony to Joe's leadership as a father.

I liked Nicki the first time I saw her. She was but a munchkin at the time but she had fire in her eyes and it's never been quenched. She is a sweetheart but she can spot a phony a mile away, so that speaks well of Ryan. Joe, like most fathers, dreaded to see the day some young paramour might show up wanting to take one of his ladies away. When Ryan was the first to try this, Joe did his best to talk him out of it. He is rumored to have said, "Ryan, are you sure you want to do this? She's just like me and has her mother's health problems."

It didn't work. Ryan remained relentless, as a right man will, and won the hand of the nubile Nicole and in due time they spawned providing Joe and Dee with Andrew Joseph, whose first birthday was February 2. Joe got to enjoy his grandson for a whole year.

Kelly. There is a piece of work for you. This young lady inherited her daddy's perpetual smile. Kind, sweet, pretty, and wise. She has studied doctrine all her life and knows how to think—another demonstration of Joe's leadership. During Joe's illness she was always at church, both Sunday and midweek classes. Always there with a smile, always carrying herself with the deportment of a spiritual aristocrat.

I'd submit that both Nicki and Kelly exhibit sprezzatura, an Italian word that refers to the ability to do the right thing without apparent effort. They both exhibited this in the face of the tension and the trauma of seeing their dad suffer from his debilitating illness. Only the power of the Word of God resident in the soul can enable children to endure the pressure of losing a parent while maintaining poise and grace.

The Bible says that "In all the land no women were as fair as Joe's daughters."

I know the verse reads "Job's daughters" but work with me here. I think it aptly applies to Joe's daughters as well.

Then there are his siblings. Judy, I honestly don't know how you survived in a house full of five brothers. And not just ordinary brothers either. Hunt brothers! But you did so magnificently. I'm sure you will miss Joe but you know stories that the brothers won't tell that could keep us here all afternoon. You know the doctrines that will sustain you during this time of sadness and you have the memories that will enable you to smile in the midst of sorrow.

The Brothers Four now remain. Along with Joe, the five of you had a camaraderie that was developed over a lifetime and was manifest by pure enjoyment of being with each other. I was able to observe your fraternal fellowship for over twenty years and was amazed at how bonded you all were and still remain. Oftentimes families drift apart after they all reach adulthood, but you have not. You are as close-knit now as you were in childhood. This companionship enabled you all to come together and provide Joe and his family all the love and support a person could ever ask for in time of need.

Joe also has another family. The people of **Color-Art**. He won the hearts of everyone in the organization from its CEO Joe Steiner on down throughout the company. There is none of you who has not been touched by this man and the way he lived his life.

So many of you have written remembrances about Joe on the Caring Bridge Web site demonstrating the powerful impact he made on so many of you. It is apparent you now miss Joe to almost as great a degree as does his genetic family. Many of you have indicated that you are believers in Christ and thus members of the royal family of God.

Joe has been Color-Art's top salesman for most of the 27 years he was with the company. A man like that is hard to replace but God will provide for a company when so many of its employees are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Their productivity is enhanced by spiritual growth. This is why Joe Hunt sold more than anyone else for so long. And he didn't need a Zig Ziglar type to inspire him to do his best. There is no reason why a Christian would ever need a motivational speaker to improve his work habits. That kind of thing is for the unbeliever whose emotions get in the way of doing his job. The believer doesn't need this kind of shallow incentive boosting. The believer is required by Scripture to give his employer an honest day's work. And the proper motivation for doing so is found in:

Colossians 3:23 - **Whatever you do, do your work [imperative mood] from the source of your soul, as to the Lord rather than for men,**



**v. 24 - knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.
It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.**

The reason that Joe Hunt was so successful is because in his mind the organizational chart at Color-Art didn't begin at the top with Joe Steiner. It was the Lord Christ Whom he served and as a result Joe Steiner never had to worry about Joe Hunt doing his job.

Grace Doctrine Church is Joe's third family. I speak for the entire congregation when I say that Joe Hunt fulfilled the mission of our church. Our emphasis is Bible study. If you don't know what God wants you to do then you can't get it done. The Lord stated His wishes clearly when He said in:

John 14:15 - "If you love Me, keep my commandments."

Many people assume the Lord refers here to the Ten Commandments. Well, there are a lot more than ten. In fact, the ones that are pertinent to the church are to be found in the New Testament where there are 1,357 that are a direct command or a prohibition, that mean: "Do this," or "Don't do that."

However, the Imperative is the mood of volition. It is the appeal of one person's will to that of another. This mood expresses neither probability nor possibility, but only intention, and is therefore the furthest removed from reality. In Colossians 3:23 the phrase, "do your work," is in the imperative mood, but it is the employee's volition that must decide whether or not to keep the commandment. Joe Hunt made a steady practice of keeping it.

Therefore, if you love Christ, keep his commandments—all 1,357 of them. However, only the believer, filled with the Holy Spirit, is even qualified to attempt this prodigious undertaking, but one is certainly better at accomplishing the objective if he knows what these mandates are and that requires diligent Bible study.

Consequently we are instructed in:

2 Peter 3:18 - "Grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."

Paul challenges us in:

Colossians 1:9 - ... be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

v. 10 - so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God."

This is an arduous process yet this is what we as believers are required to do during the time we have left on this earth following salvation. Paul illustrates how this is accomplished in:

Romans 12:2 - Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renovation of your thought, so that you investigate what the will of God is ...

Joe Hunt responded to these commandments and their challenges. He made Bible study priority one in his life. And it paid dividends exceedingly abundantly beyond all he could ever ask or think.

The doctrine he learned was available in the treasure chest of his soul when the news came of his diagnosis. He opened that chest and found all the strength and confidence; courage and wisdom he needed to ride through the Death-Shadowed Valley absent fear.

Joe is a testimonial to the power of the Word of God and he fulfilled the spiritual mandates, some of which we have just noted. In so doing he illustrates the type of spiritual life that we strive to achieve at Grace Doctrine Church and he is our current best example.

I know that all three groups—his Hunt family, his Color-Art family, and his church family—miss Joe desperately. Some may entertain the idea that God made a mistake by taking such a powerful witness home at the prime of his life. But we are told in the book of Job that there is a right time for everyone to die.

And when a person dies no one can do it for him. You have all given Joe every possible ounce of love and devotion during the dying phase of his life. However, there is someone who accompanies the believer throughout this process and such was the case for Joe. He was comforted by his Savior, Jesus Christ, and is presently in heaven face-to-face with the Lord.

The timing of Joe's death was perfect because he was in God's perfect plan. This means that *when* a person dies is God's call and the length of one's life is *not* a factor. We are God's people and the sheep of His pasture. We are here at His pleasure and for His purpose. Christians must humbly submit to the plan of God which is designed to glorify God. We serve Him in life and prepare ourselves in the process to be called home at any time so that we may serve Him throughout eternity. The biblical principle of being granted one day at a time is how the believer must structure his life. He must live his life before men as if he would live to be a hundred, but live it before God as if he might die the next day.

Jeremiah points out in Lamentations 3:23 that our grace contract with God is renewed every morning—that is, our contract is renewed one day at a time.

Job has a passage that emphasizes that one's physical age is not a factor:

Job 5:26 - "You will come to your grave in a full age [כֶּלֶח *kelach*], like a shock of wheat comes in its season."

The Hebrew word *kelach* does not refer to a "full age" in the sense of longevity but rather "full age" with reference to the plan of God. This is brought out by the simile "... like a shock of wheat comes in its season."

Only the expert knows when to harvest wheat. It should not be done too early or too late but at the right time. This means that God is the one who is the Expert. He knows when to harvest His children and although those left behind experience grief and sorrow they are comforted knowing that the decision was made by God and therefore they rejoice in the blessings of dying grace. The passage continues in:

v. 27 - "Consider this: we have researched this, therefore it is true. Hear it and retain it in long-term memory for your own benefit."

One of the greatest testimonies a believer can have is in how he dies. God commands us to study, know, understand, retain, and apply His will as it is revealed in His Word. When certain believers arrive at a point in their spiritual life where their death will have greater positive impact on the plan of God than if they kept on living, then God will call them home regardless of their physical age. Remember, heaven is an improvement over life on this earth, yet we remain here until He calls us home.

Now think of the positive impact that Joe has had on the life of each and every one of you gathered here today. Now think of the exceptional impact Joe has had on the life of each of you over the last 16 months.

The legacy of Joe Hunt is recorded in his book. In November 2005, Joe asked his brother Tim and me to come over to his house. When we arrived Joe was his typically jovial self but his excitement was riveted on an idea. Joe had just learned of his temporal fate. He was not down about it but rather animated by an idea. And this idea found its genesis in the realization he was going to die but that he had no problem with it. It had dawned on Joe that all the time he had spent studying the Bible was now paying major dividends.

What Joe had spent time learning had been used previously to apply to this life, resolving its problems, and managing the day-to-day challenges of everyday living, whether at home, work, or play. No matter the circumstance, Joe had advanced in his spiritual life to the point that he shared the happiness of God. This level of soul tranquility enables the believer to be invincible to any exigency that life has to offer. Joe had been taught this and was applying it.

But the true test of one's faith often occurs when life offers a sudden alteration of his affairs. What was not on Joe's Day-Timer was that he was about to die. But within a couple of days he had oriented and adjusted. And the result was the realization that he possessed a treasure trove of knowledge that was ready and waiting to light his path through the Death-Shadowed Valley.

He had already tapped that part of it that enabled him to lead a victorious life but he had no idea the breadth and length and height and depth that emerge when one realizes he is going home to be with the Lord. He was at the point where doctrine was no longer a *way* of life, doctrine *was* his life!

Joe then isolated his physical circumstance from his duty to God. His attention turned to each and every one of you here in this audience. He wanted to inform you of his discovery of the treasure. How to do this was the question, and the decision was made to tell Joe's story in a book.

At Grace Doctrine Church we had just formed Joe Griffin Media Ministries for the purpose of more efficiently distributing recordings of Bible classes and to also begin publishing books. I suggested that Joe's story would be the perfect opportunity for us to christen the organization's publishing division. Joe and Tim immediately agreed and I am extremely pleased that *Who Loves You?* was Media Ministries' first title to be released, and by the way, it was printed by Plus Communications, a Color-Art subsidiary. As you know it has been a great success.

What the book contains are those doctrines that Joe discovered in his treasure trove. They are ones he'd learned through twenty years of study but once he realized he was going to die he had gained an advanced level of insight about them. They were not just things he had learned; they were now things he was literally *living*.

David spoke in Psalm 23 of the "valley of the shadow of death." This is the believer's last stage of life here on earth. It can last only a second or it can go for years. But the thing that lights the way is what the believer has in his soul. If he has learned nothing about the grace and love of God, nothing about God's plan and his place in it, then the darkness of fear, dread, and panic accompanied by doubt, anger, and bitterness prevent him from enjoying the grace of dying.

The believer who is prepared, who knows all about the circumstances that are involved in death, has a soul armored with confidence and courage. Confidence that he has eternal life and will go to heaven when he dies gives him the courage to live the remainder of his life without fear so that he can continue to serve the Lord.

The major doctrine that sustained Joe was his absolute confidence in his eternal future. Our Lord spoke of this in John 3, where He had a conversation with Nicodemus, a man who was not even saved at the time and therefore had no hope. He was speaking with the Savior of the world Who gave him all the information he needed to acquire eternal life:

John 3:16 - "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life [ζῶην αἰώνιον, *zōēn aiōnion*]."

During the course of Joe's trip through the Valley I had a number of conversations with him. This doctrine was the one that I determined comforted him most and, clearly understood, would comfort anyone who might be in a similar circumstance.

In the summer of 2006 I did a special study on not only the principle of eternal life but also how this doctrine is an integral part of the Gospel of salvation.

What I am about to say is the part of this eulogy that Joe Hunt personally requested that I relate to you. Joe was friends with a large number of people in the St. Louis metropolitan area. Joe's discovery of the treasure he possessed and its application to his life once he learned of his fate motivated him to carry two messages to each of you.

First was the Gospel of salvation through faith alone in Christ alone. No one possesses the treasure unless he is saved. No one is saved unless he believes in Christ.

Second, Joe wanted to inspire every person he reached to refocus their attention away from the details of this life over to the divine guidance provided by the Word of God. In other words, Joe wants each and every one of you to make the study of the Bible priority one in your life.

He hoped to accomplish this in two phases. First through his book, *Who Loves You?* and second, through his eulogy.



At the last conversation I had with Joe his parting comment to me was, "I've done my duty, now you do yours!"

In order to do my duty I will take the next few minutes to present to you a clear, biblical presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ which carries with it both a purpose for believing in Christ and the result of having done so.

The New Testament speaks of placing one's faith in Christ. Faith is a transitive verb and demands an object and in Scripture that object is Christ.

But Christ is a title, the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Messiah. The Messiah-Christ defines an individual that is both undiminished deity and true humanity in one person. He possesses absolute sinless perfection in both His deity and His humanity.

Every member of the human race however is imperfect and therefore cannot offer any reason to a perfect God why he would qualify to live for all eternity in His presence.

Helpless to do anything about the problem, God provided a solution through His uniquely-born Son. Jesus' perfection qualified Him to be our substitute on the cross where He received the imputation of the sins of the entire human race and was judged for them in our place. We know that His sacrifice was successful because after three days He was resurrected from the dead.

The question is, "Do you believe this?" You may believe that all of this is a historical fact alright but do you believe that faith in Christ saves you? Do you understand that by believing Jesus of Nazareth is the God/Man Savior you receive eternal life and go to heaven when you die?

To be delivered from the lake of fire and to receive eternal life, you must place your faith in the reality of the claim that Jesus' work on the cross delivers you from your sins and places you in the family of God. There is nothing more to do: no works, no penance, no feeling sorry for what a cad you are, no getting baptized, no joining a church, no nothing.

When Paul and Silas crossed the Dardanelles bringing the doctrines of New Testament theology into the West their first stop was the Roman colony of Philippi where their preaching in the public square landed them in jail. Undaunted, these two men began evangelizing their fellow inmates when an earthquake hit the area causing the prison's doors to open wide. But no one tried to escape because they were riveted to the men's message. Having overheard the testimonies of Paul and Silas, the jailer asked them what he must do to be saved.

Now get this: it was Paul and Silas's responsibility to tell this man the correct answer, to not leave anything out, yet be brief. Here's what they told him:

Acts 16:31 - Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved ...

That's all they said to him regarding what he needed to do, because all that is required is faith along in Christ alone.

When the Lord spoke to Nicodemus in John 3 he presented him with a choice that, if made, would have a purpose and a result. There is an important word in John 3:16, a small, simple word pronounced *hē' -nā*. It is generally translated into the English by the word "that," but in the Greek it introduces both purpose and result. Let's take a look at the verse:

John 3:16 - "God so loved the world, that He gave his uniquely-born Son, so that [ἵνα, *hina*: introduces both purpose and result] whoever believes in Him [this is the necessary condition to achieve the purpose and the result] shall not perish [purpose of believing: Nicodemus would be delivered from the lake of fire after he dies] but have eternal life [result of believing: Nicodemus would be imputed eternal life and would go to heaven when he dies].

We know that Nicodemus came to believe in Christ because John 19:39 inform us that he assisted Joseph of Arimathea in preparing the body of Christ for burial after Pilate had released it to them.

Therefore, Joe Hunt immediately began to pull his knowledge of the Bible together so that he could form a rationale and draw a doctrinal conclusion. Here's how he did it.

First of all, Joe knew he was saved. That's the *purpose* of believing in Christ. Salvation is deliverance from the lake of fire. This is a doctrine he had been *living* since the day he was saved.

Secondly, Joe knew the doctrine of eternal life. This is the *result* of believing in Christ. Eternal life is imputed at the moment one believes in Christ but doesn't become operational until physical death. When Joe learned he was about to die then the possession of eternal life was no longer something he knew he had, it was something he could now apply and he began *living* under its power.

Absolute confidence in the fact he knew he had eternal life and that he would be transferred out of this life into the presence of God and Christ when he died gave Joe the courage to do his duty for the Lord right up until the afternoon of February 8th.

In case any of you didn't clearly understand Joe's efforts to get this good news across to you it is my duty as per his request to tell you myself:

Here then is a statement of the Gospel of salvation:

"Jesus of Nazareth, Who is both perfect God and sinless Man, was sacrificed on the cross for the sins of the human race after which He died, was buried, and three days later was resurrected from the dead. The *purpose* of these things is so that anyone who believes them will be delivered from retribution in the lake of fire after he dies. The *result* of these things is that anyone who believes them has eternal life and will go to heaven when he dies." Do you believe this?

If you do, then you have all the assets necessary to grow in grace and achieve the level of spiritual maturity that Joe enjoyed. This introduces the second thing he wanted me to make crystal clear to you here today. You will never be happy in this world until you understand this world cannot make you happy.

Only God can do this and he does it through His Word which you must appropriate into your souls.

I've read about 200 of the messages so many have sent to the Joe's family through the Caring Bridge Web site. Many expressed appreciation to Joe for helping them resolve problems in their lives, giving them good advice, or just being there in time of need.

Now remember the last thing Joe said to me, "I've done my duty, now you do yours." The duty Joe assigned me is this: To tell you that he is no longer available to give advice and counseling and for you to ask yourselves this question, "To whom do I *now* go to for advice?"

The answer is no one. If you choose another counselor when will be the day he dies? Then what?

The thing to do is to take up the gauntlet that Joe has tossed. He challenges you to become spiritually self-sustaining by making the Word of God priority one in your life. Joe stuck with it for over twenty years and you all have gathered here today to salute him has one of the finest gentlemen you have ever known.

Joe lived his faith. A person can't live his faith unless he knows what that faith demands of him. What you observed in Joe was a mature believer's application of what he knew and what he knew took two decades to acquire.

Here's my challenge: Start to work on feeding your soul the manna of the Word of God so when the day arrives that your soul makes its transfer, people will gather and say these same things about you that you are saying about Joe.

Now I can say to you what Joe Hunt said to me: "I have done my duty; now you do yours!" With that, I leave you with this Latin proverb: *Qui non proficit deficit*: He who does not advance, falls behind.

To Dee and all the members of the Hunt family: you are in a brief period of sorrow but because of your confidence in the veracity of God's immutable Word, this grief will soon be replaced by the joyous expectation of the promised future reunion. May the grace of God and the power of His doctrine in your souls sustain you in the interim. For the believer, death is the Lord's victory. For you who are left behind your motto remains: *Vincit omnia veritas*: Doctrine conquers all.

And in memoriam to my friend, colleague, and fellow member of the royal family of God, I proclaim this as his legacy: *Triumpho morte tam vita*: I triumph in death, as in life.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we come to your throne of grace today, saddened by the death of a husband, father, grandfather, brother, uncle, and friend. Yet we have learned from Your Word that such sorrow is only experienced by those who are left behind. And so we are encouraged by the knowledge that You rejoice in the death of Your saints and that Joe is happily in Your presence.

Thus, it is our prayer that Your grace will comfort those who now find themselves missing him. Shower upon them your gracious mercies which will bring tranquility to their souls.

Such tranquility springs from biblical principles which sustain, give strength, and provide the ability to endure. May the Holy Spirit empower each one to draw from this reservoir of confidence, enabling each to keep his eyes focused on the Source of all good and perfect gifts, our Lord Jesus Christ. Joe was indeed a good gift, now made perfect in Him.

There is no substitute for victory. There can be no victory without Christ, a victory that was won through His substitutionary sacrifice on the cross and made available to all through faith alone in Him.

Joe, Your child, is victorious. At sunset on February 8, 2007, You ushered him into the realm of Your eternal glory about which we are confident and for which we are grateful.

And we lift our prayer in the name of Your uniquely-born Son, namely, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Jude 24 - Now unto Him who is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

v. 25 - to the only wise God, our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, through Jesus Christ our Lord, both now and forevermore! Amen.