FUNERAL -- LUELLA TORRE -- April 16, 2001

St. John 3: 16,17: For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but to SAVE the world through Him.

FRANK & BEVERLY: IT COULD NOT HAVE BEEN EASY SPENDING DAY AFTER DAY AFTER DAY WITH YOUR DEAR WIFE & LOVED ONE, LUELLA, AS SHE LAY THERE AT DEATH'S DOOR. I CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO IMAGINE THE HEARTACHE YOU MUST HAVE BEEN FEELING....WHEN MY WIFE, MARY ANN, & I CAME TO SEE YOU, WE ALL GATHERED TOGETHER QUIETLY IN LUELLA'S ROOM / WE HELD HANDS / & WE PRAYED THE OLD PARTING PRAYER OF THE CHURCH: LORD JESUS CHRIST, YOU ALONE ARE THE DOOR TO EVERLASTING LIFE! OPEN THE DOOR FOR LUELLA! GOD THE FATHER, YOU CREATED HER! GOD THE SON, BY YOUR HOLY & PRECIOUS BLOOD, YOU HAVE REDEEMED HER! GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT, THROUGH BAPTISM, YOU HAVE SANCTIFIED HER BODY TO BE YOUR TEMPLE! BRING HER HOME SAFE TO PARADISE! ANGELS CARRY HER HOME AND GRANT HER WITH LAZARUS ETERNAL REST IN THE BOSOM OF ABRAHAM! THE DAYS CONTINUED TO GO BY. THEN FINALLY IT HAPPENED. THE LAST VERSES OF PSALM 23 WERE FULFILLED: SURELY GOODNESS & MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE; & I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER! CAN YOU SEE THE ANGELS CARRYING LUELLA TOWARD THE HOUSE OF THE LORD? IN ALL OF GOD'S CREATION THIS HAS BEEN A SPECIAL TIME! THE ANGELS & ARCHANGELS & THE MYRIAD OF THE REDEEMED -- THEY ARE ALL CELEBRATING THE ANNIVERSARY OF JESUS' RESURRECTION! THE HYMNS & THE SONGS & THE ALLELUIAS ARE REVERBERATING THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE UNIVERSE. EYE HAS NOT SEEN, NOR EAR HEARD; NEITHER HAS ENTERED INTO THE HEART OF MAN THE THINGS THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM. WHAT WE CAN

IMAGINE & DREAM ABOUT IS ST. JOHN'S VISION OF HOLY CITY, THE NEW JERUSALEM, COMING DOWN OUT OF HEAVEN FROM GOD, PREPARED AS A BRIDE BEAUTIFULLY DRESSED FOR HER HUSBAND. CAN YOU SEE GOD THE FATHER, WITH HIS ARM AROUND HIS SON, COMING UP TO LUELLA & WIPING EVERY TEAR FROM HER EYES & ASSURING HER: THERE WILL BE NO MORE DEATH OR MOURNING OR CRYING OR PAIN, FOR THE OLD ORDER OF THINGS HAS PASSED AWAY.... THAT'S WHY IT IS SO IMPORTANT FOR US TO PERSONALIZE & IDENTIFY WITH OUR TEXT FROM JOHN 3: GOD SO LOVED THIS CLOD OF CLAY, CALLED CARL, LUELLA, FRANK, BEVERLY / PUT YOUR OWN NAME HERE / THAT BECAUSE I BELIEVE IN HIM, I WILL NOT PERISH BUT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE. EASTER REAFFIRMS THAT GOD DID NOT SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD TO CONDEMN YOU OR ME BUT TO SAVE US..... TODAY AS YOU ARE LEAVING THIS CHURCH, PLEASE LOOK UP & HIGH ON THAT BACK WALL THERE IS A BANNER WHERE YOU WILL SEE A BUTTERFLY FLYING FREE. THIS IS ONE OF THE EARLIEST SYMBOLS OF THE RESURRECTION REALITY!..... HAVE YOU EVER REALLY LOOKED AT THOSE AWFUL, ICKY, HAIRY, WORM-LIKE CATERPILLARS. THEY EVENTUALLY SECRETE THIS STICKY JUICE WHICH HARDENS INTO A CASKET. THEY MAKE THEIR OWN CASKETS, & THEN THEY DIE.... THEN OVER TIME THE COCOON CASKET STARTS TO MOVE -- & EVENTUALLY IT SPLITS OPEN --- & THERE COMES FORTH THIS GORGEOUS BUTTERFLY. IF YOU LOOK AT A BUTTERFLY UNDER A MICROSCOPE, YOU WILL SEE THAT IS BEAUTIFUL BEYOND DESCRIPTION..... CAN YOU SEE LUELLA NOW / FREE AS A BUTTERFLY / CAN YOU SEE HER GLADNESS & JOY & ABSOLUTE EXHILARATION... I CAN SEE JESUS REACHING OUT TO HER WITH HIS NAIL-PIERCED HANDS TO EMBRACE HER & HUG HER. SHE LOOKS AROUND HER AT THE COUNTLESS NUMBER OF THE REDEEMED & THEY ARE ALL SING AT TO TOP OF THEIR VOICES: SALVATION BELONGS TO OUR GOD & TO THE LAMB. THAT IS OUR FAITH IN GOD'S PROMISE!