

**St. John 14:1-6 - Christian Funeral – Eugene Navoy - July 18, 2017 A.✠ D.  
Angelical Lutheran Church, Allen Park, Michigan**

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

In the Upper Room before His arrest and crucifixion, the Lord consoled His disciples. They were about to suffer great loss – He was going away, in a way they could not understand. His Words are Words of comfort, Words meant to bring strength and hope even in the face of death. And His Words are Words of Promise, Promise for the Twelve, Promise for Eugene, Promise for you.

Everyone here today knows what it is to lose someone you love. Death touches all men, it is what the Prophet Isaiah calls the “covering cast over all men”, the “veil spread over all nations.” It hurts. It hurts to lose someone you love, to know the emptiness of the loss of a father, a grandfather, a neighbor or friend.

You know that hurt this day. It is the curse of Eden, the just consequence of sin. No man can escape what St. John calls “the last enemy”, for no man is without sin. Each of us have sinned. God is just. So all men go the way of all flesh.

But it is not death that brings us together today. It is life. The Lord Jesus says to you “I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.” It is that life, eternal life, everlasting life in Christ Jesus, that brings us together this day. It is that life that unites us, makes us one in Christ, brings together the many into one Communion, one Holy Church, a living Church. For God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

And in this time of loss, this time of mourning, this time when death is undeniable for each of us, the Lord of the Church, the Lord of Life speaks Words of comfort to you: “Let not your hearts be troubled.” So let His Word, dear Christian, let His Word, family and friends of Eugene, let His Word be your comfort and your consolation this day. For His Word is true, and he keeps His Promises.

He promised the Twelve “I go to prepare a place for you.” But the way to that place, the way back to His rightful place at the center of the heavenly throne room; His way back to the endless adoration and worship of the gleaming host of heaven, was through the darkness of Calvary. His way was the Way of Suffering, the Way of the Cross. There, on that cross, He died for the sins of the world. He died for your sins He died for Eugene’s sins. He died for the sins of all men. He did it to keep His Promise: to prepare a place for you, a place for Eugene, a place for all those who believe in Him.

There, on the cross, He died, God died, bearing the sins of the world. He prepared a place for Eugene by dying in his place. Christ was laid in the garden tomb, the Seed planted deeply in the earth - to spring forth to new life on that first bright Easter morn, the First Fruits of a living harvest of righteousness. He died to defeat death. He died and rose, that all who believe in Him , that Eugene, share in His resurrection.

In Christ, death is a door, a portal, the way through which the faithful enter heaven. And so it is with Eugene this day. In Christ He is not dead. He believed in Jesus. Not that many years ago a Pastor held Eugene in his hand, and said “Eugene, I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” And in that heavenly rebirth, that rebirth from above, Eugene became heir to the Promise of life

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Eugene heard the Word of God preached and read, here at Angelica for 60 years. Here his sins were forgiven by the Called and Ordained servants that God sent as His undershepherds, those sent to care for his soul. And here Eugene was blessed to taste heaven on earth, to eat of Christ's Heavenly Banquet, the Body of Blood of Jesus, for the forgiveness of his sins, and the strengthening of his faith. And that faith, baptismal faith, faith in Jesus, is the faith in which Eugene fell asleep in Christ.

St. Paul would teach us of that sleep, as he writes "I do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep... Therefore encourage one another with these words."

Our Redeemer lives. So it is life that brings us together this day, the life Christ gives, the life He gave Eugene, the life that cannot be taken away. Although we lay to rest these earthly remains in God's acre this day, at the same time we know that because Jesus lives, Eugene lives.

Eugene lives, his soul in heaven with the God in whom he believed, the Lord in whom he trusted, the God that made him the promise "I go to prepare a place for you." And all you who believe in Jesus, you who have the faith that Eugene had, you too live. And you are one with Eugene, one Holy Church, one Living Church, with the life that Christ alone can give.

On Friday it pleased the Lord of Life to make good on His Promise to Eugene "I will take you to Myself." And in that Promise, even in the face of the sadness we feel this day, in that Promise there is comfort, there is hope, in that Promise there is great joy.

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.