

Glory be to Jesus Christ!

Grace to you and peace from Him Who is and Who was and Who is to come! ✠ Amen.

Hear the Word of God for your comfort and strength!

Ecclesiastes 3.1-8

3For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: ²a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; ³a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; ⁴a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; ⁵a time to throw away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; ⁶a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to throw away; ⁷a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; ⁸a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.

Revelation 21.2-7

²And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God; they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them; ⁴he will wipe every tear from their

eyes. Death will be no more; mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.” ⁵And the one who was seated on the throne said, “See, I am making all things new.” Also he said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” ⁶Then he said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life. ⁷Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God.

As you are able, please rise for the reading of the Holy Gospel. The Holy Gospel according to Saint John, the 21st Chapter.

✠ **Glory to You, ✠ O LORD! ✠ Amen!**

John 11:21-27

²¹Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²²But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask of him.” ²³Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” ²⁴Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” ²⁵Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, ²⁶and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” ²⁷She said to him, “Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world.”

The Gospel of the LORD!

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ! ✠ Amen.

Time comes to us from the hand of the Almighty in astonishing variety, as King Solomon muses in the Book of Ecclesiastes. Here the wise king, who was not above doing unwise things, looks back on his own life, on the life of his father, David, and on the lives of all of us. He sees a question mark over those lives, lived with such feverish passion, desiring and striving either to attain the unattainable or, having attained that which is desired, confronted by the limit of death which puts an end to all striving and all possession of that which can be measured, bought and sold. Solomon sees lives whose seasons of striving, attainment and joy are interrupted again and again by other times, times of upheaval and destruction and war, times which may make all former times seem pointless as human life is reduced to the dust of the earth from which it was first created. Only a life lived in the presence of God

has meaning, whether in good times, to be enjoyed and not to be wasted, or in bad times that are simply to be endured.

The collective life of humankind, the history of the world, viewed from the perspective of the LORD of history, may seem to be headed toward collapse under the weight of injustice and sin, but Saint John is granted the vision of a very different outcome, as we heard in the reading from Revelation. The final goal and destination of all things is not simply the predictable self-destruction of which the news is full every day. In the midst of the chaos of history and the fall of nations and empires, the LORD reveals what has been under construction since the dawn of time, a new habitation of peace with God, a renewed humanity in a new city of peace, ‘the new Jerusalem.’ This fulfilled community in which all holy striving and desire are fulfilled and all death, grief, weeping and pain are made to

simply disappear, God's promise to 'make *all* things new,' is offered to all those faithful to the promises of Christ and who, during the time before the fulfillment, simply endure and by enduring conquer all the enemies of hope and overcome all the obstacles to hope.

In today's Gospel, Jesus appears at an hour that seems to late for his dead friend, Lazarus, and the elder sister of Lazarus, Martha. Martha is still hopeful that Jesus will raise her brother from the dead, but she prepares herself to accept that the only resurrection for Lazarus will be at the end of time, on the Day of the LORD, in which Martha feels his loss most acutely, *this* day on which Martha worries about her future and that of her younger sister, Mary. Our LORD then astonishes Martha by announcing that the hope for resurrection and new life is a *present* reality, that He, Who stands before and is present to

her now, *is* ‘the resurrection and the life.’ “Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.”

The child of God, Kevin Lamar Neuhaus, had hopes and aspirations and plans, some of which he realized, others of which he saw personified in those he admired, still others of which had to be postponed indefinitely by the frailty of health, by times of hospitalization and by the final limit of death. He not only admired those heroes of his who fearlessly endured danger; he endured a great deal himself, time and again. Like Saint John of Patmos, Kevin was no stranger to the grief and tears of the human condition, to the loss of others important to him, especially the parents who gave him life, love and direction and who provided a home and a family for him and his sister. From them all he learned a gentle compassion and humor that

marks him as a member of the large extended family that mourns him today. In him the members of that family could see themselves and be thankful to God for many graces indeed.

Kevin was a farmer, pitting knowledge, skill, hard work and stubborn determination against nature, and he was a truck driver, traversing long and lonely distances to deliver needed goods. But, in that solitude he welcomed community and companionship, both animal and human, friendships he held dear. Perhaps his own struggle with illness helped to open Kevin's heart to the great charitable work for sick children to which he also chose to contribute.

Kevin was called from this life so soon that we are left with questions, questions not about Kevin but questions rather about God and about ourselves. Was it God Who was late in coming to Kevin's rescue, or was it we? Christ

answers these questions for us here and now, today, just as He answered Martha's bewildered grief. He answers all these questions and wipes away all of our tears as He did in Kevin's life and as He does even now. "I *am* the resurrection and the life," He says to us, standing among us through His Word, living within us through the Holy Spirit of His Heavenly Father, the Father Who answered His Son's own question about the forsakenness of death from the Cross by raising Him from the dead, by offering us a hope that is everlasting!

Now to Him Who loves us and has freed us from our sins by His blood, and has made of us a Kingdom, priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion with the Father and the Holy Spirit, both now and forever! ✠ Amen.

Alleluia! He is risen!
He is risen indeed!
✠Amen! ✠Amen!
✠Amen!