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LENT

FEBRUARY 2008

From the Pastor
Rev. Ingo Dutzmann

“And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:46-47)

Epiphany Joy in Jesus!

What a beautiful New Testament picture of the “family of God” caring for each other and welcoming newcomers with open arms and hearts. Is there any reason we at First Lutheran cannot emulate this remarkable behavior of the early Church?

We might be tempted to say, “it can’t happen today because we don’t trust each other.” To be sure, hardly a day goes by that we don’t hear of another scam intended to defraud us of the fruits our labor. Thus appropriate caution gives way to mistrust which gives way to paranoia. In the secular world this results in the concept of the “family of God” being perceived as no more than a naïve dream.

But what about us, the “children of God” who “live in the world, but are not of it?” As the baptized members of God’s family who are blessed with the assurances of His love, fidelity and “the peace which passes all understanding,” ought we not do all we can

in thought, word and deed to live as His family?!

I know we can’t change our distrusting “old Adam” behavior overnight. I know the world may not welcome our willingness to take risks for the Gospel of Jesus. But I refuse to succumb to the jaded view that says, “be careful that you don’t get taken advantage of.” Of course we should not become the suckers of the world. Even Jesus says we should “be as wise as serpents.” But, He also adds, we should “be as gentle as doves.”

A major theme of emphasis at First Lutheran this year is “Family.” I pray that everyone affiliated with this congregation will be open to ways by which this theme can become a powerful reality in our thoughts, hearts and actions. Thanks for your prayerful consideration; and may God bless your participation in the family of God here in the ‘Heart of Boston!’

From the President
Brian Harms

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Last month, in lieu of a newsletter, Pastor Dutzmann and I intended for you to receive a joint letter from us. Though the letters were brought to the post office in early January, it appears that most of you never received them. As a result, my newsletter article this month is a reprint of that letter.

Through it, Pastor and I would like to relate to you important ways in which God has blessed us at First Lutheran in 2007, and to present a vision for the direction of the congregation in 2008. By doing so, we hope that we will inspire you regarding the opportunities God is giving us to spread the Gospel and advance our Mission Focus Areas.

To summarize 2007, we would like to point to three primary events. First and foremost, with much anticipation FLC welcomed Mr. Bálint Karosi in late August as our new Minister of Music. Bálint's leadership has greatly boosted the worship and concert life of FLC, highlighted by the Reformation Sunday presentation of J.S. Bach's "A Mighty Fortress" cantata. (If you missed it, the cantata can be viewed at <http://flc-boston.org/music.htm>) This special worship service drew well over 150 people, the majority of whom were not members of FLC! The event highlighted the potential for our nascent Music Outreach initiative to bring quality music to the congregation and to Greater Boston in the furtherance of the spiritual truths we believe, teach and confess in the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

Second, 2007 marked a year of "growing participation" in the congregation. Throughout the year, we have highlighted this theme to facilitate our spiritual growth as a congregation and the execution of our Mission Focus Areas. It's a blessing to worship and serve the Lord, and 2007 marked a steady increase in the number of people receiving God's Word and Sacraments at worship and volunteering in the life of the congregation. We are also pleased to report a sustained high level of engagement by the congregation's elected leaders.

The third major happening of 2007 has been the ongoing work of the Brazilian Mission Task Force. Most of you are aware that Pastor Augusto Riss, our Brazilian Missionary, must return to Brazil this month due to U.S. immigration policy. In the midst

of this loss, First Lutheran is seeking to chart a sustainable future for the Brazilian Mission through initiation of a multi-church partnership for the mission. Head Elder Tom McCain and his task force members have worked diligently to develop this partnership model, and are currently reaching out to Brazilian Mission congregants and other congregations to engender their support. Your enthusiasm and participation in this ministry will also be critical to ensuring its future success.

Other significant highlights of 2007 include final completion of the HVAC installation begun in 2005, emphasis and education on a holistic view of Christian stewardship, the 10th anniversary of Pastor Dutzmann's installation at FLC, and the 50th anniversary of our church's current location in the Back Bay.

Looking forward to 2008, there are a number of important opportunities for us to pray about and tackle together. Overall, the congregation will be emphasizing the theme of "FLC Family" in its planning and execution of its Mission Focus Areas. "FLC Family" recognizes not only our increasing number of young families at FLC, but also the strong spiritual "family" character of our congregation. An integral part of the "FLC Family" theme will be advancement of our Education Mission Focus Area, including expanded Bible study opportunities at FLC and exploration of the feasibility of calling an Associate Pastor for Student and Family Ministry.

Another major initiative will be the advancement of a Long Range Planning process. At its core, this process will be driven by asking ourselves two questions: "Led by the Good Lord, what should our mission targets look like in 5 and 10 years from now and beyond," and "What steps should we be taking (including staffing and physical plant) in order for us to maximize those targets?"

Other significant areas of emphasis in 2008 include further efforts to solidify our

congregation's stewardship of its financial resources, providing the right mix of pastoral and financial support for the Brazilian Ministry following Pastor Riss' return to Brazil, and publication and refinement of a formal Music Outreach Plan.

In closing may we especially commend Pastor Riss for his five years of labor in the Good Lord's Greater Boston vineyard. Thanks to his efforts and those of many Brazilian leaders, the Brazilian Mission has a strong sense of purpose and of being the family of God in our midst. We are privileged for First Lutheran to be integrally connected to this extraordinary Gospel outreach. We also wish to thank Ms. Elaine Laaser, our Parish Administrator, for her outstanding support of our congregation's efforts. Without question, she is far more than a mere "secretary."

Thank you for your participation in the life of this great congregation in the "Heart of Boston." Your continued prayers and partnership will be a essential as FLC moves together towards the future blessings the Lord has in store for us.

Music Ministry

By Bálint Karosi, Minister of Music

In Martin Luther's concept, music was beyond the power of man. It was a gift of God; man can hardly do more than cultivate his skills in its use. Music, Luther believed, possesses universal, objective significance beyond its purely sensual qualities. Luther was also convinced of the power of music to influence human behavior, therefore he wished it to be played in church as well as at school. He contributed greatly to the development of this natural gift of God, and to the fact that in the 16th century Germany nearly all Reformed schools adapted music education in their regular curriculum, and the Lutheran chorales spread well beyond the walls of the church.

In the Lutheran Church, music has been always a great importance; the role of the Minister of Music is more than just to provide a musical frame for a Sunday service. His role is to translate the Words of God into a universal, transcendental meaning. Provided the rich musical heritage build around Evangelical Chorales, a Lutheran Minister of Music has the responsibility to realize Luther's wish to incorporate music in our life as "... a mistress of order and good manners which makes the people more reasonable that is more active and sensible in the faculties of wise and truth thought." Music Outreach at First Lutheran is supposed to achieve the goal of touching people through music, to have them deeply understand God's Word, and to attract the unchurched to our midst.

The Music Program at FLC is primarily a great opportunity for us to approach Luther's idea of the holy liaison of music and worship. As many of you probably know, it is hard to find a church in America with traditional music program such as ours allied with a musical worship space and superb organ. We are blessed to have our wonderful instrument in an acoustically musical sanctuary. This combination is a constant inspiration to all musicians and organists alike. Music outreach should be based on a strong and powerful worship experience for those who regularly worship here, and for those who are visiting FLC for the first time. I believe Music Outreach is already here, in the form of an inspired hymn singing at a Sunday service, diffusing through our walls, through people's hearts, through those who have participated at a service like the Reformation Celebration Service. I tend to believe that even if I did not do anything else except being a good musician and providing the highest quality in music for every single Sunday service, FLC would become a sort of "Lutheran Cathedral" that would slowly grow in reputation, and would attract people from outside the church-- cathedral in a sense that it is significant, important, and in the focus of attention. We are in the center of Boston,

and with a Lutheran heritage. Our Heritage is greater than the ensemble of us, and Bach's music is the greatest music ever composed. This and Christ's command to reach all nations is what makes our responsibility so huge, this is what makes our mission so universal. I would add here, that our targets for outreach are non-Christians primarily, but also Christians in the area, who are inclined to believe but don't go to church. We are also targets of music outreach via art and education. I believe we should always aim for Luther's idea of "Musical Worship" the marriage of the Word and music. This should be the basis of a flourishing Music Program, and also a basis of a flourishing Music Outreach Program. All this, of course, would not happen without the help of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in everything what we do for a greater purpose than ourselves. The ideal Music Outreach works through us, not by us.

My goal at FLC is to provide a Music Ministry that becomes a banner for the whole congregation, that anyone can use to attract people to our midst. I would not perceive my responsibility primarily being a marketing or PR job. I would be the servant who provides leadership, high quality music to services and special events, run concert series. These are values everyone can be proud of, and everyone should share with friends and the unchurched. As a positive example, let me evoke the success of our Reformation Celebration Service, which had many visitors in attendance as a result of the work of FLC members. As a missed opportunity let me add that our concert series, which hosted one of the greatest organists living today, Sietze de Vries October the 17th last year, had a disappointingly low attendance from the congregation's part, and I think it is a luxury for us to miss such an opportunity of appreciating and sharing what we have here. I therefore encourage everyone who "has ears to hear" to not only show up for our concerts, but also bring a friend, neighbor, relative, or coworker.

Another important aspect of the music program is music education. I plan to, and Dr. Brown already has begun, offer workshops and Bible studies focused on Lutheran hymnology, liturgies, music and worship. As a major event, a Hymn Festival envisioned for the Fall 2008 would give use a great opportunity to learn about our Lutheran musical heritage, and to increase our understanding and appreciation for who we are, increase our Faith, and give a foundation for explaining to others what we believe in. We have wonderful, knowledgeable resources in our midst!

Finally I would like to take the opportunity to thank everyone to have made my first four months here at FLC so easy and remarkable, that I feel I am at home, and that I do what I can and able to do the best. I am thankful to Elaine Laaser, who has always been there for me, whatever needed to be done she did it, although it was supposed to be done by me. Also Pastor Dutzmann, who is a wonderful man, and a great preacher, with full of ideas and enthusiasm, I really enjoyed working with him. The FLC choir, Sarah Bellott, besides being a wonderful singer is a charmingly nice lady, Leigh Anne, Tom Laaser who are helping me constantly with whatever I should be doing instead of practicing, David Hakes for his dedicated work as the head of the concert committee, the Muskopfs, Anne and Chris who are about the nicest people I have met in my life, and so forth, the list should go on. I thank you all for having me here, and I am looking forward to a new year.

Board of Education

By Bethany Tanis

Epiphany greetings from the Board of Education! Many exciting things have been happening in Christian education at FLC during the holiday season. First, FLC has become a Christ of Campus Chapter of

Higher Things Lutheran youth ministry. Did you know that men and women in their 20s are much less likely to attend church than those of any other age group? In fact, statistically speaking, 58% of those who regularly attended church during high school will discontinue this practice during their late teens or twenties.¹ The Higher Things Christ on Campus network aims to circumvent this trend by keeping Lutheran college students connected to the Gospel ministry of Word and Sacraments occurring at local churches. By becoming affiliated with the Christ on Campus network, FLC will be able to better publicize its campus ministry through LCMS channels and receive additional help in growing our ministry to students.

In related news, several FLC members have recently formed the student group LCMS Lutherans @ Harvard and applied for official university recognition. FLC elder and Harvard doctoral candidate Jason Heindl is currently serving as an advisor to the group.

Meanwhile, FLC's youngest scholars have also been hard at work. During the fall the Sunday School children raised over \$300 for donation to Lutheran school children in the Sudan via the Lutheran Heritage Foundation. Great job!

Finally, Dr. Christopher Brown is currently leading a Bible study of Lutheran worship and music between Divine Services. I hope you are enjoying this study and looking forward to Lent, when Dr. Margaret Schatkin will be leading us in a study of the Christology of the early Church Fathers during the 6:00 soup suppers prior to Lenten vespers. If you have ever wondered what the very first Christians *really* believed about Jesus, then you will not want to miss our annual Lenten suppers!

¹ See "Twentysomethings Struggle to Find Their Place in Christian Churches," The Barna Group, 2003, available at <http://www.barna.org/FlexPage.aspx?Page=BarnaUpdate&BarnaUpdateID=149>.

Board of Trustees

By Chris Muskopf

The dead of winter is a strange time to bring attention to the church courtyard. The curbside piles of dirty snow, early sunsets and sub-freezing temperatures of Boston in February do not incline people to thoughts of sitting outside and enjoying this space, but some recent construction in the courtyard has made me think of how we use this space to present ourselves to our neighbors.

Half a century ago, the architect of our building Pietro Belluschi provided a thoughtful entry sequence using the courtyard as meeting place between the church and the world. One leaves the street, comes into the courtyard and narthex and finally arrives in the nave through a series of perpendicular turns. This procession can easily be imagined as a leaving behind the things of the world to hear the word of God, or in the reverse, as a way of bringing the gifts of the Church to the world as we leave the building. Between the street and the church, the courtyard is a place where we can interact our neighbors, and provide them a glimpse of our life together whether we're inviting friends to ice cream socials, or beginning the Easter vigil.

In the latest construction efforts, we're replacing the existing trellis (while saving the vines) with new steel joists. Two attractive new benches are taking the place the battered, splintered originals. Loose brick steps and paving has been replaced and tuck-pointed. We continue to seek reasonable bids to refinish the soffit. Plans are in the works to add lighting under the trellis and around the perimeter of the church walls as well as improve the plantings.

These upgrades to life-safety, egress and lighting together will help make the church a safer, more usable and inviting space for all. As we re-occupy the space this spring, let's

think of how we might meet our neighbors and invite them into the FLC family through this unique space.

March 8th Work day. Save the date for a few hours of cleaning, maintaining and fellowship in preparation for readying the church for Easter.

A.L.S.O. 40ish

By Mary Reuning

2008 ALSO40ish, Adult Lutheran Singles Over 40ish is collecting activity ideas for the year. Boston Symphony, MFA, Metropolitan Opera and cross-country skiing are among the outings in the planning this year. Service events will include a Coffee Hour and BLW dinner. If you would like to host a Bible study or other event at your home or would like to share some of your own ideas please contact Mary Reuning at marydaisy@netzero.net (781) 255-2050 or Cris Brueggeman at crisbrueggeman@hotmail.net. ALSO40ish is designed to offer fellowship opportunities and spiritual support and fun for mature Christian singles.

Students & Young Adults

By Karin Denison

SYA kicked off 2008 with an organizational lunch after church on Sunday, January 13. Twenty people attended, including several newcomers, to help put a lot of events on the calendar. Thanks to the folks who helped provide food (Audrey Plinta, Michael Culbertson) and took care of set-up and clean-up duties (too many to name).

What follows is a general summary of the meeting -- which is a great way to share what's going on in SYA. There is a great enthusiasm and high levels of participation; soli deo Gloria!

Bible Studies (ongoing): Jason Heindl reported that the Monday-night Bible

Study/Dinner is still meeting the first 3 Mondays of the month at 7 p.m., with approximately 10 folks per week attending. Recently the group moved from 1 to 2 Samuel, which will be the topic through April. Jason (heindl@fas.harvard.edu) continues to coordinate. Winston Bellott (wbellott@mit.edu) still leads Sunday-morning meetings during the Sunday School hour.

The Decalogue - a film series on the Ten Commandments: Balint Karosi was our guest and spoke at length in support of "The Decalogue," a film series by acclaimed Polish filmmaker Krzysztof Kieslowski. We viewed the first movie at the Bethany Tanis home over dinner on Friday, January 18, followed by a discussion. Viewings of the subsequent nine films are being planned for later this winter and spring.

Super Bowl Party/Flag Football: Mike Timko and Audrey Johnson will christen their new home in Arlington by hosting SYA for a Super Bowl party on Sunday, Feb. 3. A flag-ice football match will take place in a nearby park. By the time of printing, details will have been sent out with pertinent details. Thanks, Timko/Johnsons!

LCMS groups at local universities: Bethany Tanis remarked on several efforts to establish LCMS-based student groups; a group is actively meeting at Harvard for weekly devotionals, led by Liz Spira with Jason Heindl as the de facto faculty adviser. Activity is also underway to facilitate similar groups at Boston University and Boston College. This will be an ongoing effort.

February Boston Light of the World Dinner: SYA has agreed to assist FLC's Boston Light of the World, Ministry to the Blind, in preparing and serving their monthly dinner -- Saturday, Feb. 23 at 5 p.m. Any number of volunteers welcome; contact Miriam Schmidt (miriam_schmidt@hotmail.com) Miriam will send out information closer to the date.

Skiing? Due to popular demand, we discussed if folks would be interested in carpooling and planning a ski excursion to New Hampshire or Vermont some Saturday in February or March. No formal plans were made, but a lot of folks were interested in the possibilities; watch the e-mail list for possible dates.

FLC Easter Brunch SYA has again volunteered to host the FLC Easter Brunch between the 1st and 2nd services on Sunday, March 23. A brunch coordinator is needed. Please contact Karin (kdenison1973@yahoo.com) if interested.

Future Service Activities: The Charles River Clean-up is held every year in Boston, on Earth Day in late April SYA has sent a group to this event for many years; please contact Karin if interested in coordinating. Lauryl Smith has agreed to look into the logistics of SYA coordinating or participating in a Red Cross Blood Drive. And trustee Chris Muskopf put in a plug for volunteers for an upcoming FLC Church Work Day to be scheduled this spring. For all events, watch the e-mail list for details.

LWML

By Mary Reuning

LWML International Culinary Extravaganza Planning: We are starting to assemble a planning committee of Lutheran Women's Missionary League supporters. That can be you. (Men, do not feel excluded. Mission work is for all of us). The first time we threw this shindig it was a bountiful luncheon of international delights with music and fellowship. The second time, Amber Pettit prepared a wonderful mission presentation for us; and there was bountiful international food. I think it was a success both ways to call attention to LWML and invite support for Mite (coin) Box mission projects.

Please let me know if you are able to plan or help at the event this year. I look forward to hearing from you. Serve the Lord with gladness. Mary Reuning, marydaisy@netzero.net (781) 255-2050.

Lutheran Social Ministries

By Amber Pettit

The final monthly feature highlighting ministries of our Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN (www.ogt.org)

The OGT stated mission is: "In loving response to Christ, the Servant, the Orphan Grain Train movement encourages and enables God's people to share the personal and material resources in bringing Christ's name and character to needy people both far and near"

The OGT serves to gather donations of clothing, medical supplies, food and Christian literature and distribute them both nationally and world-wide. The organization began in 1992 when Rev. Ray Wilke of Grace Lutheran Church, Norfolk, NE, followed up a mission trip to Latvia with a dream of driving a train across the Midwest and collecting food donations along the way to ship to Eastern Europe. Now operating at over 150 semi-loads a year, OGT facilitates the donations of Americas both overseas and to the needy here in the United States. OGT was pivotal in taking much-needed supplies to the Gulf-coast in response to hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

Post-Christmas Thanks

Food for the Poor

To the First Lutheran Church Family:

Food for The Poor wishes to thank you for the welcome you extended to Pastor Klemm on his recent visit to your parish. On behalf of our less fortunate brothers and sisters of Latin America and the Carribean, we thank you for having shared in their lives. They, and you, are blessed by your generosity.

In Christ,

The Food For The Poor Family

Giving Tree

Dear First Lutheran of Boston:

As the Sunday School teacher here at Resurrection Lutheran Church in Roxbury, I wanted to take a moment out of the New Year and express to you how happy and appreciative my children were for all of your thoughtfulness and generosity. They received the gifts and took them home with them on Christmas Eve. I understand from parents and grandparents that the chaos that followed our Christmas Eve service was incredible. The children eagerly opened their gifts, and were completely happy...everyone was so thankful and happy with what they received the lights in their eyes had not dimmed during this past week.

As the Sunday School teacher of these wonderful children, I need to express to you how happy and grateful I am for your thoughtfulness for a group of children you have yet to have the pleasure of meeting. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts. May your New Year be filled with wonderful and meaningful events.

Thank you,
Monica Allen

Christmas Caroling by BLW at Altenheim Nursing Home

By Rosalie Hoffman-Goumas, Director

On December 1st, Boston Light of the World with many volunteers of FLC went to the Altenheim Nursing Home in West Roxbury. It was a memorable day to all who participated: we sang familiar carols to the patients on two of the floors. The staff was very receptive to us and the singing almost brought tears to my eyes it sounded so good. The highlight of the visit was the joy on the patients' faces when we came in—they were happy to have us there and one of them even sang a solo. They had a reception with coffee and cookies to show their appreciation.

Neal Lipson and I performed more Christmas Carols for the evening, he on the Saxophone and Clarinet, and I on the piano. It was fun to bring joy in the realm of music that night.

I want to thank especially Mary Reuning for getting people at FLC coordinated to drive us and share in our fellowship. As the holidays get closer, I pray that you bring joy to other people as we did to the patients and staff at the Altenheim

Coat Drive

I simply can't express the depth of my gratitude to all the kind-hearted members that made this year's coat drive another huge success. Last year (our first year) we donated 35 coats and this year we donated 44 coats! It's amazing how many less fortunate lives we touched in just 2 years. You have my promise to continue this effort, so please remember our coat drive again next fall. I was humbled again by what we can accomplish when we work together. Anything is possible with God's help. This was something so simple that might make a huge difference to someone who needs warmth and a reminder that they remain in

the prayers of Christians in their neighborhood. For more information on One Warm Coat, please visit www.onewarmcoat.org. Again, thank you for your generosity - FLC really made a difference to the efforts of this worthy charity. GOD IS GOOD! --

Lori Prehar

Missão Brasileira/Brazilian Mission

By Pastor Augusto Riss

Tempo para tudo (Eclesiastes 3:12)

Tudo tem o seu tempo determinado, e ha tempo para todo o proposito debaixo do ceu: ha tempo de nascer e tempo de morrer; tempo de de plantar e tempo de colher o que foi plantado... tempo de de derribar e tempo de edificar; tempo de chorar e tempo de rir, tempo de prantear e tempo de saltar e dançar de alegria... tempo de abraçar e tempo de afastar-se de abraçar; tempo de buscar e tempo de perder; tempo de guardar e tempo de jogar fora; tempo de falar e tempo de ficar calado, tempo de amar e tempo de aborrecer; tempo de guerra e tempo de paz”.

Amados irmaos em Cristo,

Para mim agora e tempo de partir, de deixar-vos. Tempo de dizer adeus ate que Deus nos de uma oportunidade de nos revermos ou, se nao, adeus ate que finalmente estejamos todos juntos na casa eterna de nosso Deus e Pai nos ceus.

E tambem tempo para mim de pedir perdão a todos os que magoei e desapontei, como ser humano pecador que sou.

E tempo para mim de agradecer, de dizer um especial muito obrigado por todo o amor que tive de voces. Eu vou sentir muita falta de voces e do amor e carinho de voces.

Para mim, nunca vira o dia em que eu vou esquecer voces. voces ficarao para sempre em meu coracao e em minhas oracoes.

Eu vos peço para sempre permanecerem na fe e para amarem de todo o coracao a Deus.

Queira Deus Espirito Santo jamais deixar a falta de fe, a descrença, tomar conta do vosso coracao. Queira Deus Espirito Santo nao deixar voces perderem o verdadeiro amor cristão por Deus, por nosso Senhor e Salvador Jesus que deu sua vida na cruz por nos, por sua igreja, pelo proximo, pelos irmaos e irmas na fe, e por toda esta humanidade que esta na escuridão do pecado e precisa da salvacao que so existe em Jesus. A nossa fe precisa nos acompanhar ate a hora da nossa morte. O nosso amor vem junto conosco para dentro da Vida eterna e permanecera por toda a eternidade.

Desejo-vos paz. porem o mundo esta cheio de violencia e guerra, mas Jesus e a nossa paz. Que ele seja sempre a vossa paz. Que ele vos cubra de paz e de bençãos.

Me despeço de voces com as palavras de despedida de Sao Paulo ao se despedir, por carta, dos irmaos de Corinto:

“A graça do Senhor Jesus seja convosco para sempre. Meu amor esteja com voces todos em Cristo Jesus. Amem. (1 Corintios 16:23-24)

Finalmente, irmaos, alegrem-se. Aperfeicoai-vos, consolai-vos, concordem uns com os outros, sejam de mesma opiniao, vivam em paz; e o Deus de amor e de paz estara convosco” (2 Corintios 13:11)

Adeus.

Pastor Augusto Riss

Brazilian Mission/Missão Brasileira

By Pastor Augusto Riss

A time for Everything (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

“For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted... a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance... a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing, a time to seek, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast

away; a time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak, a time to love, a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.”

†††

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ Jesus our Lord and Savior.

For me is time to say goodbye to you. Goodbye until I have another opportunity to see you again or if this will not be possible in this life, then goodbye until we are together in heaven, our eternal home, the home of our dear God Father.

Is also time to say “thank you” to all of you, for the love that you have shown to me. I will miss you and your love, so much. I will never forget you. I will keep you in my heart and in my prayers.

I ask you to always keep your faith and love for God. May the Holy Spirit never allow you to have a time of skepticism. May the Holy Spirit help you to do not lose the true Christian love for our Savior Jesus who gave his life for us on the cross, and the love for people of God, our sisters and brother in faith, and our neighbors. Faith needs to be in us until our last hour. Love will follow us to eternity and be with us for everlasting.

War and violence can easily steal our peace, but we always can have Christ’s peace, “peace not as the world gives.” Let me greet you now when I leave you using the words of Saint Paul:

“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you. My love be with you all in Christ Jesus. Amen.” (1 Corinthians 16:23,24).

“Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one other, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you” (2 Corinthians 13:11).

Adeus,
Pastor Augusto Riss