

Dear Friends and guests, Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

* Today we have gathered on the occasion of the loss of a beloved daughter, beloved niece, sister and dear friend, L. S. And as much as it has pleased Almighty God in His good providence to call L. from this life, let us recall the admonishing and comforting words from the Holy Scripture.

* Thus says the Lord, Dust you are, and unto dust you will return. By one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. The shocking truth is that there is no respect of persons -- poor and wealthy, known and unknown, ordinary and in authority, bad Christians and good Christians; we are all mortal. But it shouldn't be!, because God created humanity to enjoy the gift of eternal life. One month ago after the first visit to L., her aunt E. told me that L. was admired God's world and its animals. From this I concluded that L. inwardly longed for the lost world that is promised to be ours again in the future. That is why in spite of the fatal destiny for all, Christians die with inner joy having been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive. Being delivered for our offenses, He was raised again for our justification and has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Jesus is the First Fruits of them that sleep, who says, I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believes in Me, though he were dead, yet will be alive; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die.

* If I would be asked; Did L. S. live by the promised hope? Did she keep her faith in the Lord even sometimes when she called to Him she didn't receive an answer? I would say, *Yes, she kept on waiting.* My belief is based not on the "de facto" of L's Baptism or Confirmation she received in this church but on virtue of her desire to ask for Absolution, the Lord Supper and Benediction before she died. She wanted to be prepared for the Lord. It's interesting, working in the church office by chance I noticed a paper where our circuit pastor reported about his visit to L. on December 16, 2008. When the pastor offered her Communion she declined saying that she would wait for her new pastor. Could you imagine, the Lord kept her alive until I arrived. I ministered for her Absolution, Communion and Extreme unction. She prepared herself for the Lord and the Lord prepared her for himself and I ministered according her will and the will of my Lord. Soon after she died.

* Friends, as I mentioned L. loved books; she had hundreds of books that later she donated to the Cranford Health Center. She loved to read and I am pretty sure that among the books she read there was a novel I read too. I mean *Moby-Dick* by Herman Melville. Even knowing a little about L's character I believe she liked this novel as well. Many of us have been admired adventures on the high sea, wandering sailors, waleships, passions and so on. And when I recall this novel I see it as a perpetual collision between God's nature and fallen human nature, between God and man. If we take into account L's life we might notice in which way

she found the solution to this problem. Instead of confrontation with God's made world as it was shown in the novel she preferred to love this world and its creatures. That's why she became known as generous supporter of many animal assistance organizations. She demonstrated her character by nursing for a blind spaniel for many years. Most important of all, she loved people, friends, family, co-workers and many others with whom she came across on a personal level. She knew the secret of how to make these people happy.

Do you think God forgets our good deeds that were done for sake of peace and joy? What does the Bible say?

* The Bible teaches clearly that we all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to what a person has done, whether it be good or bad. Therefore, beloved, let us escape the corruption that is in the world through lust, and seek now, in the day of salvation, the one thing needful, which will not be taken away from us. Let us fight the good fight of faith and lay hold of eternal life, unto which we are also called. May we be found in constant readiness for the final summons, ever waiting for our Lord and purifying our souls in obeying the truth through His Spirit.

The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ + and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen