

*Kevin Gosserand*

Kevin was the kind of parishioner a pastor loves. He trusted in Christ as his redeemer and ruler. He was devoted to his family. He helped with the liturgy here: he served Mass and sang in the choir. He had a successful personal life, managing his own business, and a thoughtful interior life full of questions ranging from physics to faith. He taught children, showing his care for future generations. He drew great joy from helping his neighbor. He enjoyed life.

Perhaps all of this goodness strengthened him to endure the challenges that afflicted him in life. Personally and professionally, time and again, he proved his ability to overcome adversity. Yet all that struggle never deterred his inner spirit. He ever enjoyed the goodness that life had to offer, and he made you enjoy it too.

Adversity is no stranger to those who follow Christ. In the Second Letter to Timothy, St. Paul described his own life in those terms. Paul suffered at the hands of his enemies; he was physically chained up in prisons—more than one, and for no good reason. But Paul saw his life within the bigger sphere of the gospel. He proclaimed confidently that you could chain him up, but you could not chain the Word of God. It would keep going on. Paul's life demonstrated that those who suffer for a noble purpose, for some greater good, will produce results that will endure, even if they personally do not see all the fruits of their work. Paul never saw the impact of his preaching. It carried on well beyond his lifetime. The fruits of Kevin's life will endure long into the future.

St. Paul then reports a saying he calls trustworthy: If we have died with Christ, we shall also live with him. If we persevere, we shall reign with him.

Perseverance, for Jesus Christ, is built on charity, as he explained in one of his last parables before his crucifixion: Those who feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the sick, and care for their neighbor—they will enjoy the blessings of eternity because what people do for the least of their brothers and sisters, they do for Christ.

Many of you were on the receiving end of Kevin's charity. You are here with gratitude for his life and sorrow at his passing. But many of you were also on the giving end of charity. When Kevin needed help, you were there. When his life became difficult, you supported him. When he sought family and friends, he received love in abundance. All of this expresses what Jesus hoped his followers would do. He wanted them to care for one another, and for the stranger among them. At times we don't feel like caring for others, but perseverance in charity is a hallmark of faithful Christianity. It's easier to do when someone shows us the way.

In Kevin we have lost a true friend and role model. Our sorrow is deep. But like him we trust in God, who rescues us from momentary adversity and brings us to eternal glory. As we pray for the repose of Kevin's soul today, let us strive to follow his example of faith, service and charity. With the help of God, may we all live in a way that results in a place at the right hand of Christ, who redeems and rules for ever.

*Saturday, January 7, 2023*