

****Alternate First Reading ****

Reading I From the Old Testament – (First Reading)

Ecclesiastes 3:1-15

A Reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes

There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens.

A time to be born, and a time to die;

a time to plant, and a time to uproot the plant.

A time to kill, and a time to heal;

a time to tear down, and a time to build.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh;

a time to mourn, and a time to dance.

A time to scatter stones, and a time to gather them;

a time to embrace, and a time to be far from embraces.

A time to seek, and a time to lose;

a time to keep, and a time to cast away.

A time to rend, and a time to sew;

a time to be silent, and a time to speak.

A time to love, and a time to hate;

a time of war, and a time of peace.

What advantage has the worker from his toil?

I have considered the task which God has appointed for men to be busied about.

He has made everything appropriate to its time, and has put the timeless into their hearts, without men's ever discovering, from beginning to end, the work which God has done. I recognized that there is nothing better than to be glad and to do well during life. For every man, moreover, to eat and drink and enjoy the fruit of all his labor is a gift of God. I recognized that whatever God does will endure forever; there is no adding to it or taking from it. Thus has God done that he may be revered. What now is has already been; what is to be, already is; and God restores what would otherwise be displaced.

The word of the Lord