

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community † Spirit of Christ Mission

The First Sunday of Advent-C ~ December 2, 2018

Jeremiah 33:14-16. Psalm 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14; 1 Thessalonians 3:12-14:2; Luke 21:25-28,34-36

Homily ~ Father Ed Hislop

As loss encircles us, as broken promises discourage us, as abuse harms us and darkness surrounds us: we weep, we struggle, we wonder, we wander, we long for truth, for healing, for justice."

Diocese of Helena Advent Prayer 2018

BUT STILL WE GATHER ENCIRCLING THE LORD'S TABLE, THAT PLACE OF NOURISHMENT TO HELP US LIVE IN MEMORY OF THE ONE FOR WHOM WE WAIT.

And wait we do as we struggle for hope in the midst of so much brokenness in our world, country and Church. Luke's words seem so true these days: *"People are dying of fright."* We gather, we wait, we hope, we long for a Savior, even as our beloved church is again beset by scandal, abuse and conduct shaking both earth and heaven. **BUT STILL WE GATHER ENCIRCLING THE LORD'S TABLE, THAT PLACE OF NOURISHMENT FROM WHICH WE WAIT IN JOYFUL HOPE. From here, when all these things happen, we stand up and raise our heads and our voice.**

We gather to begin again in these waning days of 2018, hesitant at first to hope, or even to believe that we *"can still stand up with heads held high and run forth to meet God's Christ with righteous deeds..."* even when so many are "drowsy" from all the sadness, scandal, judgement, fear, division and disappointment.

The healing Christ for whom we long, the one to whom we want to run and meet, is easily missed when we do not see his image in the tormented faces of so many; or in those so weary from a long journey who only hear again and again, "There is no room in this inn for you."

Yet, if we look, we "will behold his holy face, in all who hope and wait for us to do *"what is right and just in the land"* and in the Church.

A simple lighted candle moves among us and "circles 'round us," as winter's colors dance among us: bringing a quiet, almost imperceptible light in all the darkness, light, not just here but in the world, in the Church, among all God's people, among all made in God's image and likeness. Light, among those who long to be seen and for all who finally want to see, *"signs in the sun and moon and the stars"* and in all the "dismay" among the nations, and in the church.

Light, almost imperceptible, but light which reveals the mercy and justice of God; but also reveals God's wrath when the face of his Son is not recognized in the broken and abused, in the unwelcomed and shunned where his suffering is ever fresh.

A simple lighted candle moves among us and lights our way; the cross born by so many on this day, leads us in and stands before us waiting in winter's cold for the beginning of new life promised.

COULD THIS BE CHRIST, RUNNING FORTH TO MEET US?

God's Christ who will not wait for us, or the nations, or the Church to run to meet him, but can be seen running toward the human family—the whole human family—longing for all to *"increase and abound in love for one another."*

Pleading for us to stand up and raise our heads *"when perplexed by the roaring of the sea and the waves."* Stand up when terrible things happen and *"people die of fright:"* Raise up your heads, *"be vigilant... and pray, pray, pray that you have the strength..."*

Encircle the Lord's Table with all who bear the cross, to be nourished and nurtured with the food and drink of the Risen One, to live, act and do, in memory of God's Christ: "lift

**your heads, fix your gaze, unstop your ears,
make keen your sight and sense advent in
your days and these times.”**

**“Encourage us,” we pray, “to follow this light,
to seek God’s justice and fall, fall into Christ’s
mercy. Remind us again to serve justly, love
tenderly and walk humbly with all whose
hearts are broken.**

**We encircle the Lord’s Table, the place of
nourishment, to help us live in memory of
“the Lord our Justice,” singing as we wait:
UNITE US IN LOVE, HOLY AND FAITHFUL GOD.”**

