

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community

Missoula Deanery Gathering Reflection- Fr. Ed Hislop

Tuesday of the 28th week of the year + October 12, 2021

Scripture: Deuteronomy 30:11-14 (Midday Prayer of the day); Luke 11:37-41 (Gospel of the day)

Yesterday we celebrated the feast of Saint John XXIII, to whom this worship space is dedicated. It is good to remember, these days, the words he spoke to both the church and the world as he opened the long awaited, and long prepared, Second Vatican Council: *"For with the opening of this council a new day is dawning on the Church, bathing her in radiant splendor. It is yet the dawn, but the sun in its rising has already set our hearts aglow. All around is the fragrance of holiness and joy."*

With those words Pope John set the Church, amid its life in the world, on a new path forward, rooted in its ancient journey, but filled with a new fire of the Spirit, urging us all to find our way into a new age in a struggling and dangerous world. As we all know the first document of the Council was the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, completed in December of 1963. A Constitution, which in many ways, formed the basis of all the succeeding documents of the Council.

Like all journeys into the unknown, both in our own lives and in memories of sacred scripture, it does not take long to yearn for days gone by, for the way we "think" things once were, or the way we would like to remember them, even if we were never there.

Like Lot's wife who wanted to go back, fearful of the unknown. The struggles, habits, and challenges of the past became more desirable, for her, than the uncertainty of the journey forward. Her desire to "go back" made her into a pillar of salt, immovable one way or the other.

Pope Francis similarly echoes the same challenge of "moving forward" when he said, in his opening

address to the synod, the sentiment that, "we have always done it that way is poison for the life of the Church."

The fiery Spirit of the Council still urges us to move forward, to let go of *"the ways we have always done it;"* to embrace the vision, with all its risks and uncertainties as the journey continues.

As we move, we must believe, that the sun is still rising, and that the way forward is not beyond our strength or beyond our reach.

We are still invited to the banquet, not by a Pharisee, but by Christ himself, where, in the words of the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *"much more is required than the mere observance of the law."*

We still find ourselves around the Sacred Table, where *"the full, conscious and active participation of all the baptized is the norm to be considered before all else."*

At table with Christ, where **all the people** *"join with Christ in confessing the great deeds of God and in the offering of Sacrifice."* General Instruction of the Roman Missal #78

So, the vision still has its time, the journey forward continues, *"it is yet the dawn, but the sun in its rising has already set our hearts aglow."*

We need to spend less time, worrying about the "prescribed washings" and more time in the fragrance of holiness and joy, trusting in the truth that "the word is very near...and in our heart." Remembering that the *"God of goodness and kindness invites **all peoples** to the banquet and offers a feast beyond compare."*

Opening Prayer ICEL 28 A

