



Twenty-seventh SUNDAY Ordinary time-C October 2, 2022

Habakukuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4; Psalm 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9; 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14; Luke 17:5-10

LEGACY SUNDAY + Homily, Fr. Ed Hislop

Write down the vision clearly...so that one can read it readily. For the vision still has its time, presses on to fulfillment, and will not disappoint, if it delays, wait for it..."

Our parishes began with a vision, a vision centered on the spirit, hope, life and enthusiasm of the Second Vatican Council which opened in 1962. Pope John XXIII, to whom this worship space is dedicated, opened the council with these words: *"a new day is dawning on the Church... the sun in its rising has already set our hearts aglow. All around is the fragrance of holiness and joy."*

Those were days of great change, confusion, enthusiasm, anger, frustration and mostly hope. The old, closed windows of the Church had finally opened and a new fresh breeze, sometimes a mighty wind, was moving through every nook and cranny, carrying a new Spirit rooted in a deeper understanding of who we were and who we were to become. Some were frightened and resistant, others were exuberant and open.

The leadership, in those early years, both during and after the Council, at Saint Anthony's, our mother Church, was competent, enthusiastic, and excited to "move forward" with the vision and spirit, which Pope John XXIII unleashed on the universal Church. Monsignor Dennis Meade, with the loving and enthusiastic support of Bishop Hunthausen, opened the doors and windows at St. Anthony's, not long after the then "new church" had been built. Renewal was in the air, a spirit, not of cowardness but rather one of power

and love, a spirit willing to bear the hardship of change with strength that came from God.

A spirit flowing from "sound words of faith and love in Christ Jesus." A spirit embracing the rich trust of renewal, a spirit, it was re-discovered, that dwelt in the heart of all the people! A new day, indeed, had dawned upon the Church!

It was from Bishop Hunthausen that I first really discovered the meaning and impact of the vision the council unleashed. It was my first year at Carroll College and "Dutch" was home, on break, from the Council. He gathered as many students as could fit in the lower, unfinished level of the Carroll Commons, where he celebrated Mass, with all of us, completely in English. This was before it was happening in the parishes. Afterward, in the discussion, he spoke of the Constitution on Sacred Liturgy, the first document of the Council, promulgated December 3, 1963. He shared the significance of the constitution on the continued renewal of the church and noted the principle articulated of the "full, conscious, and active participation of all the people" in the Mass. And then he said, "Since that is true for Mass, then it must be true for everything in the life and spirit of the Church. Everyone is now to participate fully in every aspect of the life and ministry of the church. All are called!

It was in that spirit that the Church of the Diocese of Helena entered into the vision begun at Vatican II. The vision had its time as our parishes were founded beginning in 1971.

I first came to Missoula as a deacon in 1972, assigned to St. Anthony's in the midst of the establishment of our parishes, then unceremoniously named "satellite parishes of St. Anthony." I returned in 1973 to St. Anthony's and remained there throughout the 70's. Each of these parishes, John XXIII, Holy Family and Spirit of Christ, began in the vision and shadow of Vatican II. There was an abiding spirit of diversity of ministries developing, a vibrant and enthusiastic participation of both women and men in leadership and shared responsibilities and a deepening curiosity to study and learn scripture, theology, liturgy, and pastoral ministry, all intertwined with a new vision of social outreach, service and justice. People showed up for everything! And people did the ministry, hearing the plaintiff call from so many of the hungry in Missoula then, "Prepare me something to eat." It was from these parishes, with St. Francis Xavier, the Poverello center was conceived and born (a truth often forgotten today). People did the ministry, shared the faith, served the hungry, cared for one another and others, sang joyfully to the Lord, bowed in worship, and heard God's voice. All this seemed new then, but in truth it was "ever-ancient." This is not to say, as some here may remember, that there was no "strife or clamorous discord," there was, but even then, we were quick to remember that God did not give us a "cowardly spirit," but rather one that made us all "strong, loving and wise," willing to bear a share of the hardship for the Gospel.

We became vibrant new parishes, including St. Anthony's, because our faith had deep roots, and most were willing to bear a share of the hardship "with strength that came from God!" In many diverse ways, in those early years, the voice of God was heard and we did not harden our hearts, and chose then, as we must still do today, to

"guard the rich trust given to us by Christ" with the help of the "Holy Spirit, that dwells within us."

Our hearts were opened as we stirred into flame the gift of God when, after three years of shared ministries, dialogue, collaboration, and decisions we came together on December 2, 2006, Pope John XXIII and Holy Family, to become one again as Blessed Trinity with Spirit of Christ. Named for the Trinity and Christ's Spirit, we found again our place at the table of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one holy communion of faith, worship, and service, again, not without "strife or discord," but always with courage, vision, and integrity.

Our journey for fifty years has brought us here, flowing from the vision and hope of Vatican II, out of which we were formed, and in which we still must live and serve. A journey rooted in the vision which still has its time, and will not disappoint; a faith, sometimes as small as a mustard seed, which for fifty years uprooted, planted, and flourished. *A journey now into the future, moving forward and not backward!* A spirit stirred into flame again and again: The Spirit of God, not a cowardly spirit, but one that makes us, again and again, "Strong, loving, and wise."

For fifty years we wrote down the vision and remembered; we have believed, moved, worshipped, served, lived, and died. We have born the hardship of the Gospel with the strength that comes from God. But we have only done what we were obliged to do, much is left undone.

"A new day is dawning on the Church... the sun in its rising has already set our hearts aglow. All around is the fragrance of holiness and joy."

The vision still has its time and will not disappoint; if it delays, wait for it.

STIR INTO FLAME THIS GIFT OF GOD.

