

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community + Spirit of Christ Mission

Fourth Sunday Winter Ordinary time "A" ~ February 1, 2026

A VISION OF HOPE + A PROMISE OF LIFE + A SPIRIT OF SERVICE

Zephaniah 2:3; 3:12-13; Psalm 146:6-7, 8-9, 9-10; 1 Corinthians 1:26-31; Matthew 5:1-12a

Homily ~ Father Ed Hislop + Judy & Gary Hughes

The cross rises to the sky, "a vision of hope, a promise of life, a spirit of service," marked by all the colors of the earth and its inhabitants. The rainbow throughout scripture reflects God's *mercy and grace*, God's *faithfulness* to the diversity of the human family, created in God's own image and likeness, made in the *multifaceted beauty and holiness of the Divine*. It beckons the whole human family to hope in times of stormy darkness, like these days, to seek and make an oasis of beauty, a place of welcome, and a house, "blessed" by the good and artful work of human hands, reflecting the creative wonder of God.

The cross and the rainbow are symbol, the living symbol, of a new blessedness where the "humble of the earth" will be sheltered, where truth is heard, justice pursued and "strangers welcomed and protected," and "the way of the wicked" is named. A place where all can meet the Lord and encounter the wonder and beauty of Christ in one another. A house where all who enter can become "Blessed!" A house where the rainbow promise of the Second Vatican Council, which set the bow in the sky sixty-three years ago, is still A VISION OF HOPE, A PROMISE OF LIFE AND A SPIRIT OF SERVICE.

A way to live the vision, life, and service of Jesus, who teaches us again today, from a mountain top, in which he gave a new vision, promise and spirit, rooted in all the teachings and ways of his living Tradition. Embracing that vision, especially these days, when so many seem to long for days and times in which they never lived, and for a so-called tradition which has no authentic basis in the true and living Tradition of our faith. The Council, on which we must base our faith, work, and spirit moves the church, like Jesus does with the Beatitudes proclaimed today, "from *commands to invitations, from laws to ideals, from definition to mystery, from threats to persuasion, from coercion to conscience, from monologue to*

dialogue, from ruling to serving, from withdrawn to integrated, from vertical to horizontal, from exclusion to inclusion, from hostility to friendship, from rivalry to partnership, from suspicion to trust, from static to ongoing, from passive acceptance to active engagement, from fault-finding to appreciation, from prescriptive to principles..." John W. O'Malley, What Happened at Vatican II

Moving forward, we will maintain the simplicity, intimacy, and spirit of this house for the church. We will re-invigorate the space with the honor due to the mystery of faith we enter here, and affirm the dignity, humanity and "blessedness" of all who gather here. We will work to become "an oasis of beauty," hope, presence and hospitality, both intimate and communal. Our vision and our work (long discussed, planned, and determined by us all) embraces the "vision," "promise" and "spirit" of the Second Vatican Council's CONSTITUTION ON THE SACRED LITURGY, and on the subsequent renewed Sacramental Rites of the Church. We are moving forward with the "blessedness" of "Hope, Life and Service."

Gary and Judy Hughes reflection...

Gary:

A few weeks ago, to use Father Ed's words from a January 11th Homily, Judy and I were "summoned" by Sister Mary Jo to serve on the **Capital Campaign Committee**. We are here to help our community grow in faith and ensure the renewal of our Blessed Trinity home.

Much of my theology and beliefs begin with lived experiences—what I call personal or moments of encounters with the Risen Christ.

Our story began in 1965 when Judy and I were married at St. Anthony. I was a convert; Judy is a "cradle Catholic." We traveled to Rome just as Vatican II had ended, embracing its mission of **aggiornamento**—the "**bringing up to date**" of an ancient church. Pope John XXIII opening the

doors and windows. We have been embraced by the spirit of a Vatican II church for over 57 years. **About five years ago**, we felt the doors and windows of our previous parish begin to close to that spirit. We began a search for a Vatican II parish.

When I look at the rainbow over the Blessed Trinity spire, I think of the "Pot of Gold" at the end. To us, that gold is **this community**: a parish defined by the **active participation of the laity** - - alongside Father Ed, Deacon Jim and Sister Mary Jo.

As we walk through the doors of Blessed Trinity, we find a vibrant, living faith community.

The beautiful reality of laity preparing the sacred table and ministers of communion surrounding it. Ushers leading the gifts and people to communion.

As we receive His body and blood, we recognize that **WE, are the Body of Christ.**

YOU, are the Body of Christ.

Judy and I have always been impressed by the incredible **Outreach programs** serving the City of Missoula.

We remain amazed by your continued generosity toward the diocese, the church, and those in need.

As we worship here, we also see the wear and tear on this 40-year-old building. I am reminded of composer song writer Rob Quist's song, *A Lady Called Montana*: "We use her. We abuse her. But we will always love her and now take care of her."

Like our own homes, the House of God needs to be refurbished. Our renewal focuses on the heart of a Vatican II church.

A New Baptismal Font: Where we die with Christ & rise to new life.

A New Altar: To celebrate the Eucharist as the center of our lives.

A New Accessible Ambo: A place where we all can speak and hear the Word of God.

The New Blessed Sacrament Chapel: A new, quiet space for prayer and for reserving the Body of Christ for the homebound, the sick and dying.

I recently read a quote from Pope Leo, citing Matthew: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Through this renewal, we will be surrounded by the beauty of a fresh building, art, and new furnishings—a place to carry on the work of our Catholic faith.

If a single seed does not die, it cannot bring new life.

Let us plant the seeds of our time, talent, and generosity once again—for ***renewed life*** of Blessed Trinity church.

Judy:

- ***Greeters meet us each Sunday*** – They are always great, with a smile, good evening or morning, providing a liturgy sheet. They make us feel welcome.
- ***As I sit down*** – I look around and see all the familiar faces, and this provides me great comfort. We notice when close friends are missing. We hope they are okay or on vacation.
- ***The choir*** sings songs with amazing words, they are like a prayer. I remember one song with the line "hear us Lord, save your people". How appropriate is that in today's world. I always look to see what century the song was written and often see the seventeen hundreds.
- ***We praise God with the Gloria. Prayers of Intentions*** for the needs of us, others, state and world.
- ***First and second readings*** by laity and Gospel and Homily by Father Ed or Deacon Jim – not of our sins and wrath – but a caring teaching moment of peace, justice, hope and goodness of our faith
- ***A very prayerful preparation for Eucharist***. How fortunate we are to be able to receive communion alongside of others in our world and hope and prayer for those who can't practice their faith. At 84 this time is special to me that I can share this gift with Gary here at Blessed Trinity.
- ***Wish each other peace*** after the Our Father. Every time I say Give Us our Daily bread, I ask that we ***feed*** the starving of the world, not just spiritually.
- ***We depart with*** a blessing and go in peace to love and serve the Lord.
- ***The choir again*** sings uplifting words as ***we serve*** Family Promise, Poverello and Missoula Food Bank and more.
- ***As we depart, we receive a*** detailed bulleting, providing information and guidelines.

- **Many of us go into the** social room; always set with fresh flowers on each table; beverages; and donuts. **Thank you** to all the kitchen staffs that help set up and clean **while we visit** our friends to see how they are doing. We truly appreciate those who serve in all capacities. These people go out of their way to care for us.
- **Occasionally we are** served breakfast by the Knights and students, each earning funds for charity or their projects.
- **And we care** for Blessed Trinity and her needs. You will notice I said her. Loving and caring.
- **Last Sunday these groups provided** an incredible GALA, a masterpiece to kick off the 2026 Capital Campaign. You thought of every detail.
- **Thanks to** Father Ed and Sister Mary Jo for taking us on our beautiful journey of faith.

[Fr. Ed Conclusion:]

"When the Christian Community gathers to celebrate its faith and vision, its promise and spirit, it gathers to celebrate what is most personally theirs and most nobly human and truly Church..."

The place in which we gather and the environment which surrounds us, we feel and believe, must be *"a vehicle to meet the Lord, to hear and live the Gospel of service, and encounter the wonder and beauty of Christ in one another, and in the work and art of human hands. The challenge of our environment for worship is the final challenge of Christ: We must make ready until he returns in glory,"* with a **VISION OF HOPE, A PROMISE OF LIFE, AND A SPIRIT OF SERVICE.**

Environment and Art in Catholic Worship 107



**A Vision of Hope,
A PROMISE of Life,
A SPIRIT of Service.**

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community Capital Campaign 2026