

Blessed Trinity Catholic Community Spirit of Christ Mission

Thirtieth Sunday Ordinary time; October 29, 2026

Exodus 22:20-26; Psalm 18:2-3, 3, 3-4, 47, 51; 1 Thessalonians 1:5c-10; Matthew 22:34-40

Homily, Father Ed Hislop



LOVE GOD WITH YOUR WHOLE BEING. LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. Words and a vision which are serious, true and often challenging. A hope, planted deep in the human heart which longs for an end of separation, hatred, division, judgement, and fear. A human longing for compassion, mercy, unity in diversity and an honest welcoming spirit is planted deep in every human heart. If we listen, we can hear the many, and ourselves, "crying out" for compassion. *If we hear and act, we are saved.*

The Book of Exodus extols a vision of hospitality, a right to justice, compassion, and love for every human person. How we, as persons and as a people, treat others and those who are perceived as "different" is how we, ourselves, will be treated in the end. Paul inspires us to remember that the kind of reception others receive from us, will be the kind we ourselves will receive. That reception will reveal the idols which hold too many captive.

What are those idols? We know and feel them too well: Placing blame, demonizing, hatred, prejudice, racism, separation, division, self-righteousness, forgetting our own origins, and failing to offer others what we ourselves have received. *The* idol is failing to see the "neighbor;" it is only seeing others as "them," distinct from the so-called "us."

"But you," Paul tells us, *"became imitators of the Lord and you received the word"* even in the great affliction of the day, embracing *"God's way and promise"* in fearful and disillusioned times. So even now, today, our dream, hope and acts should strive to imitate the Lord.

To this we MUST be attentive...this is our Christian faith, our Catholic perspective, our way and truth, always remembering where we came from and in whom we believe and trust.

We are a church who survives, not through "sameness" but in diversity. When we desire to be the "Church" we embrace a mission to be *"imitators of Christ,"* to be a people of vision who know and feel that we are connected to every living person and, as well, to every living thing. This is the "sort of people" we are called to be, choose to be, and who we become, as we do the true work of *"imitating the Lord."*

Even in days like these as we witness so much turmoil, so many lies, divisions, and a war with continuing threats of "annihilation;" days when so many are filled with fear, loneliness, and doubt, when too many lives are at risk, and whose security is uncertain.

Our CATHOLIC VISION is *always* to listen and to hear the cry of the many and refuse to do them any wrong, and above all to always seek truth, support the oppressed, do the work and make the sacrifice to be *"imitators of Christ."*

Our CATHOLIC VISION is to act and do *everything* we do in memory of Christ. Our CATHOLIC VISION is to serve as if we were the Body of Christ himself. Our CATHOLIC VISION is to offer a sacrifice for the sake of every neighbor, as if they were Christ himself, especially those who are sick, oppressed, orphaned, molested, beaten, shot, kept out or sent away. Indeed, they are the face of Christ.

Our CATHOLIC VISION is to embrace every person as neighbor without distinction, separation or so-called "legal status." Our Catholic vision is to confront the lies, the "idols," to name the "extortioners" who prey on the suffering and do them wrong.

OUR CATHOLIC VISION is to pray for those who lead us, but any "blessing" over them must always mandate *"concern for the poor; for immigrant families being torn apart; for those suffering*

beneath the violence of war; for the marginalized whose dignity is threatened; and certainly, for Christianity when it is distorted into an instrument of political power.” Sister of Charity of New York: Response to the presence and blessing given by 12 Catholic Bishops over the President in the Oval Office, October 2026

Our CATHOLIC VISION is to embrace life in all its fullness and complexity, with all its differences, from its conception to its natural end, and to discover in every stage, dimension, and circumstance of each human life, the face of God and the mystery of Christ. *To see in each neighbor something of God that has never before been seen, and will never again be revealed.*

Our CATHOLIC VISION is to listen to the cries of the many these days, in every place, and to truly hear; our Catholic vision is to be “COMPASSION,” just like Christ. Our CATHOLIC VISION is to serve the living

and true God found in human need and human grace.

For us, today, “*to be imitators of the Lord,*” is to hear and live the words of the Prophet Isaiah, amazingly proclaimed and heard in every Catholic Church this day, in every part of the world, and in most mainline Protestant Churches: “*you shall not molest or oppress an alien.*” Those words are our greatest gift and our deepest challenge. To give of ourselves, to welcome, to offer a sacrifice of praise for the sake of others, is in truth to hear, heed, and believe in the greatest commandment of all: “*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” That command, that vision, that sacrificial work and offering is our only hope during these and all the days to come.

“BY OUR LOVE, THEY WILL KNOW WHO WE ARE.”

