



Blessed Trinity Catholic Community

THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT –A- February 22, 2026

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

Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7. Psalm 51:3-4, 5-6, 13-13, 17. Romans 5:12, 17-19. Matthew 4:1-11

Homily, Father Ed Hislop

The image is striking. God, the artist, shaping, molding, crafting, breathing breath, making flesh and blood, heart and soul, eyes and ears, touch and thought and, above all, imagination. The ground, the ashes left behind, the dirt, becomes a place, a home, for the divine breath! For God, it seems, it had to be beautiful...a work reflecting love and care, the mark of the creator, the artful sign of the divine, the music of the universe! We can almost hear this almighty artist, creator, lover, singing to the new human family, shaped into this creator's divine image: "Open your eyes and behold," "Breathe in my divine breath and sing." "Open your eyes and behold" what I, the great and passionate lover gives to you.

A VISION OF HOPE, A PROMISE OF LIFE, A SPIRIT OF SERVICE! Let what you see fire your imagination, illuminate your spirit, and become what you perceive! "Be still and know that I am God!" Hymn at Presentation of Gifts,

Christopher Walker "This mystery far beyond your reach, yet near in healing love." Gathering Hymn, Led By the Spirit

Do not succumb to the temptation to close your eyes, harden your heart, or silence your song. "Do not put the Lord your God to the test." Become the wonder and music of how you were made. Become the beauty you see all around you; be the holy breath breathed into you. And remember, how tempting, or perhaps convenient it can be, to close your eyes to the wonder and possibilities set before you; to deafen your ears to the music all around you; to forget that you and all others share the very breath and song of God. How tempting to let imagination be dulled and mystery set aside for what is immediately pleasing and satisfying, convenient, practical and "good enough." How tempting to open your eyes only to what you want to see and to eat only for yourselves. "Open your eyes and behold,"

"You cannot live on bread alone," but only on every word and creative deed that sparks imagination and evokes wonder. Open your eyes and behold the music of the mystery all around you.

Let the song of creation illuminate the world in which you live today: a world and universe that is still a place of awe, mystery, wonder, reverence, and thanksgiving. "You cannot, you cannot, live on bread alone." So, look beyond what is seen, beyond what is just needed. While looking at the dirt you must see a home for divine breath. "Do not put your creator to the test" by turning from the wonders and mysterious beauty set before you and planted deep within you. "Do not put your creator to the test" by seeking only what is easy or most convenient. God is filled with wonder, beauty, and mystery. This is the "God you shall worship," the only "God you shall serve." God, whose word illuminates the human spirit with an eternal breath and endless song. God who lives in the differences, wonder, needs, gifts and works of every human hand; God whose love is felt in honest worship, wondrous song, and artful music, breathing many sounds into one glorious symphony, revealing the mystery of God singing through the universe. That tree in the middle of the garden is "pleasing to the eyes" and desirable to the "wisdom of the world." But it is a tree which satisfies only the moment. It does not nourish the imagination to see beyond self or the immediate need, but tempts to keep things "just the way they are," to silence the music and deafen the song. Its fruit is poison to imagination and beauty. To eat of that tree, which still grows in the world today, satisfies only a momentary hunger, which brings a shame that cannot be covered.

THE GARDEN IS PLANTED AGAIN, however, when God's work becomes the work and hope of human persons; when the work of our human hands reflects the wonder and beauty of God's creation; when our hearts burn with a desire to reach beyond, to hear a new sound, and imagine a new world, and a life for all, filled with wonder, beauty, music, and the hope of a world made new again and again.

THE GARDEN IS PLANTED AGAIN when our gathering for worship is filled with wonder, beauty, a sense of mystery and a living imagination of seeing God, *when those bound unjustly are released.* THE GARDEN IS PLANTED again when the strength of our song, the beauty of music, and the wonder of the artist's touch expands our imagination *to set the oppressed free.* THE GARDEN IS PLANTED AGAIN when bread and wine is shared with the hungry and thirsty. THE GARDEN IS PLANTED AGAIN when the shame of the world is revealed and the cold and naked are clothed and warmed. Then, in a new flourishing garden, light shall break forth like the dawn, *our wounds will be*

healed, the wonder of music will fill the world, as the Tree of life flourishes anew.

God seems to be saying, as this Lenten journey begins, *"I hand over to you my creative wonder, to spark your imagination, to serve the world in which you live and the place you have made your home."* Do not succumb to the temptation to do or be "the least." Be **"A VISION OF HOPE, A PROMISE OF LIFE, A SPIRIT OF SERVICE!"**

"Open your eyes and behold" what I, the great and passionate lover, give you. Eat the fruit from the many trees of compassion, loving service, and caring beauty. Let what you see and do fire your imagination and create in you a generous spirit, and strengthen you so that you *"do not turn your back on your own."*

The image is striking; the music is beautiful. We are the artist, invited to make the work of our hands, the creative art of God, *"making ready until Christ comes again!"* Then our wounds, no matter how deep, will be quickly healed, and God will be heard singing throughout the universe as together we become **"A VISION OF HOPE, A PROMISE OF LIFE, A SPIRIT OF SERVICE!"**



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

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