



Blessed Trinity Catholic Community † Spirit of Christ Mission

Twenty-Fourth Sunday Ordinary time-A-September 13, 2026

Eucharistic Prayer Reconciliation II;

Gathering Hymn, "HOLD ON TO LOVE;" Presentation of Gifts, "COMPASSION WALKS THE CITY STREET;" Leavetaking: "TELL THE GOOD NEWS."

Homily: Fr. Ed Hislop

Forgiveness, hospitality, mercy, compassion, pardon. *"Hold on to Love, where grace and mercy's overflowing."*

We have all heard the church described as "field hospital," a place for sinners, a home for the rejected and a house for the unwelcomed, needy, and offended. A place where there is to be found a true sense of hospitality and compassion among a caring, giving people *"holding on to love."* THIS IS SUCH A PLACE, SUCH A HOME. HOW WE VALUE THIS HOUSE!

We can remember how challenging it is to *"hold on to love,"* or how easy it is to forget who we are gathered to become. We encounter persons who have not felt forgiveness, compassion, welcome or even a sense of healing from whatever may be broken in their living. They may feel judged or unappreciated because of their life choices. They have felt the *"hateful things of wrath and anger"* described in the book of Sirach. Some quietly walk away because they sense a move back to another age, another time. WE ARE NOT THAT KIND OF HOUSE!

So many need their wounds healed. This is the mission of the Church, to heal wounds of the heart, to open doors, to free people, to say that God is good, God forgives. God is compassion, mercy; always slow to anger. THIS IS WHO WE ARE, THIS IS WHAT WE DO! HOW WE VALUE THIS HOUSE!

The Church, the parish, if we are real and true, must be filled with human beings, just "human," *human* beings, who long to welcome with understanding, hope and loving support. A place, Sirach reminds us, where there is no room for hate of any kind; a house where judgement is left to God, where faults do not define persons, and forgiveness and compassion are a way of both living and believing. A house, a community,

where hearts can be changed, minds renewed, bodies refreshed, and people saved.

Forgiveness and hospitality are two sides of the same coin, and for the church, the parish, a never-ending way of living, believing, and serving. Hospitality is essential for forgiveness and faith. Hospitality is the need; forgiveness and faith is the gift. This does not mean that hearts do not need to be changed, or ways of living not reconciled with the truth and vision of the Gospel. It does mean that for that to happen a space must be opened where life-long stories and struggles can be told and heard, and kindness extended *"as high as the heavens are above the earth,"* so that life after life, person after person, is saved from loneliness, isolation, and judgement. HOW WE VALUE THIS HOUSE!

The words of Sirach echo through the weary world, church and parish: *"Could anyone nourish anger against another and expect healing from the Lord? Could you refuse mercy to another like yourself and then seek pardon for your own sins?" "We are all needy—and we are all gifted."* As we strive to welcome all, and listen to their story, we ourselves are welcomed and heard, our hearts changed, and our own weaknesses overwhelmed with God's never-ending mercy. Hospitality is feeling, believing, and recognizing that God's love is broader than the measures of our mind and the limits of our perceptions or the boundaries of our memory—our own, our family, and our church!

Hospitality, like forgiveness, is seeing the beauty and wonder of God in each human face and in the struggles and hopes of each human heart. It is always moving forward, it is never "staying put," or striving to go back to another time or a worn-out way. So, we give, time and treasure to, welcome, serve and move forward. HOW WE VALUE THIS HOUSE!

Hospitality is giving with unrelenting sacrifice. It is a spirit of attention to the needs of all; it is sharing grief and pain, joy and hope. It is bringing “good news” to weary hearts, and joyful spirits, even when weary ourselves; it is a “*steady light to show the way,*” a “*path through all that blocks the way,*” it “*sets a table.*” Here, in this house, we do this so well and with so much “spirit!” The giving and the sacrifice, the persistent overwhelming generosity, inspires gratitude to and for one another. A gratitude that inspires us to move forward “*holding on to love.*” **HOW WE VALUE THIS HOUSE!**

This is our work, our ministry, our hope, the reason we offer our gift each Sunday at the Lord’s table.

Today we will ask that God in his *kindness will accept our offering, made in his honor to serve the salvation of all.* Based on Prayer over the gifts 24th Sunday Ordinary time
Stewardship is hospitality. So, we “*Hold on to love, where hope is found, where grace and mercy overflow; where courage and faith will sustain,*” and “*acts of compassion restore.*”

This is why we gather, why we give, why we remember, why we are sent to love and serve. Each gift and sacrifice expands the vision, opens the doors even wider, and helps us all “*Hold on to Love.*”

Then, as in the Gospel, “*everything owed is paid back in full!*” **WE ARE SUCH A PLACE, SUCH A HOME. HOW WE VALUE THIS HOUSE!**

