

## December 3, 2019 Advent Reflection

### **Matthew 9:35-10:8**

*“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”*”

What is a flock without its shepherd? Today, on The Feast of Saint Francis Xavier, we are asked to contemplate this question in a very personal way. Our shepherd Dr. Perry Sangalli was taken away from us suddenly, and we were left with little time to mourn and reflect upon what this meant for our community. Like the crowds that Jesus encountered, we felt helpless. In an attempt to understand rather than to question why such a strong and wonderful leader would be taken so suddenly, I found it helpful to reflect upon the following words from Ecclesiastes:

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck that which is planted; a time to laugh, a time to mourn, and a time to dance.”*

So as I think about what Dr. Sangalli would wish for us today, I can't help but believe that he would want for us to dance. Just as Jesus healed the crowds and sent workers out to harvest the field – to pluck that which had been planted – Dr. Sangalli would want for us to continue to tend the field and to continue the good work started so long ago by Theodore Ryken. He would want for us, especially today on the Feast of Saint Francis Xavier, to take time to dance and to celebrate all of the joy that has been reaped from tending this beloved ground. Let us give thanks for those who have taken on the responsibilities that Dr. Sangalli so skillfully balanced. They have done so with a quiet grace that does not seek recognition. Let us give thanks for the time that Dr. Sangalli shared with us and for the lasting changes that he made on the lives that he touched. Let us give thanks for our colleagues, who are working tirelessly alongside us to continue the mission. And to our shepherd, to Dr. Perry Sangalli, we give our thanks. Today may we smile more brightly, love more strongly, and dance more joyously in his memory.

~ *Beatriz Pacheco, Learning Differences Resource Coordinator*

