

May 26, 2024
Most Holy Trinity
Matthew 28:16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Background:

Matthew devotes only twenty verses (chapter 28) to the resurrection. It would be worth reading the entire chapter. But here is a summary of the events as they are recorded by Matthew.

On the first day of the week Mary and Mary Magdalene went to the tomb at dawn. They witnessed an earthquake, and an angel rolling back the stone from the cave. The angel instructed them to go to the disciples and tell them, "He has been raised from the dead, and he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him." (Matthew 28:7) The two Marys left the tomb fearful yet overjoyed, and ran to the disciples. On their way they encountered Jesus himself, who told them, "Do not be afraid, go tell my brothers to go to Galilee and there they will see me." (Matthew 28:10) They were frightened, but ran to tell the disciples. Soldiers who had been guarding the tomb told the high priests what had happened. The chief priests and the leaders met and decided to bribe the soldiers to say that Jesus' disciples had come in the night and carried off the body. The soldiers took the money and did as they were told. The people of Judea still tell this story. The remainder of the chapter is the text for this Sunday's Gospel.

The Gospel text for today demonstrates that the two Marys were faithful to what they were commissioned to do: go tell the disciples. Despite being caught in the two emotions of joy and fear, they acted. The opening of the text reminds the reader that the disciples were also faithful to what was asked of them. They were instructed to go to Galilee to meet Jesus. They too were caught between two emotions: doubt and worship. But they were still commissioned "to make disciples of all the nations," to baptize, and to teach (Matthew 28:19-20). Jesus' earlier instruction to the disciples not to enter a pagan or Samaritan area has now been set aside. All are included, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, all social classes. "Make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 10:5) They are to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It was not until the end of the first century that the Christian community baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but Trinity was implied even when it was not explicitly stated.

The fact that we will gather to celebrate this feast is evidence that the disciples were also faithful to the commissioning they received from Jesus in today's Gospel. They were faithful, and all those who came after them have been faithful as well in passing on their relationship with God. Because of this faithfulness from generation after generation, we gather as a Church to celebrate our relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Reflection Questions:

1. What is your understanding of God as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit?
2. When you enter into times of personal prayer, do you find you pray to one person of the Trinity more often, or even exclusively? Has that changed over the years?
3. How do you experience God as Father, God as Son, and God as Holy Spirit in your personal life?
4. When the disciples saw Jesus, they worshiped and they doubted. Do you find that there are times when you worship and doubt or have a mixture of emotions as you come before God?
5. Jesus' command is that we are to make disciples of people of all nations, to baptize, and to teach everything that Jesus taught. Where do you find yourself struggling to be inclusive?

6. Can you take some time to talk with God about how you are feeling as you listen to this Gospel, and as you celebrate the feast of The Trinity?

The Gospel background and reflection questions are written by Fr. Paul Gallagher, OFM. They are edited by Sister Anne Marie Lom, OSF and Joe Thiel. The excerpts from the Sunday readings are prepared by Joe Thiel. To be added to the distribution list, send your name and email address to annemarie.lom@gmail.com

Our Gospel Reflections are hosted by the Franciscan Sisters of Christian Charity. Their homepage is <https://fscs-calledtobe.org/>. One link there is labeled Franciscan Gospel Reflections. A click on the icon will take you to the Gospel reflections for the upcoming Sunday. By following this link, you will be able to blog or comment on the reflection questions. The material will be posted on Fridays and will be available until the following Friday when the new material is posted.

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Excerpts from the Readings for May 26, 2024, The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

Moses said to the people: "Ask now of the days of old, before your time, ever since God created man upon the earth; ask from one end of the sky to the other: Did anything so great ever happen before? Was it ever heard of? Did a people ever hear the voice of God speaking from the midst of fire, as you did, and live? Or did any god venture to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by testings, by signs and wonders, by war, with strong hand and outstretched arm, and by great terrors, all of which the Lord, your God, did for you in Egypt before your very eyes? This is why you must now know, and fix in your heart, that the Lord is God in the heavens above and on earth below, and that there is no other. You must keep his statutes and commandments that I enjoin on you today, that you and your children after you may prosper, and that you may have long life on the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you forever."

Blessed be the people the Lord has chosen to be his own. Upright is the word of the Lord, and all his works are trustworthy. He loves justice and right; of the kindness of the Lord the earth is full. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made; by the breath of his mouth all their host. For he spoke, and it was made; he commanded, and it stood forth. See, the eyes of the Lord are upon those who fear him, upon those who hope for his kindness, to deliver them from death and preserve them in spite of famine. Our soul waits for the Lord, who is our help and our shield. May your kindness, O Lord, be upon us who have put our hope in you.

Brothers and sisters: Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a Spirit of adoption, through whom we cry, "Abba, Father!" The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they all saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Excerpts from Deuteronomy 4:32-40; Psalm 33:4-9, 18-22; Romans 8:14-17; and Matthew 28:16-20

Friends,

Here are the Gospel background and reflection questions for May 26th, as prepared by Franciscan spiritual director Fr. Paul Gallagher. On this feast of the Most Holy Trinity, the Gospel is the last five verses from Matthew's Gospel, where Jesus is making final remarks to the eleven apostles. The words that refer to the Trinity are where he says to them, "Make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." He also tells them, "Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

The other readings also have references to the power of God--Father, Son, and Holy Spirit--and who God has chosen to be his own, and that they should keep his commandments. In the first reading, from Deuteronomy, Moses says to the Israelites, "The Lord your God took a nation for himself with strong hand from the midst of another nation, in Egypt before your very eyes. You must now know, and fix in your heart, that the Lord is God, and you must keep his commandments, so that you may prosper on the land he is giving you forever." Psalm 33 exclaims, "The Lord spoke, and it was made; he commanded, and it stood forth. The eyes of the Lord are upon those who hope for his kindness. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own." In the second reading from the letter to the Romans, Paul writes, "Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. You received a Spirit of adoption; we are children of God, heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him."

The size of God the Father's family grows when all are adopted through his Son, Jesus Christ, and it is the Spirit he sent who is the advocate who "himself bears witness" that we are children of God.

Joe

> i < May the Word light your way each day!