

Our Sunday Readings

PROVERBS 8:22-31
PSALM 8:4-9
ROMANS 5:1-5
JOHN 16:12-15

From the Beginning

PROVERBS 8:22-31

Reading closely

1. Wisdom is speaking. Where has Wisdom come from?
2. Why has Wisdom come before all else?
3. What is Wisdom's relationship to the LORD?
4. What does Wisdom do?
5. How would you describe Wisdom?
6. What does this passage reveal about God?
7. What does this passage reveal about creation?

Living the word

8. How much do people value wisdom today?
9. Do you want to be a wise person?

THE FIRST READING

In the beginning

The Old Testament includes the biblical wisdom tradition in which God's wisdom is personified as "Lady Wisdom." Here Wisdom is linked to creation, for God created everything through her. Wisdom is an attribute or quality of God and therefore divine in origin. Because God created through Wisdom, the world reveals the justice and orderliness of God.

Wisdom christology

When the early Christians reflected on the ministry and identity of Jesus, they drew from the biblical wisdom tradition. Jesus did many of the things that Lady Wisdom did. If Jesus acted similarly to God's wisdom, then Jesus himself must be from God, divine in origin.

Ancient cosmology

The people of the ancient near east believed that the world had been created out of a dark, swirling mass of water. The sea was a violent, threatening abyss. The LORD shows his power over this chaos and violence by constraining it (v.29) and bringing forth land and sky (vv.27-28).

Delighted

Having established Wisdom's closeness to God, the author concludes by highlighting her closeness to human beings. Wisdom is an intermediary between God and his creatures. Those who seek God should seek Wisdom. By following her, people will find real and lasting joy.

*From of old I was poured forth,
at the first, before the earth.*

JOHN 16:12-15

Reading closely

1. How might the disciples have responded if Jesus told them more?
2. What all do you think the disciples believed about God’s Spirit given their Jewish background?
3. How do you think the disciples imagined the experience of receiving the Spirit?
4. What reservations might the disciples have had about receiving the Spirit?
5. What does this passage reveal about the relationship between God, Jesus, and the Spirit?

Living the word

6. How are the Father, Son, and Spirit one God?
7. How are the Father, Son, and Spirit different?
8. How does the Spirit glorify Jesus today?

THE GOSPEL READING

Saying goodbye

John’s Gospel includes a long “Farewell Discourse” as part of Jesus’ last meal with his disciples. Jesus tries to prepare his disciples for his arrest and the events that will follow. If Jesus spelled out exactly what was going to happen and who he is (v.12), his disciples would be too horrified and confused to understand. Jesus promises to send help.

Spirit of truth

People will accuse Jesus’ followers of speaking falsely about Jesus’ identity and, therefore, of God. Jesus assures his followers that what the Spirit will help them to believe and profess will be true. The Spirit’s words are true because *he speaks what he hears*, that is, the Spirit speaks what God commands him to speak, just as Jesus did.

The things that are coming

As well as helping the disciples make sense out of what happens to Jesus, the Spirit helps them understand where God is leading them. Ultimately the Spirit enables the followers of Jesus to know God’s great love and to discern how best to share this love with others, despite sometimes dangerous opposition.

TRINITY SUNDAY

A big question Christians had to answer was how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were one God. As this issue was debated in the fourth and fifth centuries, some bishops began celebrating a Mass in honor of the Trinity. The idea didn’t catch on right away because others rightly pointed out that every liturgy is a celebration of the Trinity.

By the fourteenth century, however, this feast had been formally accepted into the liturgical cycle. Trinity Sunday is unusual because it doesn’t celebrate a person or event but doctrine.

“He will glorify me”

Since the Spirit will clarify the meaning of what happens to Jesus as well as Jesus’ identity, the Spirit’s testimony will further glorify Jesus. That is, the disciples will be better able to love Jesus and to honor what he did. Also, more people will come to believe in Jesus.

Just as God fully shared his love and plan of salvation with Jesus, so now Jesus communicates all of this to his followers through the Spirit. Thus, the Father, Son, and Spirit share the same perfect love for the world. The Father made the plan of salvation, which first the Son and now the Spirit fulfill.

PRAYER

Alternative Opening Prayer for Trinity Sunday

God, we praise you:
 Father, all-powerful,
 Jesus Christ, Lord and Savior,
 Spirit of love.

You reveal yourself in the depths of our being,
 drawing us to share in your life and your love.

One God, three Persons,
 be near to the people formed in your image,
 close to the world your love brings to life.

We ask you this,
 Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
 one God, true and living,
 for ever and ever. Amen.