

Our Sunday Readings

DEUTERONOMY 4:32-34,39-40
 PSALM 33:4-6,9,18-20,22
 ROMANS 8:14-17
 MATTHEW 28:16-20

Our Inheritance

ROMANS 8:14-17

Reading closely

1. In what ways does the Spirit of God lead people?
2. In what ways are people enslaved to sin?
3. Why might people who are enslaved to sin feel *fear*?
4. What's the relationship between our spirit and God's Spirit?
5. How are we *heirs of God*?
6. Do people earn their inheritance?
7. What are all the ways people share in Christ's suffering?

Living the word

8. Do you like to call God *Father*?
9. How readily do you think of Christ as your brother?
10. In what ways is this passage suitable for Trinity Sunday?

Paul, a descendant of Abraham well-versed in his people's scriptures, applies this familial language to Christians. God's children are no longer exclusively the descendants of Abraham, but now include everyone who is *led by the Spirit*, everyone who turns away from sinful inclinations. Such people will inherit eternal life.

Unity of spirits

Abba is a personal form of the word *Father*. Jesus wasn't the only one who used the term to refer to God, but such use was uncommon.

Paul insists that God's Spirit enables us to call God *Father* just as Jesus did. By using the term when we pray, we show that we are also striving to be God's faithful, obedient sons and daughters. We're showing that our own hearts, our own *spirits*, are aligned with God's will.

Suffering with our brother

Our inheritance does not come without a cost, however. Just as the Spirit led Jesus into work for which he suffered greatly, so the Spirit leads us. We reveal ourselves as God's children when we imitate God's boundless love no matter how challenging the circumstances.

THE SECOND READING

Heirs

God revealed himself to Abraham and his descendants. The relationship that God established was sometimes expressed in familial terms: Israel was *God's son*. As God's son, Israel would *inherit* good things from God.

MATTHEW 28:16-20

Imagine that you're one of the disciples.

1. Is Jesus on the mountain when you arrive?
2. What does Jesus look like?
3. What do you do when you see Jesus?
4. What do the other disciples do?
5. What does Jesus do as he approaches you?
6. How do you feel about all that Jesus tells you to do?
7. Do you want to say anything to Jesus?
8. What does Jesus do next?
9. What do you do next?

Living the word

10. Have you ever been caught between adoration and doubt?
11. What is a *disciple*?
12. How do we *make disciples*?
13. In what ways is this passage suitable for Trinity Sunday?

THE GOSPEL READING

But they doubted

Although Jesus' disciples now meet him in his risen state, their faith is still imperfect. Earlier in this Gospel Matthew touched on the subject of weak faith (6:30, 14:31). Even people who accept Jesus question his identity and his promises. Matthew reassures us that while we should always strive for greater faith, doubts are normal.

Lord of all

Matthew doesn't include a story of Jesus' ascension because he presents the Resurrection itself as Jesus' exaltation into power and glory. Thus, the risen Jesus here declares that God has given him authority over everything (v.18).

The risen Jesus sends his followers to *all nations*. During his earthly ministry Jesus proclaimed God's kingdom mostly to his fellow Jews, although even then the inclusive nature of his kingdom was apparent (12:46-50). Since Jesus now reigns over all, he can bring everyone into his kingdom.

Baptism replaces circumcision as the ritual by which people become part of Jesus' new family.

Those who are baptized must adhere first and foremost to Jesus' teachings and not to Jewish law.

Where the church is, Jesus is

Other Jewish teachers and leaders contested Jesus' claim to be speaking for God. The Resurrection shows that God stands behind all that Jesus taught. Here Jesus commands his disciples – for the first time in Matthew's Gospel – to teach.

As long as the disciples teach what Jesus commands, the risen Jesus is the authority behind their words. When they teach, Jesus teaches through them. Jesus is thus present whenever the church acts in his name. Passages like this one support the Catholic Church's claim to authority.

TRINITY SUNDAY

A big question Christians had to answer was how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were one God. This issue was vigorously debated in the fourth and fifth centuries. The Nicene Creed was written during this time.

By the eighth century some people were celebrating a Mass in honor of the Trinity. Others argued against such a Mass by pointing out that every liturgy is a celebration of the Trinity. Nonetheless, in 1334 Pope John XXII established the devotional Mass for the whole Church. Trinity Sunday is one of the few solemnities that doesn't celebrate a person or an event but doctrine.

PRAYER

Opening Prayer for Trinity Sunday

God our Father,
 who by sending into the world
 the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification,
 made known to the human race your wondrous
 mystery, grant us, we pray,
 that in professing the true faith,
 we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory
 and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty,
 through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the
 Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.