

# SUNDAY READINGS

## READ AT HOME

Trinity Sunday

Year B

26 May 2024



### Collect

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.**

### Readings and Commentaries

At one level, the word “mystery” can simply mean something that is too difficult or opaque to understand. At another level altogether, it can denote a reality whose meaning can never be exhausted. The Trinity is such a mystery. It invites surrender rather than mastery, as does all love worthy of the name. Great theologians and saints down through the ages have suggested analogies to help us imagine God as one and three. Fresh efforts have been made in recent times to express the Trinitarian formula in non-masculine terms. While faith will always seek understanding, our daily grace is to live by Paul’s teaching: addressing God trustfully as a child, living in fond company with Christ, and abiding by the wisdom of the Spirit. In prayer we wonder at the ceaseless exchange of love between the Unbegotten, the Begotten and the Beloved of them both. This is the mystery into which we have been baptised.

**A reading from the book of Deuteronomy**  
**4:32–34, 39–40**

Moses said to the people: 'Put this question to the ages that are past, that went before you, from the time God created man on earth: Was there ever a word so majestic, from one end of heaven to the other? Was anything ever heard? Did ever a people hear the voice of the living God speaking from the heart of the fire, as you heard it, and remain alive? Has any god ventured to take to himself one nation from the midst of another by ordeals, signs, wonders, war with mighty hand and outstretched arm, by fearsome terrors - all this that the Lord your God did for you before your eyes in Egypt? 'Understand this today, therefore, and take it to heart: The Lord is God indeed, in heaven above as on earth beneath, he and no other. Keep his laws and commandments as I give them to you today so that you and your children may prosper and live long in the land that the Lord your God gives you for ever.'

**First Reading**

Moses' solemn words to the Israelites invite them into a vast panorama, stretching from the dawn of creation, through the exodus from Egypt, to an open future in which "you and your children may prosper and live long in the land." Moses is intent on reminding the people of the identity and power of the one true God. To this God alone are they called to pledge faithful allegiance.

He highlights God's own word, first evoking the creation story with which the book of Genesis begins. Through the six active days of creation God spoke and elements of the world came to be, culminating in the birth of humankind. God spoke again "from the heart of the fire" on Mt Sinai and gave the Israelites the Law, the Torah, by which they were to live. Now Moses summons them to take this word to heart, for "The Lord is God indeed, in heaven above as on earth beneath, he and no other."

This reading sums up the astonishing revelation that led ancient Israel to believe in one and only one God, beyond naming and human imagination yet passionately involved with the world. This is a powerful and fundamental text that calls for authoritative proclamation so that the assembly, like the Israelites of old, can take God's living word to heart.

**Responsorial Psalm**                      **Ps 32:4-6, 9, 18-20, 22**

**R.** Happy the people the Lord has chosen  
to be his own.

The word of the Lord is faithful  
and all his works to be trusted.  
The Lord loves justice and right  
and fills the earth with his love. **R.**

By his word the heavens were made,  
by the breath of his mouth all the stars.  
He spoke: and they came to be.  
He commanded; they sprang into being. **R.**

The Lord looks on those who revere him,  
on those who hope in his love,  
to rescue their souls from death,  
to keep them alive in famine. **R.**

Our soul is waiting for the Lord.  
The Lord is our help and our shield.  
May your love be upon us, O Lord,  
as we place all our hope in you. **R.**

**Responsorial Psalm**

The response to the psalm immediately restates the substance of the first reading: "Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own." Psalm 32/33 as a whole is a hymn of praise for the God who created heaven and earth and who has providentially guided the chosen people. Like the reading from Deuteronomy, it ranges across the ages, from creation through to the dawn of an entirely new era: "Our soul is waiting for the Lord . . . we place all our hope in you."

While the psalm casts an eye over both past and future, it is firmly focussed on the present. The Lord is always "our help and our shield," rescuing from death and saving from famine. Like today's feast of the Trinity and next week's celebration of the Body and Blood of Christ, the psalm is aglow with the spirit of the Easter season.

The verses selected for the responsorial psalm are fully representative of the complete prayer. They are faith-filled, admiring and thankful. The language is uncomplicated, the structure regular and the spirit upbeat. Readers are sure to find this an attractive prayer to lead.

## **A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans**

**8:14–17**

Everyone moved by the Spirit is a son of God. The spirit you received is not the spirit of slaves bringing fear into your lives again; it is the spirit of sons, and it makes us cry out, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit himself and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God. And if we are children we are heirs as well: heirs of God and coheirs with Christ, sharing his sufferings so as to share his glory.

## **A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew**

**28:16–20**

The eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

## **Second Reading**

The good news conveyed by this short passage from Romans is Trinitarian. It declares that as children we can address God as "Abba, Father." We are co-heirs with Christ and moved by the Spirit. This snapshot of our Christian identity is heart-warming, yet its import may be obscured by our sensitivity to the exclusive language of the Jerusalem Bible lectionary. More contemporary translations like the NRSV avoid the use of the words "son" and "sons." It may seem perfectly apt to replace these with "children," but it should be noted that this choice does entail some loss. The linguistic connection with Jesus as "Son of God" is diminished, as is the sense of privilege given to the baptised as it was to sons in ancient times.

What Paul writes to the Romans echoes what Jesus said to his disciples after he had washed their feet: "I shall not call you servants any more . . . I call you friends" (Jn 15:15). It also alludes to the risen Lord countering his disciples' fear with greetings of peace (eg Jn 20:19-21).

This is an uplifting text that communicates profoundly important spiritual truths in simple and affective language, though it doesn't shy away from saying that believers in Jesus share in his sufferings even as they are promised glory. It invites a delivery that conveys the wonder of the Christian calling.

## **Gospel**

The first and last chapters of Matthew's gospel affirm Jesus as Emmanuel, God's abiding presence in the world (1:23; 28:20). Now the child expected of the Virgin Mary has taken supreme command of the universe, as did the glorious son of man revealed in a vision to the prophet Daniel (7:13-14). There's a triumphant absoluteness pervading Matthew's final verses: "all authority," "all nations," all the commands," and "always, yes, to the end of time." Matthew's focus on Jesus' ongoing presence may be the reason why he has no account of an ascension in his gospel.

This passage has been chosen for its Trinitarian baptismal expression, the only one of its kind in the New Testament. Scholars suggest it was a liturgical formula used for baptism in Matthew's community rather than a doctrinal statement arrived at by theological argument. The great debates about the Trinity lay centuries ahead. Of course, there are Trinitarian references in Jesus' own baptism – the Spirit descends like a dove and a heavenly voice addresses Jesus as Son (3:13-17).

In today's text baptism appears not as an end but as a key step in a life of discipleship. The newly baptised are to be taught to observe all the commands Jesus gave – commands that he had laid down on his own authority in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew thus draws his gospel to a close by weaving together a variety of threads from the story he's told. These few verses form a bold conclusion that calls for assertive delivery.

An alternative translation of the scripture readings is given here from the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV). This may be particularly useful for those in parishes which use the NRSV Lectionary.

## TRINITY SUNDAY

### FIRST READING (NRSV)

**A reading from the book of Deuteronomy 4:32–34, 39–40**

Moses assembled the people to remind them how the Lord had spoken out of the fire while they stood at the foot of the mountain.

He said:

"Ask now about former ages, long before your own, ever since the day that God created human beings on the earth; ask from one end of heaven to the other:

'has anything so great as this ever happened or has its like ever been heard of?

"Has any people ever heard the voice of a god speaking out of a fire, as you have heard, and lived?

Or has any god ever attempted to go and take a nation for himself from the midst of another nation, by trials, by signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, and by terrifying displays of power; as the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?

"So acknowledge today and take to heart that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath; there is no other.

Keep his statutes and his commandments, which I am commanding you today for your own wellbeing and that of your descendants after you, so that you may long remain in the land that the Lord your God is giving you for all time."

### SECOND READING (NRSV)

**A reading from the letter of Paul to the Romans 8:14–17**

All who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.

For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear,

but you have received a spirit of adoption.

When we cry, "Abba! Father!"

it is that very Spirit bearing witness with our spirit

that we are children of God,

and if children, then heirs,

heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

In fact, we suffer with him

so that we may also be glorified with him.

## GOSPEL (NRSV)

### A reading from the holy gospel according to Matthew 28:16–20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee,  
to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.  
When they saw him, they worshipped him;  
but some doubted.

And Jesus came and said to them,  
"All authority 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,  
and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you  
"And remember; I am with you always,  
to the end of the age."

## Solemn Blessing

May the peace of God,  
which surpasses all understanding,  
keep our hearts and minds  
in the knowledge and love of God,  
and of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.  
**Amen.**

And may the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
come down on us and remain with us for ever.  
**Amen.**

(Adapted from the Solemn Blessing for Ordinary Time II, Roman Missal p 715.)

