

Most Holy Trinity Readings and Commentary Year A

Celebration Summary: Bryan M. Cones

Today's celebration falls under the heading "Solemnities of the Lord during Ordinary Time." Readings can be found after the Last Sunday in Ordinary Time in the Lectionary (#164); the prayers follow those for the Thirty-fourth Week in Ordinary Time in the Sacramentary. Vesture is white.

Although every liturgy is Trinitarian in character—our prayer to the Father through Jesus the Son in the unity of the Holy Spirit—today we attend in a particular way to the relational mystery of God. Though beyond our understanding, our belief in the one God of three persons does not describe a divinity that is distant from us. Rather, this is the God revealed "in the depths of our being," and we are the "people formed in [God's] image" (alternative opening prayer). The first reading echoes this sentiment in Moses' plaintive request that God would "come along" in the company of Israel.

The mystery of the Trinity, then, is our mystery as well. The Communion antiphon proclaims our true place in the divine mystery: In Christ we have been made children of God, sharers in the Holy Spirit. Encouraged by Saint Paul, we live that mystery in lives of love and peace, greeting one another "with a holy kiss" (second reading).

Though Easter season has passed, today's celebration should retain some of Easter's solemnity. We are not yet ready to return to the green of Ordinary Time; still, the environment, choice of prayers, and music can begin to lead us toward summer's "counted" Sundays.

Lectionary Summary: Glenn CJ Byer

The Feast of the Most Holy Trinity flows naturally from Pentecost. The Father, having sent the Son, the Father and

the Son having sent the Holy Spirit are now celebrated as a unity, as one God. The Gospel makes explicit reference to the events that will happen at Pentecost.

From the second reading today we can begin to see how the Church came to understand the Trinitarian nature of God as such a basic reality of the faith that it is used as a way to end letters. There is no need to explain the nature of the relationship; it lives in the holy greeting that Christians give one another, then as now.

This understanding was not part of the revelation found in the Old Testament, and so we are not surprised that the Old Testament readings focus on the eternity of God and the name of God, rather than on an explicit Trinitarian theme.

READING 1 EXODUS 34:4B-6, 8-9

A Reading from the Book of Exodus

Early in the morning Moses went up Mount Sinai as the LORD had commanded him, taking along the two stone tablets.

Having come down in a cloud, the LORD stood with Moses there and proclaimed his name, "LORD."

Thus the LORD passed before Moses and cried out, "The LORD, the LORD, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity."

Moses at once bowed down to the ground in worship.

Then he said, "If I find favor with you, O Lord, do come along in our company.

This is indeed a stiff-necked people; yet pardon our wickedness and sins, and receive us as your own."

Reading Summaries

First Reading: Deacon Owen Cummings

Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9

This short passage from the Book of Exodus has Moses going up Mount Sinai, with the two stone tablets. He then experiences

God's presence — God comes down "in a cloud and proclaimed his name", the cloud and the name Yahweh being symbols of the Mystery that God is. God reveals something of his Mystery when he says: "The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." These last two words, "kindness" and "fidelity" are found in constant conjunction throughout the Old Testament. One Old Testament scholar, Walther Eichrodt, has it right when he describes the meaning of these words thus: "The unbreakable character of the divine disposition of love is beautifully reflected in the description of outstanding and tested human loyalty as 'the kindness and fidelity of God,' that is to say, loving constancy such as Yahweh himself both desires and demonstrates." It is a strong anticipation of those fine words from the first Letter of John, that "God is Love..." Love is God's best name, and we are at our best when in love in Him and with all. Moses seems to have grasped something of this because he makes a request of God: "Do come along in our company... receive us as your own." Moses' request remains our request. In the celebration of the Eucharist,

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Responsorial Psalm: John Paul Heil

Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55

Main Theme: We praise the God who is exalted above everything for all ages.

On this solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity our responsorial from the book of Daniel serves as a fitting tribute to the first person of the Trinity, God the Father who revealed himself to Moses in today's first reading from Exodus as "The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity." With its repeated refrain, "praiseworthy and exalted above all forever," the responsorial invites us to declare "blessed" this Lord, the God of our fathers.

Blessed as holy and glorious is this God's "name"--not just a word by which God is called or identified, but the attributes of God's essence as revealed to Moses. The "name" by which God has made himself known is God's everlasting mercy, kindness, and fidelity to us, God's people. God is blessed "in the temple of your holy glory" because it is in the temple as the dwelling place of God with his people

that they experience the God who is gracious and merciful. God is blessed "on the throne of your kingdom" as the God who "rules" majestically and transcendentally over all things from his heavenly throne, yet still "looks into the depths," penetrating all with his gracious mercy.

2 CORINTHIANS 13:11-13

A reading from the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians
Brothers and sisters, rejoice.

Mend your ways, encourage one another,
agree with one another, live in peace,
and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss.

All the holy ones greet you.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ
and the love of God

and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Second Reading: Fr. Damien Dougherty, O.F.M. **2 Corinthians 13:11-13**

This small pericope constitutes the epilogue of the letter and serves as an invitation to expend further strength in the living of both joy and charity in complete docility to the Apostle's exhortations and in perfect accord in their sentiments, as a sign of their union among themselves.

Paul's solemn, final wish exhibits an unmistakable Trinitarian formula as it indicates the identity of nature, the equality, as well as the distinction among the three divine persons. Grace is specified as being derived from the gift of the Lord Jesus Christ as well as from the love that the Father bears for us and communicates to us. Furthermore, the role of the Holy Spirit is underscored through the mention of the disciples' participation in the gifts of the Spirit and the donation that the third person of the Trinity makes of himself and which Paul wishes upon all the believers.

The communion of the Spirit is the participation brought about by the Spirit but it is also communion with the Third Person and with the gifts that he brings into effect, and this is made apparent through the parallelism with the two preceding phrases. The love of God is the love of the Father that he brings to us and renders present within us; likewise, the grace of Jesus is his benevolence shown in the gifts that he brings to us. So, too, the manifestation of the Spirit is the demonstration that the Spirit makes of himself (cf. I Corinth. 12,7).

JOHN 3:16-18

A Reading from the Holy Gospel according to John
God so loved the world that he gave his only Son,
so that everyone who believes in Christ might not perish
but might have eternal life.
For God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the
world,
but that the world might be saved through Christ.
Whoever believes in Christ will not be condemned,
but whoever does not believe has already been condemned,
because that one has not believed in the name of the only Son of
God.

Gospel: Fr. Eugene Hensell, OSB
John 3:16-18

John 3:16 is one of the most famous passages in the entire New Testament. Reference to it is displayed on signs at sporting events, painted on the sides of barns, and even displayed boldly on the arms of men and women in the form of tattoos. Few, however, have any real sense of the depth of its meaning. Without exaggeration this verse is an amazingly compact summary of the entire theology of John's gospel. But it takes a very perceptive reader to get to that depth of meaning.

The first thing that we are told is that God loved the world in a very unique manner. He gave the world his Son. This is not about "how much" God loved the world, but about the "unique manner" in which God loved the world. Even though the world has demonstrated much hostility against God, still God created the world and continues to love it in spite of its rebellious nature. God does not punish the world for this, but sends his Son who will take onto himself the sins of the world. God's Son can accomplish this saving task because he is totally unique ("his only Son"). This uniqueness is found in the relationship the Son has with the Father. What the Father does, the Son can do. Getting access to this eternal life offered by the Father through the Son one must choose to believe in Jesus.

John 3:16 is partially restated in verses 17-18. This entire passage and its surrounding context was very significant in the early church's development of Trinitarian theology. While it is not fully developed here, all the ingredients are present. It is only a small step from this gospel to the church's teaching on the Trinity.