

THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

LECTONARY #165

READING I Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

A reading from the Book of Deuteronomy

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.”

exodus and the encounter with God at

Horeb (Sinai).

In typical biblical fashion, the text

recalls the community's experience of sal-

vation history, such as liberation from

Egypt and entry into the covenant at Horeb,

and draws conclusions about God's iden-

tity. For example, presuming that the all-

powerful and omnipresent God is the

source and creator of all being (“God cre-

ated man upon the earth”), Moses declares

that Israel's God is stronger than any nation

or gods: no other god claimed a people as

his own as God “did for you in Egypt.” This

nation in covenant relationship with its
God. Traditionally, the book is viewed as
three discourses delivered by Moses to the
people are poised to cross the
Jordan to reconquer the land after their
long sojourn in Egypt and their wandering
in the wilderness. Today's reading comes
from the end of Moses' first discourse. Part
of the theological heart of the book,
Deuteronomy 4 exhorts the Israelites to
abide by two basic principles: monotheism
and the prohibition of idolatry. The justi-
fication for these principles is found in
Israel's historical experience, notably, the

The celebration of the Most Holy Trinity, a fundamental
Christian teaching, highlights the Christian
belief that God's self-revelation is rooted in
salvation history. The philosophical defini-
tions, as expressed in the creeds and by
Augustine, came centuries after the biblical
writings, where believers mused over God's
identity as they experienced God's saving
action in their midst. Today's readings are
among such musings.

READING I

After recounting God's amazing deeds, the
tone changes to practically as the author
describes what we should do in response.

These are rhetorical questions, use an
upward inflection.
Pause between questions so the assembly
can share in the author's musings.

Deuteronomy = dōo-ter-AH-nuh-mee
or dyō-ter-AH-nuh-mee

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22 (12b)

R. Blessed the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.
 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.
 For he spoke, and it was made;
 he commanded, and it stood forth.

For meditation and context:

READING II Romans 8:14-17
 A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans

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.

Use an encouraging tone to match Paul's message in this reading.

Consider how baptism strengthens us to call out to God as his beloved children.

READING II

first realization about God, based on the Exodus, leads to the second. Israel has entered into a covenant (statutes and commandments) with the mightiest and only God. Thus, based on their experience of God's saving power, Israel realizes that God is one (monotheism) and that their future prosperity rests on worshipping only this God (prohibition of idolatry).

In Romans, Paul's longest Paul reflects on his and other Christians' experience in terms of God's salvific action and most theological letter, and most

through the person of Jesus Christ. Although Paul is an heir of the rich Jewish heritage reflected in the first reading, he realizes that God is doing something radically new in Jesus Christ, which results in a change in salvific situation and status. In spite of the great benefit of the law as the organizing principle of the covenant between God and Israel, Paul realizes that the resulting relationship is prone to enslavement and distance that only Jesus' death and resurrection can remedy. Consequently, the Spirit of God leads all who believe that Jesus' death and resurrection liberates one from sin and death into a new salvific situation and status. First, they are freed from "a spirit of slavery" that leads them to "fall back into fear." Second, they receive "a Spirit of adoption." Lacking the precision of philosophical argument, the text poetically argues that, once received, the Spirit leads Christians to adoptive status ("children of God") and establishes a special relationship between Christians and Christ and God, so that they become joint heirs in Christ's suffering and glorification.

GOSPEL Matthew 28:16-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

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.”

Don't rush Jesus' words. These are his final ones in the Gospel of Matthew.

Recite the names of the Trinity with reverence.

Pause after "you" and make eye contact with the assembly to make Jesus' words personal. Emphasize "always."

GOSPEL

Matthew's unique account of the resurrected Jesus' encounter with the eleven on a mountain in Galilee again muses on God's identity based on an experience of unfolding salvation history. These are the final verses of Matthew's Gospel, and this is Matthew's closest parallel to the Ascension and Pentecost.

Keeping in mind the biblical motif of mountains as places of divine revelation, we read that Jesus directed the eleven to an unnamed mountain, where they worship him, even as some of them doubt. If there

was any doubt about his identity, Jesus' words provide clarity. Like Israel's God, 1:23 (Emmanuel—God with us), but also exhibit how Jesus' enduring presence replaces the role of the Spirit as found elsewhere in the New Testament. Once again, the community's experience of salvation now entrusts his teaching to them, when he commands them to go make disciples and baptize all nations. If Jesus' ministry in the Gospel was directed to Jews, this commission is directed at the nations (including the Gentiles), possibly pointing to a new chapter in salvation history. Jesus' final words, "I am with you always," echo not only the prediction made of him in Matthew

S.L.