

Read

Deuteronomy 4:32-34,
39-40

Psalm 33:4-5, 6, 9,
18-19, 20, 22

Romans 8:14-17

Matthew 28:16-20

LIVING THE WORD

Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

May 30, 2021

REFLECTION

In today's Gospel, we hear Jesus giving his final, explicit instructions: "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations" (Matthew 28:19). This is the "Great Commission." This responsibility to bring the Good News of God's love to the world is the one job Jesus gave to the disciples, past, present, and future. And Jesus says to do it in the name of the Most Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Spirit. For us, a name is important because it specifies who and what we're talking about. In biblical times, names conveyed an understanding of one's essential character—their very being. When Jesus says to baptize "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19), he is giving us the responsibility of sharing the essence of God's character with the world. The best way to share God's essence is to become an ambassador of God's love, care, support, and justice to all we meet, especially those most in need.

ACTION

All Christians share in the mission to evangelize, which for the record, doesn't mean judgmentally preach and convert! Quite simply, it means to share the Good News. Everyone in need of evangelization falls into one of three categories: those who (1) don't know Jesus, (2) know Jesus, but lack passion and joy, and (3) knew Jesus at one point, but would categorize the relationship as "complicated." Every one of us falls in here somewhere, meaning that in addition to sharing the joy of the Gospel with others, make sure you're not just going through the motions!



"The mystery of the Blessed Trinity invites us to live in communion with one another, in love and in sharing: certain that wherever there is love, there is God."

—Pope Francis (@Pontifex)

QUESTIONS

- ❖ What do today's readings teach you about the Christian life?
- ❖ How do you share your faith with others?
- ❖ Which person of the Holy Trinity do you find yourself directing most of your prayers to—the Father, the Son, or the Holy Spirit? Why?

Introduction to **ORDINARY TIME** during Spring and Summer



The Season

The Gospel accounts in Ordinary Time during the spring and summer draw us deeply into the life of God and the life of the Christian disciple. Ordinary Time resumes following the fifty-day season of Easter Time, with the Solemnities of the Most Holy Trinity and the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi). These pivotal Sundays focus our attention on the inner life of God as we can perceive it, and the impact this life is to have on our lives as we encounter Christ's self-giving love in the Eucharist. Reflecting on these mysteries is a fitting way to transition into Ordinary Time, in which we explore the demands of discipleship and the impact a life of discipleship is to have on us and on all whom we touch.

In these weeks of Ordinary Time, we hear familiar stories of people who encounter Christ, and we are asked to consider how the people we meet may encounter Christ through us. This is an eternal story of the ongoing life of the Church, and a story that is very personal for each of us. Our regular reflection on the Sunday Gospel accounts helps us remember that our call is not a once-and-done but rather is an always-and-everywhere invitation to live as Christ's people. Our reflections each week encourage us to consider the circumstances of our lives, the lives of people whom we know and those whom we do not, and how Christ's love, forgiveness, mercy, and compassion will have a lasting impact on us all. These reflections help us remember that while Ordinary Time is time that is counted, it is never ordinary, since the life of the disciple is anything but that!

Celebrating Ordinary Time during Spring and Summer with Teens

The weeks following Easter are often filled with special moments in the lives of teenagers: dances and social gatherings; graduations and plans for life beyond junior high or high school; awards recognition and the close of spring athletic teams; summer plans. Giving Sunday Mass and the Gospel the priority they deserve may be a challenge for some of the teens in this time of the year. Be aware of the many things vying for their attention and encourage them to prioritize their time well. Acknowledge the youth's presence at Mass and your gatherings as a sign of their commitment to Christ.

Preparing the Liturgical Environment

The green of Ordinary Time returns with this season and mirrors the green and new life of spring. Include in your prayer environment various shades of green, along with the Lectionary or Book of the Gospels, open to the Gospel for Sunday. Consider establishing an environment that has elements that the teens may take with them as you conclude your sessions for the summer, such as small flowers, personal crucifixes, or holy cards.



May 30, 2021

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

LECTIONARY #165B

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

Psalms 33:4-5, 6, 9, 18-19, 20, 22

Romans 8:14-17

Matthew 28:16-20

Prepare for the Word

The following elements may be used by the catechist, teacher, or youth minister to prepare to facilitate today's session with teens. You may integrate this information into the reflection and discussion on today's readings.

Leader's Context

Father, Son and Holy Spirit—these three persons comprise the Blessed Trinity, and they exist together in relationship with one another. We are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Through this we are initiated into the life of God and the life of the Church. Throughout our lives, we are called to be drawn closer to the Trinity, gaining strength and grace through the sacraments. The Spirit guides us to follow Christ, who is our way to eternal life in the presence of God.

Q FOCUS: *Relationship is at the core of the Trinity; the Trinity is at the core of Christian identity.*

Liturgical Calendar Connection

On June 3, we celebrate the memorial of St. Charles Lwanga and Companions. These young men were martyred in the late nineteenth century in Uganda for professing the Christian faith. They were pages in the court of King Mwanga, but they refused to renounce their faith in order to appease the immoral demands of the king.

Church Teaching Connection

"The very mystery of the Trinity reminds us that we have been created in the image of that divine communion, and so we cannot achieve fulfilment or salvation purely by our own efforts. . . . Accepting the first proclamation, which invites us to receive God's love and to love him in return with the very love which is his gift, brings forth in our lives and actions a primary and fundamental response: to desire, seek and protect the good of others" (*Evangelii gaudium*, 178).

Hear the Word

Use this resource, a Lectionary, or a Bible to proclaim the reading. The book should be held reverently or placed on a lectern. If possible, light a candle that is placed near where the Gospel will be proclaimed. Gesture for teens to stand.

Gospel Acclamation

Use the same musical setting that is used in your parish or at school Masses. Teens may help with music and proclaim the Gospel.

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Matthew 28:16-20

Reader: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

All make the Sign of the Cross on their forehead, lips, and heart.

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.”

Reader: The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Everyone may be seated.

Reflect on the Word

When beginning the reflection and discussion about today's readings, first refer to the handout for today. Ask teens what they learned about themselves and about Christian discipleship from performing the action for the week and journaling. Ask teens about the readings of the day: What struck them? What do they think the readings mean? How do the readings affect their own lives? Then begin the following reflection:

The Trinity is one of the great mysteries of our faith. It is a truth about God that we cannot fully understand or explain, yet we know it to be true. While the details of the Trinity are not fully explained in Scripture, we do see the Trinity shining in its glory in many places throughout the Bible. We know that that Spirit and the Word of God are present at creation. We hear of the Spirit's presence in the words of the prophets and in the psalms. We know that at the baptism of Jesus the voice of the Father is heard, and the Holy Spirit descends upon him like a dove. When Jesus sends his disciples out to spread the Good News, he tells them to baptize people in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Our recent celebrations of Ascension and Pentecost show us that all three persons of the Trinity work as one to accomplish the mission of salvation. We believe that Scripture is the divinely inspired Word of God, written through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Through these, and many other things revealed to us by God, we have come to understand the Trinity as three persons in one God, existing together in relationship.

► **When you think of a loving relationship, what do you envision? Do you consider respect? Love? Admiration?**

The Trinity is a union of the three persons that make up our triune God. They exist together, in perfect relationship and love. Throughout history, theologians have attempted to describe the Trinity.

St. Patrick famously used the clover to help people understand this mystery. St. Gregory of Nazianzus described the mutual relationship as *perichoresis* or a dance that recognizes the individuality of each member of the Trinity while maintaining their unity. When we recite the creed, we state that the Holy Spirit is consubstantial with the Father. This means that they are both made of the same “essence.”

► **Based on these explanations, how might you explain the Trinity to someone?**

► **Why is it important to understand the Trinity?**

The Trinitarian relationship of God is at the core of our Christian identity. In today's Gospel reading we hear about Jesus telling his disciples, “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” (Matthew 28:19–20). When Jesus gave this command, he was teaching the Apostles how to initiate people into the life of God and the Church. When we are initiated through Baptism, we become Christ's disciples.

Discipleship is meant to be a lifetime journey toward God. On this journey, the sacraments give us grace and spiritual support to continue following Christ. Each time we receive a sacrament, we are encountering the Trinity in a tangible way. God uses the sacraments to communicate his grace, love, and presence; invisible to us, but present in the symbols of our faith that he has made holy so that we can become holy. They draw us closer to God. Through Christ, we are not just made acceptable to the Blessed Trinity, we are drawn into the life of the Trinity.

► **What does it mean to be drawn closer to God? What has Jesus called us do in this relationship?**

Jesus desires for us to make disciples of others, helping them to understand his love for us. We do this by sharing the Good News of his life, death, Resurrection, and Ascension with other people. We can reach out to others by showing them the same love of God that God has shown us.

Wrapping It Up

Consider these points to conclude the discussion and reflection. Integrate the thoughts and ideas that surfaced during the discussion as well as the "Church Teaching Connection" on page 202.

The Trinity is three persons in one God who exist together in relationship.

The three persons of the Blessed Trinity are made of the same essence, that is, they are all God and act as one.

We are called to join in the life of God and begin that journey at Baptism.

Act on the Word

The Trinity in Art, Music, and Prayer

You will need a book on Catholic art. You can also look online for images. You will need to arrange for a time to take the young people into the sanctuary to view the artwork your parish has in its worship space. If you do not have visual art resources, you can use hymnals to look at lyrics. You will also need copies of the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.

The early Church did not yet have all of Scripture compiled, nor did they have all the teachings of the Church written down like we have today. They came to know and understand the Trinity through the teaching, preaching, and liturgical practices in their communities. Even after canon of Scripture had been compiled, there were periods of history where most people didn't own books, and literacy rates were low. For generations, the artwork in the churches served as catechetical lessons for people. Instead of reading and writing about the Trinity, lay-people commonly observed artistic renderings of this mystery.

Using Catholic art books, pictures you found online, and the artwork in your parish sanctuary, guide the teens in seeking artwork that depicts the Trinity. This artwork may come in the form of the scene at Jesus' baptism, a simple triangle, Celtic Trinity knots, or iconography. Let the young people share with one another the images they find and let them explain the theology behind each image. If your parish or meeting location has limited visual art resources, have ready a stack of hymnals, and analyze the lyrics of hymns that describe the Trinity.

As with the artwork, discuss the connotations and theology behind the lyrics.

Remind the teens that the way we pray also influences our belief. How do the prayers we say during the liturgy expand our understanding of the Trinity? Provide each teen with a copy of the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. Have them review each prayer, then lead a guided discussion about the differences between the two. Use the following questions or questions of your choosing.

- ✧ When you read these two creeds, what differences stand out most?
- ✧ What differences do you see in each prayer's understanding about the Trinitarian God?
- ✧ Which prayer do you pray more often?
- ✧ Do the prayers illustrate a difference in understanding of the relationship between the Father, Son and Spirit?

Closing Prayer

Loving Father,
you sent your Son into the world to save us
and your Holy Spirit to sanctify us.
You are revealed to us as a God of perfect
relationship: love that knows no end.
May our relationships bear witness
to your presence and dominion in our world.
Grant this 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.

For Next Sunday

To help teens prepare for next Sunday's Mass, print, email, or share on a blog or social media the handout found on the next page. The JPG and PDF files are available at www.lit.org/lwgr. Encourage teens to attend Mass with family or friends.