

The Most Holy Trinity, Year B

GOSPEL

Jerusalem Bible © 1966 by Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday & Company Inc.

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.'

(Matthew 28:16–20)

DID YOU KNOW?

Points of interest and Catholic lore

- Many of the prayers of the Church express our belief in a triune God (three persons in one). One of the greatest prayers is the sign of the cross, where we dedicate ourselves 'In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit'.
- Although the Scriptures describe God as Father, Son and Spirit, many centuries elapsed before the Church formulated the doctrine of the Trinity. This formulation is enshrined in the Nicene Creed.
- St Patrick reportedly used the shamrock to describe the three persons in one God to the pagans of Ireland.
- St Augustine described the Trinity as the lover, the beloved and the love between.

EXPLORING THE WORD

This text is taken from the very end of Matthew's Gospel, after Jesus has been raised and appeared to some women. He instructs them to tell the disciples to leave Jerusalem and travel to Galilee to the place he has arranged to meet them. This place is on a mountain. In Jewish tradition and in Scripture, the top of a mountain is associated with closeness to God and is often the setting for God's self-revelation to his people Israel.

The disciples who gather there are a fragile bunch! Their hopes and dreams have been shattered by the death on the cross of the one they saw as saviour. The disappearance of his body from the tomb has left them wondering and afraid. Now Jesus appears to them and offers words of great consolation. He has ultimate authority in heaven and on earth, and issues the disciples with three instructions.

First, they must go to all the nations, not just to the people of Israel. Christ's salvation is for all people. We must remember that Matthew was writing to a predominantly Jewish community, which was struggling with allowing Gentiles to enter as people of faith in Jesus. Next, he instructs on a new initiation rite—baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Spirit. For Jews, the old initiation rite was the circumcision of male children. Membership in the new people of God is open to all, male and female, Gentile and Jew. Finally, Jesus replaces the old Law, the commandments given to Moses, with a new Law, the commandments given by Jesus.

In conclusion, Jesus assures them (and us) that he will be with them always, even to the end of time.

- How has this promise of Jesus been fulfilled over the centuries?
- Where do you see the Spirit of God operating in our world today?
- How do you experience God's Spirit with you?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Opportunities for group discussion and personal prayer

- Are there things that cause you to hesitate in your approach to Christ?
- In what ways are you aware that Christ is with you always?
- How do you feel about your journey towards baptism?
- Have you ever experienced a sense of closeness with the divine that left you with a feeling of awe, of being truly aware of God's presence? Share some of those moments with others.
- When and where do you feel a sense of God with you? What is the stimulus for such moments? Can you see ways in which this understanding can help you in growing your relationship with God?
- At the end of each day, spend some time reflecting on when and how Christ was with you during that day.
- The final words of the eucharistic prayer of the Mass are a doxology—a prayer of praise—which expresses the dynamism of the Trinity. Repeat those words often this week:

*Through him (Christ), and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honour is yours,
forever and ever, Amen.*

