

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

O sing a new song to the Lord,  
for he has worked wonders;  
in the sight of the nations  
he has shown his deliverance, alleluia.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Almighty ever-living God,  
constantly accomplish the Paschal Mystery  
within us,  
that those you were pleased to make new in  
Holy Baptism  
may, under your protective care, bear much  
fruit  
and come to the joys of life eternal.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING**

Acts 9:26-31

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.  
When Saul got to Jerusalem he tried to  
join the disciples, but they were all afraid  
of him: they could not believe he was really  
a disciple. Barnabas, however, took charge  
of him, introduced him to the apostles, and  
explained how the Lord had appeared to Saul  
and spoken to him on his journey, and how he  
had preached boldly at Damascus in the name  
of Jesus. Saul now started to go round with  
them in Jerusalem, preaching fearlessly in  
the name of the Lord. But after he had spoken  
to the Hellenists, and argued with them, they  
became determined to kill him. When the  
brothers knew, they took him to Caesarea and  
sent him off from there to Tarsus.

The churches throughout Judaea, Galilee  
and Samaria were now left in peace, building  
themselves up, living in the fear of the Lord, and  
filled with the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 21

Response:

You, Lord, are my praise in the great  
assembly.

or  
Alleluia!

1. My vows I will pay before those who fear  
him.  
The poor shall eat and shall have their fill.  
They shall praise the Lord, those who  
seek him.  
May their hearts live for ever and ever! (R.)

2. All the earth shall remember and return  
to the Lord,  
all families of the nations worship before  
him.  
They shall worship him, all the mighty of  
the earth;  
before him shall bow all who go down to  
the dust. (R.)

3. And my soul shall live for him, my  
children serve him.  
They shall tell of the Lord to generations  
yet to come,  
declare his faithfulness to peoples yet  
unborn:  
"These things the Lord has done." (R.)

**SECOND READING**

1 John 3:18-24

A reading from the first letter of St John.

My children,  
our love is not to be just words or mere talk,  
but something real and active;  
only by this can we be certain  
that we are the children of the truth  
and be able to quieten our conscience in his  
presence,  
whatever accusations it may raise against us,  
because God is greater than our conscience  
and he knows everything.  
My dear people,  
if we cannot be condemned by our  
conscience,  
we need not be afraid in God's presence,  
and whatever we ask him,  
we shall receive,  
because we keep his commandments  
and live the kind of life that he wants.  
His commandments are these:  
that we believe in the name of his Son Jesus  
Christ  
and that we love one another  
as he told us to.  
Whoever keeps his commandments  
lives in God and God lives in him.  
We know that he lives in us  
by the Spirit that he has given us.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Make your home in me, as I make mine in  
you.  
Whoever remains in me bears fruit in plenty.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

John 15:1-8

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I am the true vine,  
and my Father is the vinedresser.  
Every branch in me that bears no fruit  
he cuts away,  
and every branch that does bear fruit he  
prunes  
to make it bear even more.  
You are pruned already,

by means of the word that I have spoken  
to you.  
Make your home in me, as I make mine in  
you.  
As a branch cannot bear fruit all by itself,  
but must remain part of the vine,  
neither can you unless you remain in me.  
I am the vine,  
you are the branches.  
Whoever remains in me, with me in him,  
bears fruit in plenty;  
for cut off from me you can do nothing.  
Anyone who does not remain in me  
is like a branch that has been thrown away  
– he withers;  
these branches are collected and thrown on  
the fire,  
and they are burnt.  
If you remain in me  
and my words remain in you,  
you may ask what you will  
and you shall get it.  
It is to the glory of my Father that you  
should bear much fruit,  
and then you will be my disciples."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

O God, who by the wonderful exchange  
effected in this sacrifice  
have made us partakers of the one supreme  
Godhead,  
grant, we pray,  
that, as we have come to know your truth,  
we may make it ours by a worthy way of life.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

I am the true vine and you are the branches,  
says the Lord.  
Whoever remains in me, and I in him, bears  
fruit in plenty, alleluia.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Graciously be present to your people, we  
pray, O Lord,  
and lead those you have imbued with  
heavenly mysteries  
to pass from former ways to newness of life.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**THE WORD**

In the Gospel reading today, Jesus describes himself as the true vine for his disciples. The one tending the vine is the Father. The plant is not decorative: its purpose is to produce fruit and for this to happen a certain amount of pruning has to take place.

The instrument for this task is the word which the disciples whom Jesus is addressing have accepted and are therefore already cleansed or pruned and in a fit condition to be productive. But, as with any growing plant, care has to be taken that this healthy state is maintained, so "remaining" (or "abiding") in Jesus is vital. The image of the vine is especially appropriate, as it suggests the intimate flow of life from the trunk into the branches: if this communication is interrupted or impeded, the branch will wither and lose its reason for being part of the plant. If the disciples remain in Jesus and his words remain in them, then the positive result is that whatever they ask, the Father will grant.

This passage warns against any sense of complacency: the image of the living vine suggests more than a passive attitude towards Jesus, that being his disciple is proved by bearing much fruit, which will redound to the glory of the Father, another strong theme in the Fourth Gospel. It is the word of Jesus which gives life to the disciple, and it is the mutual love of the disciples which will reveal them as disciples of Jesus, to the glory of the Father. ■

**REFLECT**

There is no scene in John's Gospel of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. The Eucharistic text is usually identified as the feeding of the crowd of five thousand, which only concerns the bread. Some scholars suggest that the passage on Jesus as the true vine provides the teaching on the Eucharistic wine. Whatever the merits of such arguments, there is an interesting lesson in the idea of communicating life.

The importance of the branch being properly joined to the trunk is

unquestionable: the stem is the source of the branch's life. In the New Testament tradition of the institution of the Eucharist, Jesus speaks about "the cup of my blood". In biblical thought, the blood is where the life principle of a person or animal is to be found. When we speak of Jesus "shedding his blood" on the cross, we really mean that Jesus "gave his life": the sacramentally consecrated wine is a very powerful way in which the risen Jesus communicates his life to his disciples and makes sense, if we think about it in the context of the vine

**SAY**

Whoever remains in me...  
bears fruit in plenty.  
(John 15:5)

**LEARN**

The image of the vine or vineyard is used in the Hebrew scriptures as a symbol for the people of Israel.

The life principle of the creature is in the blood (Leviticus 17:14).

Jesus "shedding his blood" really means that Jesus "gave his life" for us.

**DO**

Buy a bunch of grapes. Take some time at home to contemplate them in the context of Jesus' teaching about the vine and the branches. Then enjoy them!



providing life-giving nourishment to the branches: this enables them to bear the grapes, which then produce wine.

One of the most important reforms of the Second Vatican Council was the restoring of the chalice to the laity: as Jesus commanded, "drink of it, all of you". Perhaps we might reflect that it is one way in which the Lord communicates his life to us. ■

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Proclaim a joyful sound and let it be heard;  
proclaim to the ends of the earth:  
The Lord has freed his people, alleluia.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Grant, almighty God,  
that we may celebrate with heartfelt devotion  
these days of joy,  
which we keep in honour of the risen Lord,  
and that what we relive in remembrance  
we may always hold to in what we do.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Acts 10:25-26, 34-35, 44-48

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

As Peter reached the house Cornelius went out to meet him, knelt at his feet and prostrated himself. But Peter helped him up. "Stand up," he said "I am only a man after all!"

Then Peter addressed them: "The truth I have now come to realise" he said "is that God does not have favourites, but that anybody of any nationality who fears God and does what it right is acceptable to him."

While Peter was still speaking the Holy Spirit came down on all the listeners. Jewish believers who had accompanied Peter were all astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit should be poured out on the pagans too, since they could hear them speaking strange languages and proclaiming the greatness of God. Peter himself then said, "Could anyone refuse the water of baptism to these people, now they have received the Holy Spirit just as much as we have?" He then gave orders for them to be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ. Afterwards they begged him to stay on for some days.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 97

Response:  
The Lord has shown his salvation to the nations.  
or  
Alleluia!

1. Sing a new song to the Lord  
for he has worked wonders.  
His right hand and his holy arm  
have brought salvation. (R.)

2. The Lord has made known his salvation;  
has shown his justice to the nations.  
He has remembered his truth and love  
for the house of Israel. (R.)

3. All the ends of the earth have seen  
the salvation of our God.  
Shout to the Lord all the earth,  
ring out your joy. (R.)

**SECOND READING** 1 John 4:7-10

A reading from the first letter of St John.

My dear people,  
let us love one another  
since love comes from God  
and everyone who loves is begotten by God  
and knows God.  
Anyone who fails to love can never have  
known God,  
because God is love.  
God's love for us was revealed  
when God sent into the world his only Son  
so that we could have life through him;  
this is the love I mean:  
not our love for God,  
but God's love for us when he sent his Son  
to be the sacrifice that takes our sins away.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Jesus said: "If anyone loves me he will keep  
my word,  
and my Father will love him, and we shall  
come to him."  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

John 15:9-17

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"As the Father has loved me,  
so I have loved you.  
Remain in my love.  
If you keep my commandments  
you will remain in my love,  
just as I have kept my Father's  
commandments  
and remain in his love.  
I have told you this  
so that my own joy may be in you  
and your joy be complete.  
This is my commandment:  
love one another,  
as I have loved you.  
A man can have no greater love  
than to lay down his life for his friends.  
You are my friends,  
if you do what I command you.  
I shall not call you servants any more,  
because a servant does not know  
his master's business;  
I call you friends,  
because I have made known to you  
everything I have learnt from my Father.  
You did not choose me,  
no, I chose you;  
and I commissioned you  
to go out and to bear fruit,  
fruit that will last;

and then the Father will give you  
anything you ask him in my name.  
What I command you  
is to love one another."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**THE APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

May our prayers rise up to you, O Lord,  
together with the sacrificial offerings,  
so that, purified by your graciousness,  
we may be conformed to the mysteries of  
your mighty love.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

If you love me, keep my commandments,  
says the Lord,  
and I will ask the Father and he will send you  
another Paraclete,  
to abide with you for ever, alleluia.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Almighty ever-living God,  
who restore us to eternal life in the  
Resurrection of Christ,  
increase in us, we pray, the fruits of this  
paschal Sacrament  
and pour into our hearts the strength of this  
saving food.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

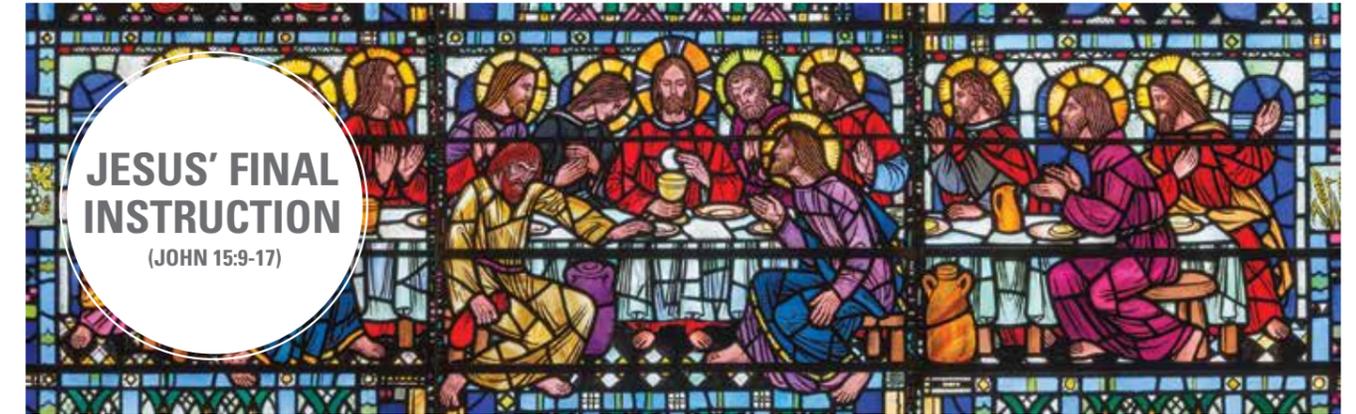
# Sunday Message

9 MAY 2021

6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

**THE WORD**

Year B • Psalter Week 2



Stained glass depiction of the Last Supper by Joseph Edward Nuttgens (1952) in St Etheldreda's Church, London

Today's reading comes from the meditation Jesus makes with his disciples during the Last Supper. In some ways, we could understand it as part of his last will and testament. It is the culmination of the disciples' training.

The Fourth Gospel presents Jesus in the light of the female figure of Wisdom in Jewish writings, the one who gathers disciples, teaches them with a view to their becoming "friends of God". Jesus tells those around him that the term "servants" is no longer applicable to them, as they have progressed to the final level: their training is now complete. Normally, disciples would choose the rabbi whose teachings they found most meaningful and by which they could order their life. Jesus is unusual, in that, as he says, "You did not choose me, no, I chose you."

There is also, in this passage, a hint of the making of a covenant between Jesus and his disciples. There is no account in John of the instituting of the Eucharist with its mention of the cup containing "the blood of the covenant" and the giving of the command to "do this in memory of me", as we find in the versions of Mark, Matthew and Luke. Here, we find Jesus saying, "This is my commandment: love one another" and in this way "remain" (or abide) in his love, which is the reflection of the Father's love for Jesus. ■

**REFLECT**

A person's last words are often highly valued by his or her family and friends and treated as being of great significance. People's dying wish can be regarded as sacred and those close to them will go to great lengths to see that it is carried out, even though it may not make much sense to those left behind.

There are a couple of rather demanding ideas which occur in our Gospel reading today. One is that *Jesus* has chosen *us*, rather than the other way round. Most of us were baptised as infants and brought up in a Christian environment: sometimes people of this sort may envy those who came to the faith or the Church later in life, after making an adult decision for themselves. There are many reasons why people give up the practice

of the faith, but one reason may well be that some never really believed in the first place. Each Easter, we are all invited to renew for ourselves the baptismal declaration of faith and the promises made on our behalf by our parents or godparents. We may regard this as simply a formal exercise, part of the Easter liturgy, or we can make it a really personal act of commitment to God in the person of Jesus, whom we are freely choosing to follow as disciples.

Another challenging lesson from our extract from John's account is that Jesus sums up his commandments in the deceptively simple phrase to "love one another". This means that we have to be much more aware of ourselves and how we treat other people – a rather challenging prospect. ■

**SAY**

Thus may we Godward  
move, finding God in  
others.

(Percy Dearmer – adapted)

**DO**

Read through the Renewal of Baptismal Promises from the Easter Vigil liturgy: renew them in the light of today's reading, making the Sign of the Cross with holy water.

**LEARN**

John uses the female figure of Wisdom, who functions as God's agent, from the Jewish scriptures, to express his understanding of Jesus and his mission.

The female figure of Wisdom (*Hokmah* or *Sophia*) becomes the masculine Word (*Logos*) in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.

The training of the disciples of Wisdom or Jesus is complete when they can be described as "friends of God".



**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

O Lord, hear my voice, for I have called to you;  
of you my heart has spoken: Seek his face;  
hide not your face from me, alleluia.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

Graciously hear our supplications, O Lord,  
so that we, who believe that the Saviour of  
the human race  
is with you in your glory,  
may experience, as he promised,  
until the end of the world,  
his abiding presence among us.  
Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Acts 1:15-17, 20-26

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.  
One day Peter stood up to speak to the  
brothers – there were about a hundred  
and twenty persons in the congregation:  
“Brothers, the passage of scripture had to  
be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit, speaking  
through David, foretells the fate of Judas,  
who offered himself as a guide to the men  
who arrested Jesus – after having been one  
of our number and actually sharing this  
ministry of ours.

“In the Book of Psalms it says:

Let someone else take his office.

“We must therefore choose someone who  
has been with us the whole time that the Lord  
Jesus was travelling round with us, someone  
who was with us right from the time when  
John was baptising until the day when he  
was taken up from us – and he can act with  
us as a witness to his resurrection.”

Having nominated two candidates, Joseph  
know as Barsabbas, whose surname was  
Justus, and Matthias, they prayed, “Lord, you  
can read everyone’s heart; show us therefore  
which of these two you have chosen to take  
over the ministry and apostolate, which  
Judas abandoned to go to his proper place.”  
They then drew lots for them, and as the lot  
fell to Matthias, he was listed as one of the  
twelve apostles.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 102

Response:

The Lord has set his sway in heaven.  
or  
Alleluia!

1. My soul, give thanks to the Lord;  
all my being, bless his holy name.  
My soul, give thanks to the Lord  
and never forget all his blessings. (R.)
2. For as the heavens are high above the  
earth  
so strong is his love for those who fear  
him.  
As far as the east is from the west  
so far does he remove our sins. (R.)
3. The Lord has set his sway in heaven  
and his kingdom is ruling over all.  
Give thanks to the Lord, all his angels,  
mighty in power, fulfilling his word. (R.)

**SECOND READING** 1 John 4:11-16

A reading from the first letter of St John.

My dear people,  
since God has loved us so much,  
we too should love one another.  
No one has ever seen God;  
But as long as we love one another  
God will live in us  
and his love will be complete in us.  
We can know that we are living in him  
and he is living in us  
because he lets us share his Spirit.  
We ourselves saw and we testify  
that the Father sent his Son  
as saviour of the world.  
If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son  
of God,  
God lives in him, and he in God.  
We ourselves have known and put our faith in  
God’s love toward ourselves.  
God is love  
and anyone who lives in love lives in God,  
and God lives in him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

I will not leave you orphans, says the Lord;  
I will come back to you, and your hearts will  
be full of joy.

Alleluia!

**GOSPEL** John 17:11-19

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said:

“Holy Father,  
keep those you have given me true to your  
name,  
so that they may be one like us.  
While I was with them,  
I kept those you had given me true to your  
name,  
I have watched over them and not one is  
lost  
except the one who chose to be lost,  
and this was to fulfil the scriptures.  
But now I am coming to you  
and while still in the world I say these  
things  
to share my joy with them to the full.  
I passed your word on to them,  
and the world hated them,  
because they belong to the world

no more than I belong to the world.  
I am not asking you to remove them from  
the world,  
but to protect them from the evil one.  
They do not belong to the world  
any more than I belong to the world.  
Consecrate them in the truth;  
your word is truth.  
As you sent me into the world,  
I have sent them into the world,  
and for their sake I consecrate myself  
so that they too may be consecrated in  
truth.”

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

*(all bow during the next two lines)*

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living  
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Accept, O Lord, the prayers of your faithful  
with the sacrificial offerings,  
that through these acts of devotedness  
we may pass over to the glory of heaven.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Father, I pray that they may be one  
as we also are one, alleluia.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

Hear us, O God our Saviour,  
And grant us confidence,  
that through these sacred mysteries  
there will be accomplished in the body of the  
whole Church  
what was already come to pass in Christ her  
Head.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.  
Amen.

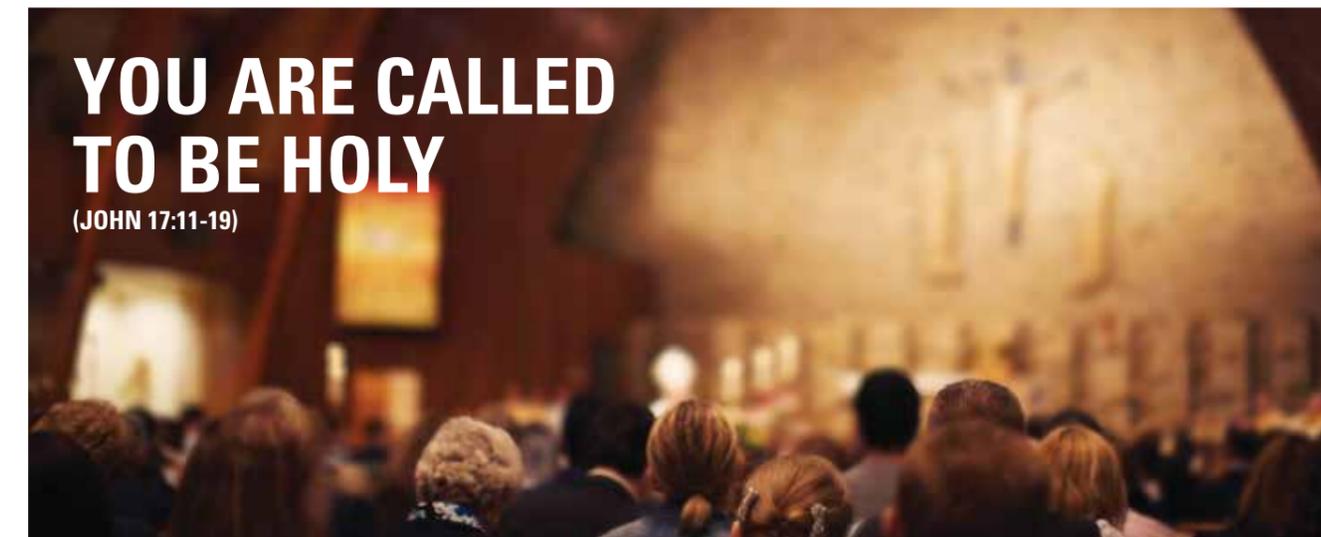
# 16 MAY 2021 Sunday Message 7<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

**THE WORD**

Year B • Psalter Week 3

## YOU ARE CALLED TO BE HOLY

(JOHN 17:11-19)



Our Gospel passage today is an extract from what is called “Jesus’ Priestly Prayer”, during which he speaks directly to the Father on behalf of his disciples, who are present with him at the Last Supper.

Jesus is about to leave them, and knows that they are not in a fit condition, so will need the Father’s help in the face of what is to happen in the future. Jesus sums up his care for the disciples, acknowledging that one has been lost, but through that one’s deliberate choice. Jesus asks the Father to make the disciples “holy”, that is, that they identify themselves with God’s purpose, just as Jesus did. His final act of holiness will be to give himself completely to God’s will, and in this will reveal to them the love of the Father. Holiness is rooted in the unity of the disciples with the Father, and it is on the basis of this that Jesus is sending them out to continue his work of revealing God to human beings. ■

**DO**

As you go about your daily routine,  
remember that holiness is found in the little,  
everyday things of life.

**REFLECT**

The text of our Gospel reading presents Jesus as praying, “Consecrate them in the truth”. The underlying meaning is “to make holy”. This notion can be confusing for some people, as it conjures up images of individuals whose lives are totally dedicated to praying and serving others, perhaps wearing distinctive clothing or emblems of one sort or another: they are different from normal or ordinary folk.

The Second Vatican Council, in its document on the Church, rejects the idea that holiness is something reserved for special individuals, but is the calling of all baptised disciples of Jesus. To be a disciple of Jesus is the fundamental vocation of all Christians: how each one lives this out will depend on their circumstances; most are called to marriage and family life, others to a different path, but no one way of living out our baptismal commitment is better or higher than any other. Everyone is called to live as best they can by the teachings of Jesus, and, in that, each person can be said to be holy, to be committed to the Gospel values.

One religious sister, when she read the chapter entitled “The Universal Call To Holiness” in the document on the Church, said to herself that the bishops at the Council had just written the death sentence for religious life: no longer would people feel that they necessarily had to become a priest, a nun or religious sister, or a member of a teaching order of brothers to be someone totally committed to the Christian life. There would be no spiritual advantage in entering the convent or monastery. Her insight may go a long way to explaining the present dearth of what we traditionally called vocations: it is, perhaps, not due to a lack of generosity or the refusal of young people to answer the call, just that the Holy Spirit is calling us all in a different way. The “typical” Christian is sitting in the pew. ■

**LEARN**

The official teaching of the Church is that all Christians are called to be holy.

Holiness consists in our being committed to living out our baptismal promises as best we can in our daily lives.

No state of life in the Church is necessarily holier, better, or higher than any other: each is appropriate to the person concerned.

**SAY**

Teach us, good Lord,  
to serve you as you  
deserve.

(Ignatius of Loyola)

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

The Spirit of the Lord has filled the whole world and that which contains all things understands what is said, alleluia.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

**COLLECT**

O God, who by the mystery of today's great feast sanctify your whole Church in every people and nation, pour out, we pray, the gifts of the Holy Spirit across the face of the earth and, with the divine grace that was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, fill now once more the hearts of believers... Amen.

**FIRST READING**

Acts 2:1-11

A reading from the Acts of the Apostles.

When Pentecost day came round, the apostles had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

Now there were devout men living in Jerusalem from every nation under heaven, and at this sound they all assembled, each one bewildered to hear these men speaking his own language. They were amazed and astonished. "Surely" they said "all these men speaking are Galileans? How does it happen that each of us hears them in his own native language? Parthians, Medes and Elamites; people from Mesopotamia, Judaea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya round Cyrene; as well as visitors from Rome – Jews and proselytes alike – Cretans and Arabs; we hear them preaching in our own language about the marvels of God."

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 103

Response:

Send forth your Spirit, O Lord, and renew the face of the earth.

or Alleluia!

1. Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Lord God, how great you are,  
How many are your works, O Lord!  
The earth is full of your riches. (R.)
2. You take back your spirit, they die,  
returning to the dust from which they came.  
You send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the earth. (R.)
3. May the glory of the Lord last for ever!  
May the Lord rejoice in his works!  
May my thoughts be pleasing to him.  
I find my joy in the Lord. (R.)

**SECOND READING** 1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians.

No one can say, "Jesus is Lord" unless he is under the influence of the Holy Spirit. There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done, but always to the same Lord; working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose.

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

Or Galatians 5:16-25

**SEQUENCE**

Holy Spirit, Lord of Light,  
From the clear celestial height  
Thy pure beaming radiance give.

Come, thou Father of the poor,  
Come with treasures which endure;  
Come, thou light of all that live!

Thou, of all consolers best,  
Thou, the soul's delightful guest,  
Dost refreshing peace bestow.

Thou in toil art comfort sweet;  
Pleasant coolness in the heat;  
Solace in the midst of woe.

Light immortal, light divine,  
Visit thou these hearts of thine,  
And our inmost being fill:

If thou take thy grace away,  
Nothing pure in man will stay;  
All his good is turned to ill.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew;  
On our dryness pour thy dew;  
Wash the stains of guilt away:

Bend the stubborn heart and will;  
Melt the frozen, warn the chill;  
Guide the steps that go astray.

Thou, on us who evermore  
Thee confess and thee adore,  
With thy sevenfold gifts descend:

Give us comfort when we die;  
Give us life with thee on high;  
Give us joys that never end.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Alleluia.

**GOSPEL**

John 20:19-23

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

In the evening of the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, "Peace be with you," and showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy when they saw the Lord, and he said to them again, "Peace be with you.

"As the Father sent me, so am I sending you."

After saying this he breathed on them and said:

"Receive the Holy Spirit.  
For those whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven;  
for those whose sins you retain, they are retained."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

The Second Reading from Galatians 5:16-25  
Or John 15:26-27; 16:12-15

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,

(all bow during the next two lines)

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Grant, we pray, O Lord,  
that, as promised by your Son,  
the Holy Spirit may reveal to us more abundantly  
the hidden mystery of this sacrifice  
and graciously lead us into all truth.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke of the marvels of God, alleluia.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

O God, who bestow heavenly gifts upon your Church,  
safeguard, we pray, the grace you have given,  
that the gift of the Holy Spirit poured out upon her  
may retain all its force  
and that this spiritual food  
may gain her abundance of eternal redemption...  
Amen.

**THE WORD****THE EMPOWERING SPIRIT**

(JOHN 20:19-23)



"Dove of the Holy Spirit" at Throne of St Peter by Bernini (1600s) in St Peter's Basilica, Rome

### The miraculous appearance of Jesus among the disciples in a locked room shows that he is no longer constrained by physical limitations.

Although the disciples have been told by Mary Magdalene that she has experienced the risen Lord, they have not done so for themselves, and so are still fearful of the Jewish authorities who were so hostile to Jesus and brought about his execution. Once Mary's message has been confirmed by their own experience, they respond with joy and the peace which the risen Jesus has bestowed on them.

Jesus "breathes" the Holy Spirit on them: at the moment of his expiring on the cross, he handed over his spirit to the two figures at the foot of the cross, his unnamed mother, who represents the community of disciples, and the anonymous disciple whom Jesus loved, who stands for the individual follower of Jesus. Earlier, the evangelist had observed that there was no Spirit since Jesus had not been glorified. For John, the crucifixion is the exaltation of Jesus in glory, so the Spirit can now be poured out. On the evening of Easter Day, the risen Jesus confers the Spirit on the assembled group of disciples to empower them to carry on his mission, which can only be accomplished with the presence of the Spirit of holiness. The peace that Jesus brings is not to be a comfort which allows the disciples to remain safely locked away, but will allow them to confront the world, just as Jesus did: we remember that the reason for Jesus' mission is that "God loved the world"; it is in this spirit that the disciples are now to take up and continue Jesus' work. ■

**LEARN**

In the New Testament, the term "spirit" is neuter in gender: the appropriate pronoun would be "it".

In the Hebrew scriptures, the term "spirit" is feminine in gender: the appropriate pronoun, therefore, would be "she".

Pentecost is a Jewish festival (also known as the "Feast of Weeks"), commemorating God's self-revelation at Sinai and the giving of the Law. (the Torah).

**REFLECT**

This Gospel account is often referred to as "Little Pentecost", as it is so different to the dramatic account of Luke, with its "mighty, rushing wind" and "tongues of fire". Some writers refer to the Holy Spirit as "the forgotten person of the Trinity": if this is true, it is very unfortunate indeed, since the Spirit is the life-force of the Church and should be the driving power in the life of the individual Christian. But like any source of power, it will remain unused unless it is connected to the person and actively engaged in the disciple's life.

One way of understanding the Holy Spirit is to liken it to electricity, which can transform a simple light bulb, composed of metal and glass, into a source of light and heat, too bright to look at directly, too hot to handle unprotected. Perhaps some of us are reluctant to turn on the switch, afraid of what the Spirit might make us capable of. It can be more comfortable to stay in the locked room, safe from danger, real or imagined. That is not the purpose of the Spirit: it is to enable us to live as true disciples of Jesus and to teach others about our faith by example, if not by word. Often, attraction is more effective to others than direct and explicit promotion. ■

**DO**

Switch on the light: consider the effects of the power of electricity. Apply this image to the Holy Spirit and yourself.

**SAY**

Attraction rather than promotion.

(Twelve-Step Programme)

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Blest be God the Father,  
and the Only Begotten Son of God,  
and also the Holy Spirit,  
for he has shown us his merciful love.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**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,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

A reading from the book of Deuteronomy.  
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."

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 32

Response:

Happy the people the Lord has chosen as 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.)

**SECOND READING**

Romans 8:14-17

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Romans.

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.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to  
the Holy Spirit,  
the God who is, who was, and who is to  
come.  
Alleluia.

**GOSPEL**

Matthew 28:16-20

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
Matthew.

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."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

*(all bow during the next three lines)*

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Sanctify by the invocation of your name,  
we pray, O Lord our God,  
this oblation of our service,  
and by it make of us an eternal offering to you.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

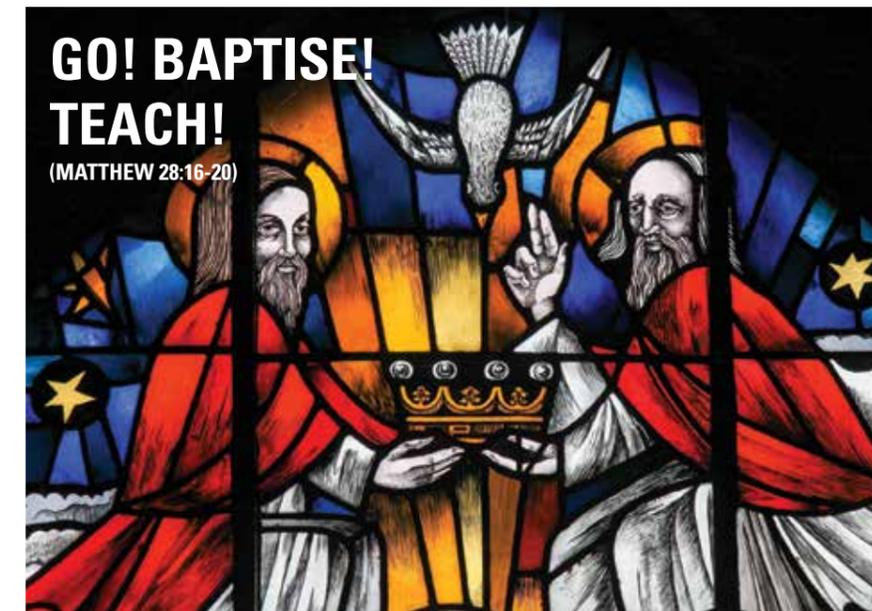
Since you are children of God,  
God has sent into your hearts the Spirit of  
his Son,  
the Spirit who cries out: Abba, Father.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

May receiving this Sacrament, O Lord  
our God,  
bring us health of body and soul,  
as we confess your eternal holy Trinity and  
undivided Unity.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

Behold O kind and most sweet Jesus, I  
cast myself upon my knees in your sight  
while with deep affection and grief of soul  
I mentally contemplate your five most  
precious wounds, having before my eyes the  
words that David the prophet spoke about  
you, most sweet Jesus: "They have pierced  
my hands and feet, and I can count everyone  
of my bones."

*Traditional prayer before a crucifix to be said  
after Communion.*

**THE WORD**

Stained glass in the Church of Tervuren, Belgium, depicting the Holy Trinity

Today's Gospel reading tells us of Jesus' revealing himself to the disciples  
in Galilee after his resurrection. Normally in the appearance stories,  
there is an element of non-recognition which alerts us to the message  
that Jesus is now different from how the disciples remembered him.

In some ways, this passage functions as a summary of the main themes in Matthew's  
account: Jesus is the risen Lord, whom the disciples approach in an attitude of worship  
as they "fell down before him"; Jesus has been presented as the teacher, and now  
commissions his disciples to carry on his teaching mission; the Son of Man has been  
given all authority, like the figure in the book of Daniel; the Gentiles, "all the nations",  
are to be baptised, something very important to Matthew's mainly Jewish-Christian  
community; the Emmanuel theme, revealed to Joseph in the Infancy Narrative, returns  
with Jesus' declaration that "I am with you". The disciples also are no longer referred  
to as being "of little faith"; they are now entrusted with carrying on the work of Jesus,  
helped by his presence, which is Matthew's equivalent of the Holy Spirit. Thus the First  
Gospel, as it is commonly known, ends on a high note, with the Gospel reaching out to the  
ends of the earth. ■

**REFLECT**

The Easter season came to an end  
on the feast of Pentecost. Today  
we celebrate the feast of the  
Most Trinity, one God in three equal  
persons. Many preachers and catechists  
take comfort in the story concerning  
St Augustine, which tells of the great  
theologian walking along the beach,  
wrestling with the problem of how to  
understand the mystery of the Trinity.  
He came upon a little child, who had  
dug a hole in the sand and was going  
to and from the sea, filling a bucket  
and emptying the contents into the  
cavity. "What are you doing?" asked the

scholar. "I'm going to empty the sea into  
this hole," replied the child. Augustine  
smiled and said, "You'll never manage to  
do that!" to which the other retorted, "I'll  
empty the sea into this hole before you  
manage to understand the Holy Trinity!"  
Out of the mouth of babes...?

The discussions on the relationship of  
the persons of the Trinity began after the  
New Testament was completed. It may  
seem like avoiding difficult questions to  
say that, in the end, we have to admit  
that it is a mystery. However, mystery, in  
this sense, is not a puzzle that we cannot

**SAY**

Holy! Holy! Holy!  
God in three persons,  
blessed Trinity!  
(Reginald Heber – adapted)

**DO**

Make the Sign of the Cross slowly:  
pronounce carefully the names of the  
persons of the Trinity.

**LEARN**

Augustine of Hippo (354-430) was a bishop in  
North Africa and has been a great influence  
on Christian thought in the Western Church.

He was baptised by St Ambrose in Milan in  
the year 387.

A mystery is a truth of our faith that we can  
explore, but never fully understand.



The statue of Augustine of Hippo on the  
Charles Bridge in Prague

work out: it is, rather, something so deep  
that we will never fully comprehend  
it, but that is no excuse for not trying  
as best we can to understand what it  
means.

The doctrines of our faith do not simply  
tell us something about God: they tell  
us something about ourselves as well.  
In the Trinity, we celebrate God: Creator,  
Redeemer and Sanctifier. These are all  
aspects of God's love for the world and  
ourselves, something we will never fully  
comprehend – at least not in this life. ■