

Missionary Commentary

Trinity Sunday
May 26, 2024

Sunday Readings

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

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

Romans 8:14-17

Matthew 28:16-20

[USCCB Link to the Readings](#)

Go, Make Disciples, Baptize Them

The Church has traditionally highlighted the mandates of Jesus to his disciples to engage in mission; in response, over the centuries thousands of dedicated Christians have given their lives to spread the Gospel—both in their home countries as well as in far-flung areas of the world.

Jesus' Mission Commands. The mandates of the risen Lord appear in the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles. They can be conveniently listed: Mk 16:16; Mt 28:18-20; Lk 24:46-48; Jn 20:21; and Acts 1:8. Two brief examples are provided: “Go out to the whole world; proclaim the Good News to all creation” (Mk 16:16). “As the Father sent me, so am I sending you” (Jn 20:21). Probably the most frequently quoted passage is the “great commission” found in today’s Gospel: Mt 28:18-20. Each one of these five passages can serve as a basis for a profound discussion, a sharing of insights, as well as a personal invitation to engage in mission.

The consciousness of Jesus’ disciples was radically transformed by the experience of Jesus’ suffering, death, and resurrection. Then, in the descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost, they were provided with the power to make their witnessing effective. These weak and timid men became courageous and fearless proclaimers of the crucified-risen Lord. They witnessed to Christ through selfless service, missionary journeys, and the proclamation of the Gospel.

Anointed by the Spirit. One may validly assert that the disciples received their “missionary charism” through the outpouring of the Spirit; we celebrated Pentecost last Sunday. The disciples now perceive that their mission is to go beyond the Jewish people to the Gentiles, always witnessing to Christ until his final return at the Parousia. With the assurance of the Lord, “I am with you always until the end of time” (Mt 28:20), they boldly engage in mission. The Holy Spirit manifests the Spirit of the Risen Lord; mission becomes the work of the glorified Christ.

Imitating Jesus in Mission. In their mission approaches the disciples recall Jesus’ own mission vocation (Lk 4:18-19) and how Jesus went about his mission during his earthly life. As Matthew notes, “He went around the whole of Galilee teaching in their

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synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom, and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people” (Mt 4:23); thus, the disciples imitate Jesus in teaching, preaching, and healing. As Jesus proclaimed the Beatitudes (Mt 5:1-12), missionary disciples become persons of the Beatitudes.

As Jesus is the incarnation of God’s love, the disciples become persons of charity and signs of “God’s love in the world—a love without exclusion or partiality”; they serve as a “universal brother” to all those in need (*Redemptoris Missio* 89). They seek to imitate the *kenosis* (Phil 2:5-11) of Jesus (self-emptying love). They embrace hardships and suffering, because they realize that “mission follows this same path and always leads to the foot of the cross” (RM 88). Indeed, it is an understatement to affirm: As Christians we follow no other “model of mission” than Jesus himself!

Notes on the Sunday Readings

First Reading

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40 – Today’s feast reminds us of all those truths revealed by God. This reading asserts that the Lord is God, the unique God of Israel, the one and only God.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 33:4-6, 9, 18-20, 22 – This psalm praises two beautiful qualities of God: his justice and his kindness.

Second Reading

Romans 8:14-17 – This reading mentions the three persons of the Trinity; in the Spirit we are children of God and heirs with Christ.

Gospel

Matthew 28:16-20 – These concluding verses of Matthew’s Gospel show the commissioning of the apostles by the risen Savior; they are to baptize in the name of the Three Divine Persons.

Notes and Commentary by Maryknoller James Kroeger, who recently published
[A Joyful Journey with Pope Francis: Exploring Twelve Pivotal Documents](#)
(Faith Alive Books – 2024)

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