

Most Holy Trinity, Year A, Catechist - RCLB Lectionary



Catechist Background and Preparation

To prepare for this session read all the readings.

Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9

Daniel 3:52-56

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

John 3:16-18

Spend a few minutes reflecting on what these readings mean for you today. Is there a particular reading that appeals to you? Is there a word that engages you?

Read the Word in Liturgy and Catholic Doctrine sections. These give you background on this session. Read over the session outline and make it your own. Check to see what materials you will need.

The Word in Liturgy

Chapter 34 of Exodus is the story of the second giving of the law after the people of Israel broke the covenant by worshiping the golden calf. Moses is asked by God to bring a second set of blank stone tablets up the mountain, and this time to come alone. Here our passage begins, with God's appearance to Moses and a revelation of the divine name—this one less ambiguous than the one given in the sight of the burning bush ("I am who I am," Exodus 3:14). For the purposes of the liturgy of Trinity Sunday, this revelation of God's name is central, and indeed throughout the whole Old Testament literature God's identity as "merciful and gracious . . . slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity" is recalled and celebrated. Compassion is of God's essence. In this passage, we catch a glimpse of God in the loving act of offering a restored covenant relationship to a "stiff-necked people"—a gracious response we are to see offered again and again as the witness of scripture unfolds.

Moses' response of complete obeisance, bowing down to the ground, is the fitting act of humility before so great and merciful a God. As a mediator, Moses prefigures Christ who, because he "finds favor" with God, can prevail upon God to journey with the people and "receive us as your own" (v. 9). Moses' respectful invitation to the Lord to "come along in our company" reminds us that the people are on a journey. The reestablishment of the covenant means that this God will be with them.

The gospel passage is taken from the end of a long discussion between Jesus and Nicodemus



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about rebirth through water and the Spirit. The love of God, which resulted in the gift of Jesus Christ to the world, is depicted in all its generosity. Not to judge but to save, Jesus was given to the world. The expression "given" suggests not only his incarnation, but also his suffering and death on the cross. The response called for is faith, in other words, the active acceptance of the gift which is Jesus Christ. As the author of John's gospel illustrates throughout his account, the coming of Jesus into the world provokes a crisis in human history. The encounter with Jesus results in a kind of self-judgment, wherein people by their acceptance or rejection of him decide their own fate. Here again we see the revelation of the Trinity within the drama of salvation, calling for a human response of faith that brings with it an abundance of new and eternal life.

Catholic Doctrine

The Holy Trinity

One enters into the salvation offered by God by being baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Our faith as followers of Jesus, as Christians, rests upon the foundation of the Trinity. It is important to note that at baptism we are baptized in the name, not the "names," for we hold that there is only one God, the Father, his beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit--the Most Holy Trinity (CCC 232).

Catholic teaching describes the Trinity as the central mystery of our Christian faith and life because it is the mystery of God's very self. It is, therefore, the font of all the other mysteries of faith, the doctrine which underpins all the rest (CCC 234).