



## Trinity Sunday (A)

May 31, 2026

[RCL] Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8 or Canticle 2 or 13; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; **Matthew 28:16-20**

### Opening Prayer |

Almighty and everlasting God, you have given to us your servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity: Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory, O Father; who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

### Context |

Today's reading from Matthew is the culmination of the first canonical Gospel. Other accounts detail further sightings of the resurrected Christ, but in Matthew's telling, Jesus appears first to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, instructing them to send the disciples to meet him in Galilee, and the next time anyone sees him, he's having a literal and figurative mountaintop meeting with the disciples (minus Judas who has died by suicide in chapter 27), assuring them that he'll be with them "always, to the end of the age." And that's it!

While Luke-Acts details an ascension into heaven, in Matthew, it's just heavily implied, in that Jesus-is-saying-goodbye-without-saying-farewell way. The disciples who are turning into apostles probably won't get to see their teacher and lord again—and only right after getting him back from the grip of death.

In the minds of Matthew's intended, Jewish audience, the mountaintop setting would surely have invited comparison to Moses' encounter with God. And so Christ's "Great Commission" in this passage, to "make disciples of all nations.... teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you," would have echoed the establishment of the law in the

Hebrew Scriptures. Jesus's teachings, particularly his two-fold love commandment—to love God and neighbor—are thus cast as recapitulations of the commandments received through Moses.

Within the Gospel of Matthew itself, mountaintops have also already featured prominently: as the settings for the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7) and the Transfiguration (17:1-9), as well Jesus's prayer on the Mount of Olives (chapter 24). In the Transfiguration episode, Jesus appeared alongside Moses and Elijah, the latter of whom, like the former, also conversed with God on Mount Horeb. On a mountain again, we know to expect something important to happen.

### **Theological Reflection |**

Elijah's experience of God as a "still, small" voice (in the KJV translation of 1 Kings 19) would become an archetype for the Holy Spirit—which contrasts with the more tangibly incarnate voice of God the Son which the disciples would have been accustomed to by the point of their own mountaintop moment. This particular, intertextual parallel is of particular interest today, in the context of Trinity Sunday, when we read one of the scant Biblical references to the Holy Spirit in a trinitarian formula alongside the Father and the Son.

Perhaps Jesus mentions the Father and the Holy Spirit alongside himself, the Son, just before reminding the disciples that "I am with you always, to the end of the age," in order to prepare them to recognize God in all of God's persons, particularly the stiller, smaller ones. Perhaps his use of the phrase "I am" is also doubling: as both a first-person singular pronoun (for Christ himself) and an evocation of God's whole self's holy name, as related to Moses, "I am that I am" (Exodus 3:14).

The implication of finality in this last meeting between Jesus and his followers comes more fully into relief when we put it in conversation with today's epistle selection, in which Paul signs off his second letter to the church in Corinth with an explicit farewell and Trinitarian benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you." Taken together with the formula found in Matthew, these evocations of the Holy Trinity create a sense of wholeness, and by extension, completion.

A meaningful sense of totality can also emerge when considering the divinity of each person of the Trinity—such as that which occurs by coincidence of translation: the Holy Spirit is grammatically feminine in gender in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, neuter in the *Koine*

Greek of the New Testament, and masculine in the Latin of the Early Church. God is all in all.

Speaking of translational coincidence, where other translations attribute fellowship to the Holy Spirit in 2 Corinthians 13:13, the NRSV translates “communion,” with an undeniably sacramental connotation. The association is fitting, since the appeal to the name of the Holy Spirit—along with those of the Father and the Son in Christ’s institution of Holy Baptism—not only differentiated the Christian sacrament from the ritual Jewish practice of John the Baptist, but also because it established the precedent of the Trinity serving as a key component of sacramentality. For more evidence of this, look no further than the other sacrament instituted by Christ in the Gospels. What Communion would be complete without: “Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ, all honor and glory are yours, Almighty God and Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.”

In the sacraments of the church, we are united to God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### Reflection Questions |

- Moses, Elijah, and the disciples all met God on mountaintops. What places do you go to meet God? What similarities or differences do those places share with mountain tops?
- Compare Jesus’ and Paul’s goodbyes and today’s lectionary readings. How do you approach saying farewell? What helps make an ending feel complete?
- Play Trinitarian “I Spy”: Where do you find the Trinity in the sacramental liturgies of the prayer book? How about elsewhere?

### Faith in Practice |

With Trinity Sunday, the Church transitions into “Ordinary Time,” when God may feel stiller and smaller compared to seasons like Lent and Eastertide. Go looking and listening for the God who promises to be “with you always, to the end of the age,” in all of God’s persons, in places you expect and in places you don’t.

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