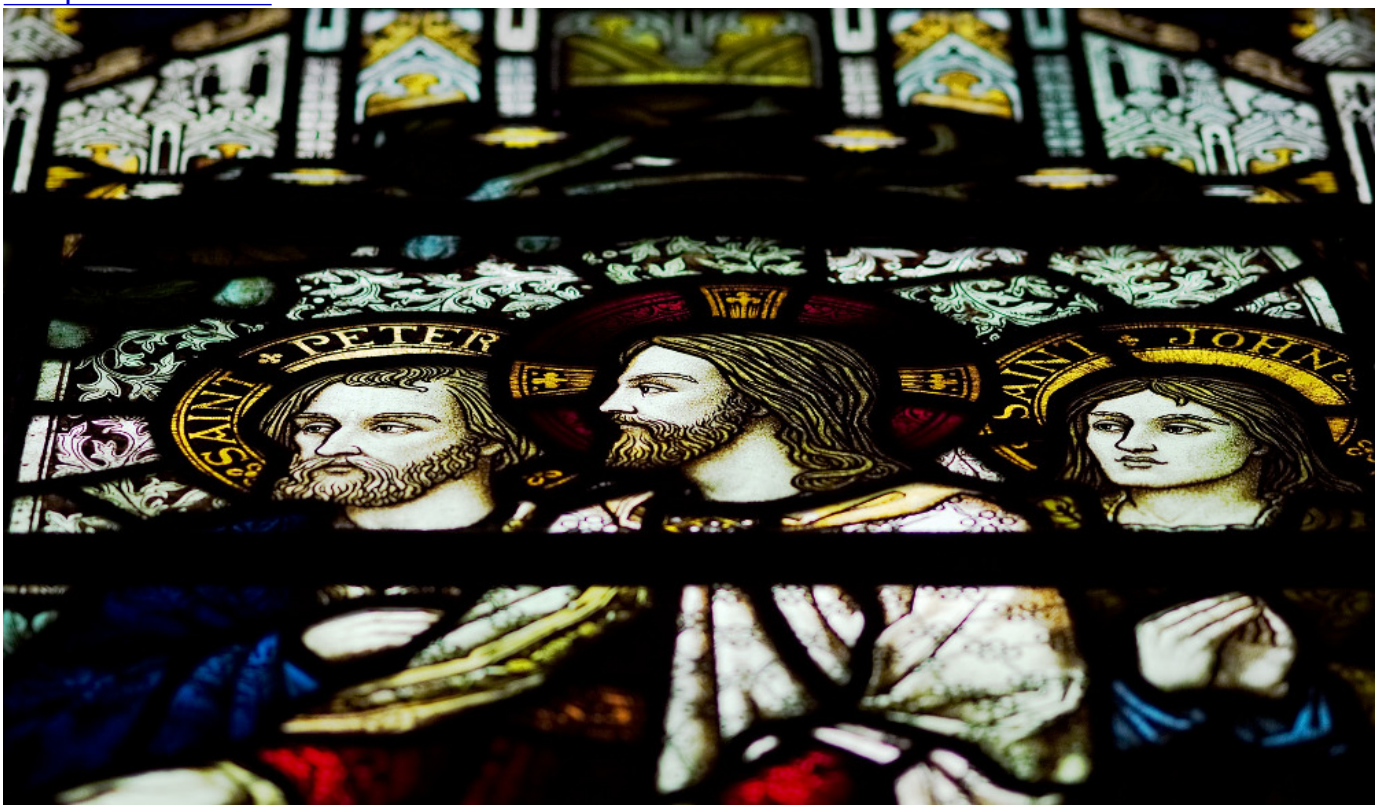
Spirituality
Scripture for Life



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by Sr. Mary M. McGlone

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When the bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean met in 2007 in Aparecida, Brazil, they proclaimed, "The church is called to a deep and profound rethinking of its mission … confirming, renewing, and revitalizing the newness of the Gospel rooted in our history." That statement comes from the document published as the conclusions reached at that meeting. The first paragraph of that document says that the church is called to make all its members disciples and missionaries, suggesting that you can't be one without the other. The document's final version was written by a committee of bishops under the leadership of Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, now known as Pope Francis.

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity

May 27, 2018

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

Psalms 33

Romans 8:14-17

Matthew 28:16-20

Although today's feast sounds as if it might call us into the heady heights of dogmatic discourse, the readings invite us into a decidedly practical, down-to-earth reflection on God and on who we are as disciples.

Moses is the first person to address us in today's Liturgy of the Word. We get to eavesdrop on a homily he preached to inspire his people to strengthen their commitment. If we listen as heirs of his tradition, we hear him call us to remember our own experiences of God. He took his people through their memories of the Exodus and hearing God's voice. That suggests that we, too, might recall how and when we have been aware of God's presence, of God's love, of God's grandeur. He's recommending that we allow this Sabbath to claim some of our time so that we can remember and appreciate the ways we have come to know God in our individual and communal lives. When we do that, we will be well-prepared to sing, "Blessed the people the Lord has chosen!"

Paul's Letter to the Romans advances Moses' message by pointing out how God's own Spirit is active in us. Francis Thompson's poem "The Hound of Heaven" offers a meditative image of what Paul is suggesting. Thompson portrays God as the heavenly hound who never ceases trying to lure us toward our divine destiny. Paul tells us we know God's Spirit as the one who leads us to seek Abba, the God we know as a loving parent.

Today's Gospel portrays the post-Resurrection group of disciples as a broken community who waver between worship and doubt, a description that also describes many in our own day. The disciples had followed the instructions of their companions, the women who had been told by both the angel at the tomb and by Jesus where the Lord wanted to meet them. When they met the risen Christ, he explained what his resurrection meant by saying that all power in heaven and earth was his. He was victorious and if they believed in him and in his promise to remain with them, they would believe that no evil can overcome him — or them.

Little wonder that disciples both worship and doubt! Believing in Christ implies that they must also believe in themselves as his disciples. The risen Lord believes in his disciples enough to hand on his mission, telling them to make their faith contagious, to spread the good news not as dogma, but in the form of vibrant and attractive love and hope — the only powers capable of transforming ordinary people into other Christs.

The wavering disciples who gathered on that mountain did go out to preach and that made it possible for their faith to overpower their doubts. They had to invent how to carry forth Jesus' message when he was no longer with them as a living prophet, a faithful son of Israel. It was only through that process that they could discover how he was with them in other, more universal ways.



(Mark Bartholomew)

The first disciples had to do in their day what the bishops at Aparecida are calling the church to do in our day. Like them, we must rethink our mission. As heirs to Moses, we are called to renew and confirm the faith we have received. Knowing that the Spirit is ever with us, we need to take the time necessary to hear the Spirit's urgings, to allow ourselves to be lured toward the God who made us and calls us into an unknown but marvelous future.

As people chosen and loved by God, we are called to fulfill our vocation as disciples and missionaries, followers of Christ who spread his message and love. Like the early disciples, we must be willing to rethink our mission and revitalize our Gospel message. Moses tells us that we begin by gratefully remembering God's works of creation and liberation. Paul assures us that the Spirit will urge us toward our goal. Most of all, the risen Lord promises to remain with us. Although we may not explain it as such, the process of being disciples and missionaries is what allows our triune God to live in us and work through us.

[Mary M. McGlone is a sister of St. Joseph of Carondelet who is writing the history of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the U.S.]

Editor's note: This Sunday scripture commentary appears in full in NCR's sister publication Celebration, a worship and homiletic resource. Request a sample issue at CelebrationPublications.org. Sign up to receive email newsletters every time Spiritual Reflections is posted.

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