

SOLEMNITY OF THE MOST HOLY TRINITY - B

Today we express our faith in the triune God and in so doing give honour to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The gospel reading is Matthew's account of Jesus commissioning his disciples to go out and 'make disciples of all the nations, and they are to baptise them 'in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,' the baptism with which we have all been baptised and have become children of God. The first reading encourages us to meditate on all that God has done for us in Christ as he did of old for the Israelites, and the second reading similarly encourages us to live the life of the Spirit as children of God.

The **First Reading** is from the fifth book of the Law, the book of Deuteronomy. This book as the name suggests is a second law book and is distinct from the other four books of the Law in that, apart from chapters 31 and 34, it comes from a single written tradition: the Deuteronomic. This tradition has a distinctive style and its teaching constantly reaffirms that of all nations in the world, God has, out of pure love, chosen Israel to be his people, but this choice and the Covenant made with his people ratifying this choice are conditional on Israel giving allegiance exclusively to God, and to the prescribed worship to be offered to God in one single place of worship. The book is a code of civil and religious laws which are framed within a long discourse of Moses. The concluding chapters deal with the final days of Moses, the commissioning of Joshua to succeed Moses and Moses' death in sight of the Promised Land. The Deuteronomic code is a partial restatement of the laws promulgated in the desert and recalls the great events of Exodus, of Sinai and of the beginnings of the conquest of the Promised Land. Later the principles of Moses were re-thought by the prophets and adapted to the situation of the Israelites living in Palestine 600 years after Moses. After the fall of Samaria, 721, the book was stored away in the Temple in Jerusalem to be rediscovered in the reign of Josiah, 622. It was re-edited at the beginning of the Exile, 587-538, and came to be regarded as a code of law laid down in his final years by Moses in Moab.

Today's reading, 4.32-34,39-40, is from the first of the introductory discourses of Moses. He warns the Israelites to keep the commandments that Yahweh their God spoke to them at Mt Horeb. Moses foretells of punishment to come on the Israelites because of their infidelity in the Promised Land, but they will search for Yahweh and be converted. Our reading now starts: Moses asks the Israelites to ask themselves, since the creation of the world did any other nation hear God's word as they heard it? Has any other god been known to work such wonders as Yahweh worked in Egypt? So the Israelites must ponder carefully their history and all God has done for them and faithfully keep his commandments so that their children may prosper in the Land that God is giving them.

The **Responsorial Psalm**, Psalm 32.4-6,9,18-20, for us is in praise of God's faithful and trustworthy word. God has only to speak and the wonders of creation spring into being. If we revere the Lord he will keep us safe from all harm. So we acclaim the Lord as our shield and pray that his love will be our complete hope.

The **Second Reading** is from Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome. Paul had not founded the Church in Rome but he intended to visit the Christians there on his way to Spain. The community in Rome was a mixture of Jewish and non-Jewish converts and there was a danger that they would look down on each other. Some of the converts from Judaism wanted pagan converts to be circumcised to ensure salvation. Paul maintained this made nonsense of Christ's redemptive work. The Law was good and holy but made those who kept the Law aware of their need of God's help. This help has now been given in Christ Jesus. The reading, 8.14-17, comes from the second part of the letter where Paul speaks about salvation and more particularly here the Christian's spiritual life. In the first part of the chapter Paul has been contrasting the disordered life of human nature and the life of the Spirit which we have received from Christ. The 'everyone' at the beginning of the reading refers to all who are guided by the Spirit they are children of God and coheirs to the glory of Christ in heaven, God is our Father. The Spirit we have received makes us sons and daughters of God, our Father, however, we must also take our share in Christ's sufferings if we wish to share in his glory. Paul directs us to our true homeland which we must ever keep before us through life.