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The Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd  
Venice, Florida  
May 31, 2026

**Trinity Sunday, The First Sunday After Pentecost, Year "A": Genesis 1:1- 2: 4a;  
Psalm 8; 2 Cor. 13: 11-13; Matthew 28:16-20.**

**Title: Some Doubted**

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**I have titled my sermon this morning – Some Doubted.**

**With that said, I begin by reminding that many years back in the 1960's and 70's there was an ad on TV touting that Certs mints are both a candy mint and a breath mint. Now the way they reconciled this double-sided reality was to declare that Certs was "Two mints, two mints in one!" Saturday Night Live picked up on that theme and did a skit where a product was touted to be both a floor cleaner and a dessert topping.**

**I tell you this to say that after I was asked if I might be available to preach this Sunday I went to the lectionary page and discovered that the readings invite us – insist really – that we spend some time this morning with the concept of the Holy Trinity. This is, after all, Trinity Sunday. But then as I read our Gospel reading appointed for this day, I found myself much more concerned about Mathew's reporting that eleven disciples are on a mountain top somewhere in Northern Israel with the resurrected and glorified Jesus who has died, risen from the dead, and is about to be taken up to heaven. And Jesus says something that I find amazingly surprising. He says that some of them are doubting. I mean here the disciples are on a mountain top with no less than the resurrected and glorified Jesus and we are told that some doubted. Well, I tell you that got my attention. How could this be!?!?**

**So, I finally decided that I would basically prepare two short sermons instead of one – one speaking to the concept and theology of the Trinity and the other to this amazing moment in time that took place on a mountain top somewhere in ancient Israel. And so here we go - two sermons, two sermons in one. First, let's spend a few minutes with the theology and history of the Holy Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**

**The concept of the Holy Trinity can be, and for many is, quite puzzling. How can three separate personalities - at the same time - be a singularity? I confess that over the years I've had my own struggles with this concept of one God in three persons.**

**Some find it helpful to sort of reframe the Trinitarian formula – that is to think of the Trinity not only as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit but likewise as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.**

No less than St. Augustine described the Trinity as Lover, Beloved, and Love indicating that it is love that binds the trinity into a singularity.

I once found myself in a conversation about this very thing with a Baptist preacher friend of mine. He said, man you Episcopalians – you make everything way to complicated. He said, I am a parent, a preacher, and a golfer. Same man, three modes. But hey, speaking of which - you want to hit the links tomorrow? Well, even though I thought Clarendon's trinitarian theology a little weak we still played golf together the next day.

But it is important to note that the issue of the Holy Trinity in the theology of the church was of such importance that in 325 AD the Emperor Constantine brought together 315 Bishops from all across the span of the Roman Empire to travel to Nicaea for the sole purpose of establishing consensus around the issue of the Trinity for there were, in fact, serious and important competing constructs. The council was in session for nearly three months debating this single theological construct finally coming up with essentially with what we now call the Nicene Creed To this day, the theology of the Trinity is so foundational and fundamental to the church that we confirm this theological construct by way of reciting the Nicene Creed at every Sunday service.

And that, dear ones, is a quick synopsis of the history of the theology of the Holy Trinity – a theological concept that is so foundational in the Christian faith that we dedicate a Sunday every year to this bedrock theological concept. And we call this day Trinity Sunday.

With this said, as commentator and storyteller Paul Harvey would say – and now... the rest of the story - the story this morning that we find at the end of the Gospel according to Matthew.

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It is the glorified Jesus, the post-resurrection Jesus that we encounter this morning for we are at the end of the story of Jesus' earthly ministry. Earlier the glorified Jesus has appeared to Mary Magdalene and the other Mary near the entrance to the empty tomb and Jesus instructs them to go and tell his disciples that they are to go to Galilee for it is there that they will find him. And so, it is indeed on a mountain top where the disciples are gathered with the glorified Jesus. The text says that upon seeing Jesus, they worshipped him. But, quite surprisingly, in the very same sentence -- separated by only a semi-colon -- the text also says something very curious. It says that "some doubted." Some of those we now call Apostles, Jesus' inner core, those who have been closest to Jesus, those on whom Jesus is depending upon to continue the good work that he had started – the text says some of them doubted! Apparently, this amazing holy moment was so awesome; so powerful, so 'other worldly' that some of the disciples were rendered incapable of quite knowing what to believe or what to do.

Amazingly, here at the end of the Gospel according to Matthew, we have it that “some doubted” meaning that even as the disciples recognized and worshiped the resurrected Jesus, a portion of them experienced a natural, human hesitation or wavering.

Scholars generally attribute this to three key points: The Greek word for “doubted” is *distazō*, which means to waver, to hesitate, or to be of two minds. In this case it suggests an internal struggle to process the overwhelming reality of the resurrection.

But here’s the thing. Jesus does not dismiss the doubters -- whoever they were. Not only does he not send them away in disgrace - he ordained them! He did not send them away as somehow unworthy because of their doubt. Jesus never said, “Come to me all you who have your doctrine straight.” Jesus does not say, “Come unto me all of you who have no remaining questions.” Jesus doesn’t say come unto me all of you who are Democrats or all of you who are Republicans. What he does say is, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Holy Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And that is where the Gospel according to Matthew ends. That’s the period. That’s the end of the story. So, yes this Trinitarian formula is very important. No wonder the 350 Bishops way back in Nicaea were willing to spend three months fleshing the theology of the Trinity. No wonder the bishops were willing to spend whatever time was necessary to put the meat on the bones of this existential theological concept.

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Speaking of not knowing the answers to every question – which apparently included the disciples, there is a story that Jay Leno, the former host of the Tonight Show, tells about his mother. She came to this country as an immigrant. And like many immigrants she longed to be a citizen of this country. Unlike one born in America, in order to become a citizen she had to take a test. The rule was that you could miss up to four questions on the test and still pass. However, miss five and you would fail and you would not be granted citizenship – a thing that she desperately desired.

Well, she had already missed four questions when the judge asked her, “What is the Constitution?”

She quickly responded, “I know that; it’s a boat.”

No, no, I’m afraid not, said the judge. That’s wrong.

Her countenance fell. She was *sure* she was right. She had seen the Constitution, the USS Constitution, anchored in Boston Harbor. Yet the judge had said that she was wrong. It looked like, for sure, that she would not be granted the citizenship she so desperately desired. And she was terrified that she would be deported.

But back to the judge who is now leaning over his desk and saying to Mrs. Leno, "No, no - the constitution is the document governing...."

"It's also a boat!" protested Leno's father. The Constitution. It ah the same thing. Come on judge!"

Well, the judge and Mr. Leno bantered back and forth a few minutes. Finally exasperated, the judge rolled his eyes and said, "Okay. Fine. She's a citizen. Now you two get out of here."

Leno's father hugged his wife. "You passed!" he said.

Jay Leno said that his mother was never completely convinced that she had passed that test. Until her death, she worried that she might be deported for not having answered all the questions in exactly the right way.

I tell you this story to simply say that the good news is we don't have to have all the answers to all the questions either. We don't have to be Bible scholars. We don't have to become professional theologians. And we don't have to fully understand the Trinity. We don't have to fully understand how it can be one God in three persons or put another way – how three separate personalities can, at the same time, be a singularity. Personally, for my nickel I think that it is love that binds the Trinity into a singularity – but that's just me.

I close with this. We find the text saying that even as the eleven disciples are gathered with Jesus on a mountain top - some doubted. Yet, Jesus loved, embraced, and even commissioned them anyway. Doubts and all. Questions and all. Shortcomings and all. No disciple was dismissed or fired for maybe not having their theology completely straight. None of them were deported from the Kingdom - the Kingdom of God - because they didn't have all the right answers to every question. In fact, if you read the gospels, you soon realize that the disciples had a hard time even coming up with the right questions, much less the right answers.

And so, we say 'come.' Come to this house. Come to this table. Come into the presence of the Great Mystery. Bring your questions. Bring your doubts. Bring your fears. Bring your anxieties. Bring your need for forgiveness. Bring all that you are. But come. And as you come you might recall Jesus' words and the all-inclusive invitation that is this: "Come unto me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls (Mathew 11:26-30).

And finally --- know that Jesus said, "I am with you always, even to the end of time."

Amen....