

# Trinity 7

## Morning Prayer A

First Lesson: Hosea 14

Second Lesson: Rom 6:12-18

## Homily

*"Return to the Lord ... Take with you words ..."*

Odd words

at the very beginning of the First Lesson.

What on earth does Hosea mean by them?

*"Return to the Lord"*, he begins.

He is speaking to those who have, in some sense, left the Lord

*"I will heal their backsliding,"*

he quotes the Lord as saying,

recognizing them as those

who have pledged to follow His ways,

but have slid back from doing so.

That was true of Israel then,

but, as is so often the case with the Prophets,

what he said to them, he says to all times,

to us.

We're tempted to apply this to someone else,

perhaps to the society around us,  
perhaps to the denomination may of us came from,  
perhaps ... (You get the idea)

But he is speaking to us, here and now.

We have pledged to follow the Lord.

That's why we are here today.

We've at least said that we accept His standards,  
but are we living up to them?

*"Return to the Lord"*, he cries.

*Take with you words ..."*

Words?

What good are words?

Can words change the fact that we have sinned?

Can words remove all the bad effects of our sin?

Sometimes words are pretty empty.

Surely there must be

something better than words to take with us.

*"Take with you words, and turn to the LORD:*

*say unto him, Take away all iniquity,*

*and receive us graciously:"*

These are powerful words.

There's no effort to squirm out of guilt.

No effort at self-justification,

simply, "I'm sorry, forgive me."

And those words have a powerful answer,  
the most powerful answer ever given.  
It's known as the Cross.

*"so will we render the calves of our lips."*

Do you see the sacrificial meaning in that?  
The Old Testament required an unending series  
of sacrifices offered for sin,  
of bulls and goats and lambs and calves,  
sacrifices which,  
according to the Epistle to the Hebrews,  
were unable to obtain remission of sins,  
but were a sign of a greater and sufficient sacrifice.

That sacrifice is ours to plead  
for our forgiveness and acceptance,  
in answer to those words,  
if those words are the gift of our hearts.  
*"Return to the Lord ... Take with you words ..."*

It is by words that we offer ourselves,  
that we claim the gift offered for us and to us.  
As St. Paul wrote:

*"Know ye not,  
that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey,  
his servants ye are to whom ye obey;*

*whether of sin unto death,  
or of obedience unto righteousness?"*

Who or what do we recognize as our purpose?  
Where are our values places?  
Are we amassing treasures upon earth,

*"Return to the Lord ... Take with you words ..."*

and, as St. Paul continues:

*"God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin,  
but ye have obeyed from the heart  
that form of doctrine which was delivered you.  
Being then made free from sin,  
ye became the servants of righteousness."*

Let us pray.

Behold, O God our Defender, and grant that we, who  
are sore oppressed by the burden of our sins may by  
the bounty of thy mercy be relieved from them, to  
serve thee in perfect freedom, in thought, word, and  
deed, all the days of our life, through Jesus Christ our  
Lord. Amen.

# **Trinity 7**

## **Morning Prayer B**

First Lesson: Ecclesiasticus 6:5-17

Second Lesson: John 15:12-27

## **Homily to be written**

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## **Morning Prayer C**

First Lesson: Gen 22:1-18

Second Lesson: Heb 6

## **Homily to be written**

# Trinity 7

## Evening Prayer A

First Lesson: Dan 5:1-9, 13-30

Second Lesson: Rom 1:17-21, 28-32

## Homily

*"... the wrath of God is revealed from heaven  
against all ungodliness  
and unrighteousness of men,  
who hold the truth in unrighteousness; ..."*

St. Paul, in a brief part of a sentence,  
provides the background to the story in Daniel.  
Fix this picture in your mind:

The king, in all his majestic royal robes,  
is sitting in the midst of his nobles,  
celebrating the greatness of his reign.  
He's holding a cup that was taken from the Temple.  
He's given similar cups to his nobles,  
and they are all drinking a toast to their gods.

What they hold was consecrated

to the God of Truth,  
set aside to symbolize His majesty,  
and His rightful rule over the whole earth,  
set aside, thus, to represent truth.  
They hold the signs of truth, and yet ...

They worship false gods.  
They proclaim the supremacy of a cruel king.  
They carouse shamelessly.  
The hand of God appears,  
and His writing proclaims their doom,  
and it comes.

As the Apostle continued:  
*"... that which may be known of God is manifest in  
them;  
for God hath shewed it unto them.  
For the invisible things of him*

*from the creation of the world  
are clearly seen,  
being understood by the things that are made,  
even his eternal power and Godhead;  
so that they are without excuse:  
Because that, when they knew God,  
they glorified him not as God,  
neither were thankful;  
but became vain in their imaginations,*

*and their foolish heart was darkened."*

They knew, at least on some level,  
that they were defying God.

And so it is for the human race.

There is conscience planted within,  
and though that conscience itself  
is sometimes perverted and in error,  
yet it does make us aware of right and wrong,  
and we are without excuse.

We know the truth, at least in part,  
and, knowing, we yet choose to sin,  
declaring ultimately, like the song,  
"I had to do it my way."

But that leads to disaster,  
if not during our lives on this earth,  
then hereafter, and that is more fearsome yet.

How do we apply this?

First, there is the application that we,  
(as a faithful minority of dissidents,  
consciously holding a truth that others despise,  
even while giving it lipservice),  
find ourselves liking and taking comfort in:  
We've separated from a fallen church,  
that holds or seems to hold parts of the truth,

but knowingly denies much that God has said.  
Ultimately that will not stand.

Ultimately God will have His way.

And we are right in proclaiming this, but ...

Secondly, we who hold the truth and insist upon it,  
are we holding it in righteousness?

Are we what this truth demands that we be?

Or are we holding the truth and proclaiming it  
while continuing to live

according to our own sinful will?

Are we really better than those we oppose?

Even if that be true,

do we approach what God expects of us?

How much of these words of St. Paul fit us?

*"... Being filled with all unrighteousness,  
fornication, wickedness,  
covetousness, maliciousness;  
full of envy, murder,  
debate, deceit, malignity;  
whisperers,  
Backbiters, haters of God,  
despiteful, proud, boasters,  
inventors of evil things,  
disobedient to parents,  
Without understanding,  
covenantbreakers,*

*without natural affection,  
implacable, unmerciful: "*

Let's examine ourselves.

Probably there is a lot in that list  
of which we can rightly claim innocence,  
but we are broken, flawed, and sinful,

and there is some of that that applies  
to each and every one of us.

Some of it, indeed, is more characteristic  
of religious people than of the world.

There are terrible sins against others  
that arise from holding the truth  
and using the truth to express disdain for others:  
Yes, from holding the truth in unrighteousness.

That proclaims a dramatic untruth about God.  
It paints Him with the same lack of love  
that we so easily show.

To hold the truth in righteousness,  
as we must,  
is to admit those faults,  
and openly seek God's help to remedy them.

Let us pray.

Merciful God, reveal to us the unrighteousness with  
which we have veiled thy truth. Change our hearts,  
fill us with thy love and mercy, and make us living  
examples of thy truth; through Jesus Christ our  
Lord and Savior. Amen.

# **Trinity 7**

## **Evening Prayer B**

First Lesson: Micah 7:14-20

Second Lesson: Mark 8:1-21

## **Homily to be written**

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## **Evening Prayer C**

**First Lesson: 1 Sam 17:1-11, 32, 40-50**

**Second Lesson: Acts 11:19-30**

## **Homily to be written**