

Last Sunday of Creation Care
October 4, 2026 • 10:30am
Trinity Episcopal Church • New Orleans, LA

The Rev. Robert B. Hadzor

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. You may be seated.

Good morning. Well, about 3,500 years ago, a million and a half Hebrew people, along with their leader Moses, stood at the base of an Egyptian mountain range in the Sinai Peninsula. Fifty days earlier, they had watched as God's wonders freed them from an oppressive Pharaoh.

By then, they had miraculously crossed the Red Sea, been fed with manna in the desert, and received water from the desert rocks. And up until the time of today's story at Mount Sinai, God's voice was everywhere. It was something present.

It was something tangible. It was something that any individual, or any mass of people, could experience. God's voice was the logos of Scripture.

It was the vehicle for God's incredible works. It was God's voice that brought forth creation from the chaos. It made the waters burst from the ground before Noah.

It made covenants with Abraham, and Sarah, Isaac, and Rebekah, Jacob, and his wives. And it spoke to Joseph in his dreams. But today, at the base of Mount Sinai, a distinct change is about to occur.

As the Hebrew people stand at the mountain base, they're looking up with fear and trepidation. The scene above them is overwhelming. There are trumpets erupting, and a murky veil of smoke and fire has engulfed the mountain's peaks.

The ground beneath their feet, it shakes with every thunderclap and every lightning strike. Many have already started falling on their faces in great fear. And as they

trembled, a distance began to take root between humanity and the magnificence of God.

In this chaos, God called for everyone to ascend to the top of the mountain to receive the commandments as God's chosen people. But the people below, they refused. There was no way they would voluntarily go up to that unknown above them.

So instead, they approached their leader, Moses, with their plea. Will you go in our place, Moses? Will you speak to God for us? For if God speaks to us, we will surely die. Now, there are a total of 1,189 chapters in the 66 books of our Bible, and it had only taken 70 of those chapters before we silenced God's voice.

And as this change occurred, God's heart broke. In that moment, God's voice, the sacred logos of creation, it was no longer to be heard by the masses. The people strategically moved it from their midst and sequestered it to the cosmos above us.

Humans quickly seized the opportunity to fill that void with something else, something easier to digest and more easily approachable. The human voice. Before long, the sacred voice of God was distorted and lost in translation.

We began to dilute God's calling and purpose for our life. We stripped it of its sacredness in order to make it easier for us to comprehend. We then became drawn to the voices of mankind because they pointed to our greatness and not to our faults.

And meanwhile, the voice of our Creator seemed to be extinguished in our midst. But God did not stop speaking. The logos of God continued whether we heard it or not.

But now, God had to become clever and find new ways to reach us. Soon, God broke through that silence through visions and dreams. God called upon the judges and the prophets to once again amplify God's voice and soon, we were able to return from our foolishness and back to the splendor of our Maker.

But it didn't take much to quiet those voices too. Soon, we exiled them. We silenced them.

We even killed those individuals who were speaking a prophecy of hope and of change. We wanted to return to the comfort of that silence. And after the death of Malachi, who was the last prophet in the Hebrew Scriptures, the voice of God would remain dormant for 450 years.

It would remain that way until a man named John the Baptist emerged on the banks of the Jordan River, calling us back to repentance. And this is the world that Jesus was born into. Now, one of the most incredible things about God's great story was God's willingness to enter into our humanity.

Through the life of Jesus, God was given a first-hand experience of what it means to be a human. God could learn about our limitations and our desires and even experience that powerful grip that the world can have on our human hearts. It helped God have an understanding of why humanity could possibly dare to seize power for themselves.

But most importantly, it provided God a new avenue for God's voice to speak once more. So Jesus knew that the world was filled with many powerful voices. So instead of filling the world with even more words, Jesus found a new way to teach.

Jesus invited us back to the Logos by teaching us that it hadn't gone anywhere. We had just lost sight of it. He gripped the multitudes with his parables and he radically invited us to sit in silence and to wonder.

He modeled his message of humbleness and peace in his actions and he never instructed any of us to do anything that he wasn't willing to do alongside us. Slowly, God's voice manifested itself again. Today, our gospel reading is one of the most vivid of Jesus's parables.

It's called the Parable of the Wicked Tenants. And this would be one of the final parables that Jesus would ever give, where only hours after he delivered it, he would be arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. In this parable, Jesus invites us to return to the beginning of it all.

Not just the time of the kingdom of Israel, not just the time of the prophets, before Mount Sinai, before Noah, the very beginning. When God's voice created out of the chaos, and was made unimaginably present. He used metaphor and imagery to remind us of how great our God truly is.

Through every rejection, every opportunity we took to seize control for ourselves, that God never stopped speaking a vision of hope and love in our world. Nothing would ever stop our Maker from crossing any threshold that we created to call us to return. Two thousand years later, this very day as we sit here, we are still in the midst of this parable.

As Christians, we are walking that fine line that our spiritual ancestors did. On one hand, we believe we have a great grip on what God's call is to our life. But on that other hand, it's really difficult to ignore the cultures around us that want to control our hearts.

Today is also the feast of St. Francis of Assisi. Yesterday, October 3rd, marked the 800th anniversary of his death. Francis is one of the most beloved saints of the church.

His name conjures up images of animals being blessed. Some of us have his statues in our gardens. His name is synonymous with God's presence in all of creation.

And isn't it fitting that his feast day also falls on the last Sunday of Trinity's season of creation care? But there's another side to Francis's life that many don't know about. It's about the world that Francis was also born into and had to navigate before he was the saint he is. See, at the time of Francis's birth, the Roman Catholic Church dominated the religious landscape in Europe.

It was institutionalized. It had fallen into great corruption. And it was both the political and the religious authority in all of Europe.

And while the Christian Crusades raged, many small communities were starting to see a new pathway emerging in their towns, leaving behind the darkness of the Middle Ages. For these small towns, there started to be things like commercial businesses that were taking over. There was a new opportunity for people to make a name for themselves, for wealth, for status.

Towns were abuzz because priority was put back on them. And this was everything that Francis wanted as a young child. In his late teenage years, Francis sought to find glory and status by becoming a knight in an army.

And when a local skirmish broke out near his town, he went into battle. But unfortunately, very soon, Francis was injured and was captured by the enemy. He was held as a captive for a year until his father was able to pay his ransom.

And when his military career failed, Francis didn't have to worry about much. He was simply the heir to his father's textile business, which was known to be as one of the wealthiest in all of Italy. He began living a lifestyle of consumption and what many people would say, selfishness.

But even at the time of Francis' calling by God, he was barely a practicing Christian. In fact, his father was so confused and angered by his news that he disowned Francis. He kicked him out of the family business and exiled him from their town.

But this didn't matter to Francis because he had heard something. The sacred voice of God. And the world around him just seemed to open up differently.

When God called Francis to rebuild his church, Francis didn't just see this as the ruins of the church in his town that he needed to rebuild. But he needed to speak to the people. To rebuild their thoughts, their minds.

To remind people how God was constantly speaking to them all through the people they met and in the creation that surrounded them. His primary message was that God had not abandoned us, but we had forgotten to hear God's voice. Today, our world is desperately looking for this same type of hope that has existed since Mount Sinai.

I believe people are looking at the voices in our lives and they're starting to feel really empty. And contrary to what I think, I honestly think that many people are looking for something sacred again. It's as if we're all staring up towards the peak of this murky mountain.

And we have all these unknowns and we're just too afraid to go on that journey. But thankfully, our history shows us that we have a God that is no longer only on that mountaintop. We have a God who came down to journey alongside of us and show us how.

Our Christian history is filled with so many people who have modeled this same thing. Many of you in this room have maybe encountered some of those in your own life. For me personally, I know at least three or four individuals who stood alongside me as I stood at the bottom of that mountain and questioned God's presence in my life.

The story of Sinai, the parable of the wicked tenant, the life of St. Francis, they're all examples of the vitality of God. Nothing can stop the sacred voice of God from breaking through to us. And God will continue to put people in this world who will help us come close to it.

I believe that every single person in this room are those people. Will we fall short? Absolutely. Will we forget time after time of what we are called to do? Yes, we will.

But we must not hide God's divine logos in the cosmos anymore. We must bring it here, make it incarnate. We must seize every opportunity that we have.

Something that sums all of this up beautifully is a phrase that is credited to the early followers of St. Francis and later the Franciscan order in Italy. It says, preach the gospel at all times and when necessary, use words. I pray this morning that God uses this week before us so we have opportunities to preach this gospel.

I pray that God places opportunities in our midst so we can practice our faith and if needed, use words. I pray that we become saints ourselves. And I pray that all of us remember that even when we fail, we can rest assured that our God is not limited to our abilities.

And that God can use the smallest of things to bring forth the voice of the creator.

Amen.