

Sermon Trinity Sunday

Dear Bishop Ian, Revd Fathers and brothers and sisters in Christ, I wish you well on this Trinity Sunday. Trinity Sunday follows from Pentecost and is a very important Sunday as it makes us face the nature of our relationship with God.

The Holy Trinity is a difficult concept for many people and it is likely that most of us will never fully comprehend its full meaning. The word Trinity is not one that appears in the Bible, although there is running through it the idea that there is one God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The idea of the Trinity probably came from Tertullian an early Christian writer who used the Latin word "trinitas", and his thought was that the Trinity was three separate persons but of the same substance.

The early Christians were not overly concerned with doctrines-they based their lives on worship, fasting, praying and service to others but they did use the Trinity in baptising others. The Trinity's mystery can be expressed in this way-it is the togetherness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit into one loving communion. First, God created us and is therefore the Father. Second, God is also His Son, Jesus, who came to the world to share with us His life. Third, God as Holy Spirit gives us life and enables the Trinity to dwell within us. What we do therefore in crossing ourselves is an expression of the Trinity- for we touch our foreheads and say "In the name of the Father", who is the first in the Trinity- then we touch our hearts and say "and of the Son" which reminds us that the Son came from the Father and descended from Him to be amongst us through the Blessed Virgin Mary. We touch our shoulders, finally, left then right, at the same time saying ,"and of the Holy Spirit" which is a reminder that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son and fills our lives with the love of God.

So we should endeavour to live our lives as repositories of the Holy Spirit because living this divine life as temples of the Holy Spirit is what we are meant to do. This is the fundamental purpose of our lives. So thinking about the Most Holy Trinity on this day brings us into a directness with God and causes us to reflect on His incomprehensible energies. As we are human it is impossible to fully comprehend His unfathomable mysteries-there is always something more to learn-He is beyond our capacity to define in human words, we do not have the words to express Him fully.

The only way we know something of God is what Jesus told us- for example through the Holy Gospel of St John Chapter 16, which was that He was God's Son and that his Father was compassionate and loving. Reading the Holy Bible helps us to understand better the Trinity, to understand that God gave His only Son because of his great love of the world and so that we may all have eternal life through Him. We need to be thankful of this love and to show love ourselves in our dealings in our everyday lives in the same way that He did for us.

At a time of physical distancing to stop the spread of the Covid virus we realise our need for the company of others as we are linked to all creation. We see the divisions in society at this time as well as the oneness, so that the love that exists within us from the Holy Spirit can assist us in reaching out to others.

There is a story of a king who had everything material that life could give but whose ambition in life was to see God. He asked a poor shepherd to help him-after several failed attempts to describe the vastness of God and to see Him the shepherd said that his eyes did not require

purifying to enable him to see God but his heart. Towards the end of the day the shepherd looked down a well and smiled to himself- the King saw this and was curious asking what he saw and who lived down there. The shepherd said, "God does"-the King said, "Can I see him too?"; "Of course have a look and see". After a few minutes the king lifted his head up and said, "But all I can see is me". The shepherd in his wisdom told the King that he now knew where God lives-He lives in you.

Early Christians put their faith ahead of trying to be exact about what they meant by God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, but by staying in contact with others in a loving way the Holy Spirit can work through us for the benefit of all creation. God is all around us but we need to discover Him from within, and then everywhere will be appear more friendly and caring- we will never be lonely, we will see life as a deliberate creation full of love. We may then begin to understand the Trinity and that God the Father is within us yet beyond us. Amen.

Dean Brian Roberts