

Trinity Sunday 7th June 2020

7 th June Trinity Sunday	9.30 Family Communion	Isaiah 40 vv 12-31 p724 II Corinthians 13 vv 11-14 p1167 Matthew 28 vv 16-20 p1001	A&M 95 Holy, Holy, Holy <i>Gloria in Excelsis Deo</i> Psalm 8 181 May the Grace 96 Bright the Vision 431 We Have a Gospel
7th June Trinity Sunday	11.00 Holy Communion	Isaiah 40 vv 12-31 p724 II Corinthians 13 vv 11-14 p1167 Matthew 28 vv 16-20 p1001	A&MR 167 O Worship the King <i>Gloria in Excelsis Deo</i> Psalm 8 96 Bright the Vision 160 Holy, Holy, Holy 165 O God our Help

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of thy Divine Majesty to worship the Unity; We beseech thee, that thou wouldst keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Holy! Holy! Holy! Trinity Sunday is the crowning glory of the Christian year. More even than on any other Sunday, the theme of our worship is glory. Well, that's how it seems to me. You may have very good reasons for ascribing glory to the wonderful truths we proclaim on the other Sundays and holy days. Yet I derive support from the opening words of the collect: *ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of thy Divine Majesty to worship the Unity.* The opening and closing sentences of collects teach us a lot about God and how He relates to us and we to Him.

Acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, worship the Unity. Glorify. Worship. We were made for the glory of God. Worship here on earth is a foretaste of worship in heaven.

Yet the doctrine of the Trinity is often presented as an insoluble mathematical puzzle $1+1+1=1$, which hardly inspires us to worship. Indeed some people say that, because it is apparently insoluble, it cannot be right. Now, if all the Maths I can't understand couldn't be right and had to be taken out of Maths textbooks, some of those books would be very thin indeed. I even have a book called *Calculus Made Simple*. I can't see how that title could possibly be true, but, some people do understand it and they're the ones who make it possible for people like me who don't understand calculus to use computers.

But the Trinity is not a mathematical problem. When some people hear vicars talking about *three in one*, they imagine they mean the stuff you oil your bike with. Well, your bike will seize up without oil and the abundant life Christ came to bring is only possible through faith in God, Father, Son & Holy Ghost.

Better than thinking about Maths or lubricants, some preachers on Trinity Sunday, talk about relationships. The three persons of the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – are one in love. We might say that a man and a woman become one when they marry, one in love. When a person is baptised, he or she becomes one with Christ in love. As the Bride of

Christ, the whole Church is one with Him in love. It is His prayer at the Last Supper that all Christians should be one with one another in love. In marriage and in Baptism, as members of Christ and members one of another in love, we are still distinct persons, but we are nevertheless participants in a greater unity. God is love. All things exist in Him and He is in all things. *The LORD our God is one Lord. God is love.*

The Trinity is not a mathematical problem. God is infinitely greater than our grasp of mathematics. Mathematics exists because that's the way God made the universe. He is way beyond human language to describe. He is so far beyond our understanding that anything we may think about Him must fall short of the Truth. Even our thoughts about relationships, grounded as they are in thoughts about Christian love, mislead to the extent that no human words can be adequate to talk about God.

What I'm trying to do in these sermons as we go through these difficult times, both COVID 19 and the other troubles we all have to face up to, is to share faith and hope and love. I've always rather revelled in thoughts about the Trinity (since my teens anyway), but what does the Trinity say about faith and hope and love? How does this knowledge of God help us to live our lives on earth and bring us to eternal life? *We beseech thee, that thou wouldst keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities.*

We know that God is one and that God is love. Given that God is the One from Whom everything comes, there can only be one God. That is why Christians (and Jews and Muslims and no doubt others too) are so adamant that God is one. Even religions which appear to worship many gods may well turn out, when we ask them more deeply, to believe that these many gods are in fact manifestations of the One. The nature of God is love.

What is essential to the Christian faith, the Truth which has been entrusted to us to proclaim to the world, is that God's love for us is so great that He takes our flesh. He becomes one of us. So God from Whom comes everything that is, Who sustains the entire universe, loves you and me that much. Now there's a reason for us to have faith and hope and love.

It is beyond our comprehension that God could and did become human, but He did, and that is the essence of our Christian faith. Christ is one person. He is God and man. He has the divine nature and He has our human nature. His human nature and His divine nature are whole, perfect and complete. That is how close we are to the heart of God. The barrier between us and God is broken down by the fact that Jesus died for us on the Cross.

And yet, Jesus calls God *Father*. He teaches us to call God *Father*. In Christ, we are the children of God. There is only one God. There can only be one God. Jesus and the Father are one. Yet Jesus talks to God and God answers Him. The Father & the Son are two persons with one divine nature. And Jesus promises not to leave us alone. He promises us the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the same as Jesus. The Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son. He is a distinct person sent by the Father and the Son. He is, with the Father & the Son, one God. It is our intimacy with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, which assures us that we are safe in His Hands. In Him, we have faith and hope and love.