

SERMON : TRINITY SUNDAY (2020)

Trinity Sunday - the day when we celebrate the unity of The Father, Son and Holy Spirit, three persons in one God - yet interestingly this is the one festival in the Christian year that does not relate to EVENTS that have happened or that will happen in time. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Passion-tide, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost all relate to specific events in Christ's life on earth.

Trinity Sunday is different - it refers to a reality that has no date, no time-frame, no direct link to a specific part of Christ's life, it is surrounded in mystery. It IS a mystery! <PAUSE> ... BUT ...

WHAT WE DO KNOW is that Trinity Sunday is the essential reminder, coming round once every year, that we cannot manage God - we cannot even imagine God.

How can three be one? It defies both logic and understanding for if we could understand God - contain\explain him - then God would cease to be GOD.

When we are dealing with theology and faith we are always dealing with something more than we, as human, can cope with.

We are being asked to deal with things too wonderful for us to comprehend - and we speak of things which we do not understand. <PAUSE>

Therefore, God will ALWAYS be beyond the capacity of our human minds.

So today here I am are trying to use words to sum up great heavenly truths about God. KNOWING that my words simply cannot describe the glories of heaven. So, I am tempted to use the language of images and similes, and stretch imaginations to breaking point.

Many speakers around the world today will focus on this "Trinitarian Doctrine", perhaps the most inexpressible mystery of our faith, and will try to do so, in about ten minutes, using words which will ALWAYS fail.

There have been many attempts to try to bring this mystery into our level of understanding. Some imagine the Trinity is like water, others have said that the Trinity is like the same person with three different titles (mother, sister, daughter) all at the same time. Others compared the Trinity to a cherry pie which is cut into three distinct pieces yet the filling in the middle all runs together as one.

None of these analogies or metaphors or symbols or whatever it is you want to call them are accurate. They are all incorrect. They all fail!

The Trinity is three distinct Persons in One God.

All three - Father, Son, Holy Spirit - have been around for all eternity; all three co-exist so that all can be apparent in the same place at the same time, as we saw in the Epiphany season with the Baptism of Jesus

God the Father speaking, God the Son being Baptised in the Jordan, and the Holy Spirit descending upon Him.

Each one of the Three are able to talk to each other as distinct Persons (like when God the Son prayed to God the Father)

The doctrine of the Trinity is the central doctrine of our Christian faith.

Our faith is this, "that we worship one God in Trinity, and the Trinity in unity."

Ultimately, the KEY WORD is "faith"!

We live by faith as well as knowledge and it is FAITH that teaches us that God is indeed three in one, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We can acknowledge this by faith even when we cannot understand it by human knowledge or logic!

The unity of the Trinity is what holds it together. The 'three-in-one', when together, makes the whole. Each part is necessary and without all three it is not whole - it is not complete - it lacks integrity.

For God, in the unity of the Trinity, is the epitome of integration and completeness.

We are believers who live and strive, with God's grace, to integrate the two into one - the flesh and the spirit - the human and the divine - the earthly and the heavenly - within time and in eternity ... using Christ as our supreme example.

Looking at Jesus we see a man - and we see God - two realities in one integrated life. The earthly and the heavenly become perfectly integrated.

From his poor and humble birth to his prophetic life and ultimately - by his resurrection - the life of Christ expresses the Father's decision to make himself :

- visible to all.
- speaking to all.
- calling to all.
- challenging to all. <PAUSE>

So while my humble, human brain may struggle to come to clarity regarding The Holy Trinity I have absolutely no doubt that we are promised that, by the transformation of grace, we may live in Christ as he lives in us and my commission is clear and comprehensible. In the gospel this morning, Jesus tells me:

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”

So this commission comes to us from the Father, through the word of The Son and we pray for the empowerment of The Spirit to help us carry out it.

To take this commission seriously:

- we have to be proactive, take the initiative, make the first move;
- we have to be led by Christ’s teaching and example and share and show those with others;
- we have to be willing to embrace those who are different, letting the love of Christ alone be the tie that binds us all together as one.

<PAUSE>

This is mightily confronting, some would say, frightening stuff.

<PAUSE>

So, should we demand an explanation from our Lord?

Question his methods?

Or should we merely enjoy the benefits of His grace? <LONG PAUSE>

Well, I don’t think the good Lord wants us to question TOO much.

Well, don’t just sit there. Go out and make disciples.

Ahua tuku i enei kupu, I runga e te Ingoa o te Atua, te Matua, te Tama me te Wairua Tapu.

I offer these words, in the name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

AMEN