

SUNDAY 30th May 2021 – Trinity Sunday

Led by the Rev'd David Newton

Hymn

1 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

2 Holy, Holy, Holy! all the saints adore thee,
Casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
Cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
Who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

3 Holy, Holy, Holy! though the darkness hide thee,
Though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
Only thou art holy, there is none beside thee
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

4 Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name, in earth, and sky, and sea;
Holy, Holy, Holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Opening Words

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:
the whole earth is full of his glory.
Ascribe to the Lord glory and strength;
ascribe to the Lord the honour due to his name.
The whole earth is full of his glory.
The Lord shall give strength to his people;
the Lord shall give his people the blessing of peace.
Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts:
the whole earth is full of his glory.

Meditation

God under us, sustaining the earth....

God walking with us, guiding our feet....

God in us, enlivening our heart....

Prayer of Confession

We have too often exchanged the worship of the living God for idols of our own imagining. As we gather to offer our praises to the holy and undivided Trinity, and to worship him in spirit and in truth, let us call to mind our sins.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.

May the God of love and power
forgive us and free us from our sins,
heal and strengthen us by His Spirit,
and raise us to new life in Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Readings

Read by Deborah Spencer

Romans 8.12-17

So then, brothers and sisters,^[a] we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— for if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death

the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba!^[b] Father!’ it is that very Spirit bearing witness^[c] with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ—if, in fact, we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

John 3.1-17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus^[a] by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’^[b] Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit.’^[c] Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You^[d] must be born from above.’^[e] The wind^[f] blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you^[g] do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has

ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.^[h] And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.^[i]

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Reflection

Written by the Rev'd David Newton

Today is Trinity Sunday. It is the culmination of the story that we have been telling through the liturgy, week by week, right from the 1st week of Advent.

We have heard of what the prophets foretold. We have heard of the messiah's birth, life, and testing. We have heard that he was tried, crucified and died. We have celebrated his risen life, his ascension into glory and the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost.

And so now we come to Trinity Sunday. Here we bring all the strands of the story together and celebrate it all in one moment. Having heard the whole story, we learn to speak of God as Trinity, as One who we also know as three.

As many of you will know, the doctrine of the Trinity is not something that appears all worked out in the pages of scripture. Instead, the doctrine of the Trinity is the inevitable conclusion to the early Christians' reflection on how God has

revealed Godself to be in the person of Jesus Christ and in the outworking of the Spirit.

Or, to put it a different way, the doctrine of the Trinity is the most concise expression of the Good News you could possibly imagine. We hear it in those words from Romans 8. God whom we call Abba, Father – the maker, who is our maker, our life-giver. God who we call Son, who calls us to be sons and daughters with him. God the Spirit who raises our hearts back to Godself.

One God in three ways. And in this ‘three ways’ is the entirety of the good news.

So, presented with the question, ‘what is the Gospel?’ The most concise answer there is, is, ‘The Trinity!’ (Although I would not recommend giving this answer if you’re asked on the street).

To say God is Trinity means affirming: God as maker, sustainer, ground of my being; God as known and revealed in the person of Jesus Christ; God as alive and active in us and in this world. All this is the expression of God’s Life as it is shared with us and made known to us.

To say God is Trinity also means affirming something about God’s own “inner” life, before us, for all eternity: that God is not a static unity, but rather that God’s own life is a dynamic relating loving dance. And that means that at the heart of ‘things’ (or we could say at the heart of reality) is Love. The Doctrine of the Trinity affirms above all else, that the Universe is founded upon, and held by, and will find its end in Love – in the Love that is God’s very own life.

So once again, what is the Gospel? The answer - The Trinity. Which is a short-hand way of saying that Love is at the heart of all things; that love that has been shared with us and been made known to us.

The stumbling block of all this, at least for me, is not around some logical nonsense, as if we were proclaiming $3 = 1$ or whatever. (We're not, and we never have). Instead, the difficult thing – perhaps even more so at the moment – is believing that, despite what we see, the last and final Word is not death and darkness but is in fact Love. It is sometimes hard to believe that the universe has its meaning and purpose, beginning and end, in a Word of Love, but that is precisely what a life of faith is all about. It's all about Love, Actually.

With all that is mind, it is no accident that it is on Trinity Sunday that we, as the Lordsbridge Team of Churches, have chosen to launch a sermon series on the 5 Marks of Mission.

For these, 'marks' – of which I'll say a bit more in a moment – find their beginning and end in the life of the Trinity, in the God who is Love; in the God who pours Love out upon creation.

The 5 Marks of Mission have their origin in the late 1980s and early 1990s, formulated by what's known as the 'Anglican Consultative Council', to help the whole Anglican Communion find a common expression for the task of the church in the world.

These marks are

- To Tell... the good news of Jesus Christ, who shows us that at the heart of reality is Love, and that Love has been poured out into creation,

- To Teach... people that they might know and understand the depth and breadth of the love of God
- To Tend... to those in need
- To Transform... unjust structures in society
- To Treasure... God's good earth

Together, they provide a wonderful, wholistic understanding of what it might mean to live in the Love of God who pours that love out into the world. They give us 5 ways of thinking about how we might share in the Love that God pours out on us.

Over the next few weeks we'll explore each of these marks in more details. But as we do so, we need keep in mind that at the root of each of them is Love. Or to put it another way, that at the root of them is the Holy Trinity. In seeking to live out these marks we reveal that Love is at the heart of reality, and that Love has been poured out on creation.

In seeking to live out these marks we make manifest the good news – that God is Trinity. Amen.

Affirmation of Faith

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
source of all being and life, the one for whom we exist?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature, died for us and rose again?

We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God and makes Christ known in
the world?

We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Written by Rick Nelms

To God the Father; invisible; all powerful and ever present; who created everything; who made us female and male in Your image; who loves us first and who loves each one of us equally.

To God the Son, Jesus who is fully God; the Word through whom everything was made; the light who shines, overcoming the darkness; Jesus who was willing to be one of us, fully man; Jesus who came not to condemn the world but to save it.

To God the Holy Spirit, who hovered over the waters at the creation, who inspired the prophets to predict the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit; breath of God, the comforter, the advocate, the counsellor, God within each one of us, the giver of gifts and the bringer of fruits.

To One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers this morning.

Heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we ask that You help each one of us and every Christian in every Church throughout the world, through the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, to understand the Trinity; one god in three persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
In your mercy, hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray for the worldwide Church of Christ. We pray for unity. We pray for obedience to Jesus's

commandments. We pray for a truly inclusive Church in which all people are given equality. We pray for protection for persecuted Christians. We pray for everyone who contributes to the Church in Ely diocese and the Lordsbridge Team. We pray for the Holy Spirit to lead us so that we can be children of God. We pray that the Spirit will, through our prayers and words and actions, spread the love of God in the world and touch the lives of people who do not know Jesus.

One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
In your mercy, hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray for the world and its leaders. We thank you for the many places where there is freedom and where leaders are accountable and care about the people they lead. We thank you for the faithful work of so many people who have kept society functioning, the shop workers, the bin emptiers, the road menders, the scientists, the vaccinators, the carers and the health service workers, and pray that you will protect them. We pray for the light of Christ to shine into the places where bad decisions are being made, where the pandemic is unconstrained, where war and conflict are the norm, where crime is uncontrolled, where genocide, apartheid, bigotry, inequality and poverty go unchecked, where forests are burning, coral is bleaching and ice is melting. We pray for your Holy Spirit to fill your Church with vision and hope, so that we challenge evil wherever it occurs.

One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
In your mercy, hear our prayer

Lord Jesus, during your ministry on Earth, you reached out to touch those who were infectious, you ministered to people regardless of race, gender, ability, mental illness, poverty or any

of the other ways people find to discriminate against others. The Holy Spirit enables us to cry, 'Abba! Father!', affirms that we are fellow-heirs with Christ and pleads for us in our weakness. We pray for all of the people and families who are in need or distress. In a time of silence we pray for those people on our hearts today.

silence

One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
In your mercy, hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we pray for those people who are dying and for their friends and families. We pray for people who are grieving, and pray for your Holy Spirit to support them for as long as they grieve. We give thanks for the lives of those people we know who have died knowing Jesus as their Lord and their God, and also those whose faith is known only to you. In a time of silence we bring before you those known to us.

silence

One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit
In your mercy, hear our prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank You that we have been chosen and destined by You and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ and to be sprinkled with his blood: May grace and peace be ours in abundance. (cf. 1 Peter 1:2)

Merciful Father,
accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours now and for ever. Amen.**

The Collect

Holy God,
faithful and unchanging:
enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth,
and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love,
that we may truly worship you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Hymn

I God is Love: let heav'n adore him;
God is Love: let earth rejoice;
Let creation sing before him,
And exalt him with one voice.
He who laid the earth's foundation,
He who spread the heav'ns above,
He who breathes through all creation,
He is Love, eternal Love.

2 God is Love: and he enfoldeth
All the world in one embrace;
With unfailing grasp he holdeth
Every child of every race.
And when human hearts are breaking
Under sorrow's iron rod,
Then they find that selfsame aching
Deep within the heart of God.

3 God is Love: and though With blindness
Sin afflicts the souls of men,
God's eternal loving-kindness
Holds and guides them even then.
Sin and death and hell shall never
o'er us final triumph gain;
God is Love, so Love for ever
O'er the universe must reign.

Blessing

God the Holy Trinity make you strong in faith and love,
defend you on every side,
and guide you in truth and peace;
and the blessing ...

**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of us.**