

SERMON TRINITY SUNDAY 4th June 2023

One of the most confusing things about Christian doctrine to non Christian people, and sometimes to Christians themselves, is the whole idea of a Trinitarian God.

Surely God is God. What's all this 3 in one business about?

Like the other book religions, Judaism and Islam, we believe in the One God.

In fact to believe in other than One God seems an odd concept to us.

But the big difference between us and the other worshippers of the One God is that we see the action of God, as God incarnates and manifests to us in the world, and empowers us. as expressed in three persons.

God has three personas or faces through which he engages with us.

The word person comes from the word persona which is the Latin word for mask used in Greek drama. And masks, like our animated faces, are our way of communicating with each other.

God communicates with us in three main ways as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

God the Father is God as our Creator.

If our culture had evolved slightly differently we could quite validly talk of God the Father as God the Mother.

It is recognising God as our divine parent.

The one from whom we are born.

The transcendent God who is huge and deep and mysterious and profound.

Our large cathedral spaces with their high roofs and great arching spaces and echoing emptiness speak to us of this transcendence.

The voices of choirs and worshippers are loosened from their moorings and sent heavenward like sacred smoke dissipating up into the lofty spaces above.

God the creator is large and ethereal and 'beyond' us and yet ever present.

And so we send our prayers and our praises skyward up to him.

And then there is the person of God unique to our belief.
 God in the person of Jesus Christ.
 The biography of Jesus speaks to us of God incarnate.
 His life, actions and teachings -
 his acceptance of a journey to a cruel death -
 the re-presentation of himself in a glorious resurrection.
 All of this contains within it a pattern of God's work in the world through
 a spiritually enlightened humanity.

I believe that the life and actions of Jesus changed the whole world
 whether we believe in it or not.
 God in Christ transformed our humanity and this goes beyond religious
 belief.
 The world AD (after Christ) is very different from the world BC (before
 Christ). This is a spiritually historical fact.

And through the gift of Jesus Christ and his life and actions the third
 person of the Trinity was able to manifest to us.
 God the Holy Spirit.
 The transforming spirit of God that makes all things new.

That same creative spirit that manifested the world in the first place
 comes to live with us to empower all that we do in God's name.

If we can truly live in the spirit then miracles can open up before us. Not
 creating an easy life but one full of promise and transformation.

These things are expressed in the Trinitarian tract

Ex Deo Nascimur
 In Christo Morimur
 Per Spiritum Sanctum Reviviscimus

Ex Deo Nascimur - From God we are born

In Christo Morimur – In Christ we die

Per Spiritum Sanctum Reviviscimus – We are revived by the Holy Spirit.

From God we are born, in Christ we die, through the Holy Spirit we are
 revived.

This is the essence of what the trinity means to us as human beings in our relationship with God. A relationship which is uniquely Christian.

We are born from God our Creator.

But the Latin phrase *Ex Deo Nascimur* doesn't just mean we are born from God as an event in the past.

The grammar of the phrase implies that not only were we born from God but that we are continually being born through God.

God the Father, God our creator continually creates us. If God blinked then we would cease to exist. God truly is Him in whom we live and move and have our being.

In Christo Morimur, in Christ we die.

Jesus allowed himself to die in a certain way that death would no longer have its sense of finality for us. Since Jesus died and was resurrected death no longer has the sting it used to have. When we die we die in Christ and the outcome of such a death is resurrection.

Per Spiritum Sanctum Reviviscimus.

We are revived by the Holy Spirit. And we are being continually revived by the Holy Spirit. God's transforming power is now with us in the world and we can see it at work in our daily lives if we tread the Way as a disciple of Christ.

But if all these words make your head spin then lets just look at the Celtic knot trinity picture on our service sheet.

This interweaving of the three aspects of God tells us something which is the key to understanding the Trinity and that is that it is all about relationship.

God as we understand him (or her) isn't just a creator somewhere distant and far off like an absent parent or like an overseeing government body.

Our God loved the world so much that he incarnated right into the middle of it. He loved us so much that he entered the world through a human being in order to have a direct relationship with us and our humanity. He loved us so much that He wants to continue that intimate relationship through the Holy Spirit.

And so our world and our lives talk to us through relationship. Our relationship with God and with creation around us and with each other. We learn about God and about the world through living our lives with others.

We also learn that what we do has an effect on that relationship whether it be the impact we have on our environment or on how we react socially with others and the consequences of that.

We are all linked. We are all interwoven. Our trinity knotwork shows how the overarching trinity of God holds us and we weave our lives within it as a lesser trinity.

And this pattern of interweaving relationship is one that we need to think about and practice at St John's.

We have a wonderful church here with dedicated congregations. Our regular 8 o'clockers and 10.30ers. All the events and initiatives that continually go on around our church life.

What I would like to see us achieve is that HOLY connectedness expressed by our Trinity,
and I'm hopeful our visioning groups will help to make that come about.
A glorious diversity IN UNITY.

I have no magic formula but it is the subject of my prayers and meditations and I ask you to pray with me that we may find a way to be a church in this place that is interwoven and interconnected with our community and our council and our businesses and our people and our God,
Interwoven and interconnected in a Trinitarian way.

And by Trinitarian I mean fully incarnated in a Godly way and led by the Spirit.

A way that expresses the wisdom of the Father
And the love of the Son
Through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

Jonathan Poston

