

Mt. 28.16-20; Isaiah 40.12-17, 27-end; 2 Cor. 13.11-end  
Trinity Sunday; 8 & 10 am; 11th June 2017.

*Enable us, our Father, to respond to the grace of your word with humility of heart and in the Spirit of Love; that our lives may be conformed more and more to the image of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The Holy Trinity is a name often described as a mystery – humanity’s best guess at the nature of God, the supreme being. We know there is a Father – the people of Israel found him in the Hebrew Bible, in the form of Elohim, Yahweh, or Jehovah. We know there is a Son – he spent time with us here on earth and there are many records of his existence, not just from the Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.

And from both the Hebrew Bible and the NT we get the idea of an intangible Spirit, who in the beginning moved over the face of the waters (Gen.1:2) to bring the Creation into being, who inspired the prophets, who would rest on the Messiah (Isaiah 11.2), who would bring the voice of the Father to his baptism by John (Mt.3.16), who would be a gift to be bestowed even in the Christ’s breath (John 20.22), and which would rest on the disciples at Pentecost like tongues of fire (Acts 2), inspiring them to spread the gospels around the world, and bring us together on days like today.

The word ‘Trinity’ does not exist in the Bible, but quite soon after the coming of Christ, the disciples and all those who so needed to articulate their experiences, sought to find words that might explain what had happened in this commingling of heaven with earth. Just like Isaiah had sought to teach

Israel that its people had no particular claim to significance before they could begin to grasp the wonder of God’s determination to confer significance upon them. The prophet wanted them to marvel at a God who chose to be absolutely attentive to the detail of their lives, watching over those who thought they’d been forgotten, and giving the weary the strength to get home.

Psalm 8 draws attention to the same question, “[what are human beings that you are mindful of them?](#)” and the writer points to the dignity given to humanity as custodians of the natural world (v.4-8). But it’s not until the coming of Jesus and the glory of God in the midst of a human community that we discover we are important enough to be summoned by the Spirit into a close relationship; to be healed, forgiven, instructed in the way to live a godly life (Mt.4.18-5.12), and taught by the Son to address God with new words (Mt. 6.9-13), ‘[Our Father, who art in heaven...](#)’

Because then we are enabled for mission and evangelism, to call new disciples, to admit them symbolically into the life glimpsed at Christ’s own baptism (Mt.3.13-end), and to send them to spread the word as Jesus had sent them. St. Paul was one of the first so called – extraordinary to think that there’s no evidence to prove that he ever even met his Lord, except through the power of that summoning Spirit, but boy, did it turn his world upside down! From being a vicious persecutor of Christians he would come to say things like, ‘[Agree with one another, live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you](#)’ (2 Cor.13.11)

Which brings us back to the problem of names and what they refer to. Christ's reference to Father, Son and Holy Spirit at the end of St. Matthew's gospel, the 'Great Commission', becomes a major part of our effort to understand what it means to describe God as a holy 'Trinity'. In the light of these words, and thinking back to the experience of Abraham and Sarah in the desert (Genesis 18.2), with the three mysterious visitors by the Oaks of Mamre, we begin to see Trinitarian references even in the earliest book of scripture.

But this is not just some formulaic outworking of the minds of men to make convenient understandings for liturgy at services of this kind. The idea of a Holy Trinity, a unified yet three-fold divinity in a relationship of complete and utter devotion to one another, of an inextricably interwoven matrix of mutual hospitality, can become for us a paradigm for a total way of life.

If God resembles three persons joined together in a loving relationship, and we are made in God's image, then as long as we remain isolated individuals, too proud to speak or share with others, we will miss our calling, our vocation, and fail to achieve our full potential. God made us to live together with other human beings, as families, as fellowships, as communities. Perhaps what God wants of us is for all the world to live together as one happy family. Is that not what we pray for when we ask that God's kingdom may come on earth as it is heaven?

So, my brothers and sisters, to close this talk on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, I'd like us to reflect on the words of that oft repeated prayer known as 'the grace'. Will you please stand. I'll say the words first, and then I'd like all of us to say them together, with our eyes open, joining hands if you may, at least turning our heads and smiling at as many people as we can, to deepen our sense of being in a fellowship with one another, as it is between our God of Three-in-One...

*'The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, evermore. Amen.'*

## **Matthew 28.16-20** The Commissioning of the Disciples

16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'

## **Isaiah 40.12-17, 27-end**

<sup>12</sup> Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand and marked off the heavens with a span, enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance?

<sup>13</sup> Who has directed the spirit of the Lord, or as his counsellor has instructed him?

<sup>14</sup> Whom did he consult for his enlightenment, and who taught him the path of justice?

Who taught him knowledge, and showed him the way of understanding?

<sup>15</sup> Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket, and are accounted as dust on the scales; see, he takes up the isles like fine dust.

<sup>16</sup> Lebanon would not provide fuel enough, nor are its animals enough for a burnt-offering.

<sup>17</sup> All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

<sup>27</sup> Why do you say, O Jacob, and speak, O Israel,

'My way is hidden from the Lord, and my right is disregarded by my God'?

<sup>28</sup> Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable.

<sup>29</sup> He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless.

<sup>30</sup> Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted;

<sup>31</sup> but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.

## **2 Corinthians 13.11-end**

11 Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. <sup>12</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

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

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