

Reflection for Sunday 7th June (Trinity Sunday)

Readings for the day

2 Corinthians 13.11-13

Finally, brothers, goodbye. Aim for perfection, listen to my appeal, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you.

Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints send their greetings.

Matthew 28.16-20

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go 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 I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Reflection

One of the jokes that is sometimes made between preachers is that no one likes to preach on Trinity Sunday. After all, which of us can explain the Trinity? How exactly can God be three persons and at the same time one? This question was the source of a good deal of argument in the first few hundred years of the church and even today, when we think about our brothers and sisters who belong to different denominations, we tend to draw the boundary around those whose faith is 'Trinitarian' – i.e. they believe in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Many images or metaphors have been put forward to explain the Trinity. St Patrick used the example of the three leaves of a shamrock. Others have used the image of ice, water and steam to describe one substance that we find in three different forms. I have also heard the Trinity described as being like three musical notes in a chord. You can hear each note separately on its own but they also blend together in a way that is both perfect and different from any of the individual notes.

But if we were to examine any of these analogies in depth, we would discover that each of them is to some extent flawed. That shouldn't surprise us. God is simply far too wonderful and amazing to be ever be fully described by mere human words.

Instead I prefer to think that images like these each give us a glimpse into the wonders of the God who made us and loves us. It seems to me that each description is like looking at a different facet of a priceless diamond. Each view allows us to appreciate the beauty a little more but does not reveal the whole.

So here's a different view of the Trinity which may or may not work for you.

When we marvel at the wonders of creation, we can simply enjoy being in awe of the Father who created. In difficult times, we look to the image of a loving parent who is in control and in whose arms we are held safe. When life needs a compass, it is the Father who teaches us right from wrong.

On Thursday evenings, many of us have joined in the 'Clap for Carers'. We wanted to thank the people who have travelled the difficult journey alongside others who were sick, dying or bereaved;

people who have put themselves in the front line – sometimes at great personal sacrifice. Do we see in them a glimpse of the character of Jesus?

In the 10:30 service at Chilvers Coton, we sometimes ask the question, ‘Where have you met with God this week?’ The answers can sometimes surprise us. Not long before the lockdown someone related being in a supermarket checkout queue when the person at the front didn’t have enough money. They were about to put something back when the next person in the queue told them not to because they would pay for it. How did that generous person come to be in the right place at the right time. Could it be the work of the Holy Spirit?

These are of course just three small examples that only give us glimpses (*cf 1Corinthians 13:12*) but I’d like to encourage you to think about the Trinity in terms of the different ways you encounter God. If you look back over the last week, where have you encountered him as Father, Son and Holy Spirit? Where will you meet him this week?

May he bless you wherever you meet him.

Jonathan.