

## Trinity Sunday Seminar (2012)

I have spent more sermons trying to explain it..in all the usual ways;  
water ice steam or tree, leaf fruit imagery .  
So I am not going to today.

Today I am going to ask you to embrace the Trinity for the mystery that it  
is...and to celebrate that mystery.

I think that what so many lack in their lives today is mystery...

Most of us like to think that things are either black or white -  
and we will go to incredible lengths to fit things around us into one  
or the other category -

What so many Christians lack in their lives,  
is a sense of the mystery of God  
and of the mystery of the life that God gives to them.

We keep trying to develop one simple mental picture of God  
one simple portrait of what our life in God is like or ought to be like.

but God is greater than any category -  
any system of thought or classification,  
and so is our life in him.

This Sunday is Trinity Sunday - the first Sunday after Pentecost

a time of year that Popes and Bishops, Councils and Synods,  
have, for more years than this ancient church has existed  
thought it good and wise to remind the millions of faithful -  
that God is a mystery which is best understood in three ways -

As creator -- or Father  
as redeemer -- or Son  
and as sustainer -- or Spirit.

God is one. Yet God is three.  
It feels like a paradox but then,  
our faith is gloriously full of them!

God is here. Yet God is everywhere.  
God is mighty. Yet God is tender.  
God is just. Yet God has mercy.  
God is spirit. Yet God takes on flesh.  
God is in Christ. Christ is in Us.  
God is Spirit and the Spirit blows where it wills.  
Yet the Spirit abides in our hearts.

God is one. Yet God is three.

The Apostle Paul writes this about God

*"Since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities  
- his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly  
seen, being understood from what has been made."*

The first time we see then Trinity in action is in the Creation...  
God desires to create  
His Son, the Word made flesh, speaks it out...'Let there be'  
And the Spirit moves at His Word, brooding over the waters, creatin the  
cosmos

When you go outside after this worship time at Foxhill..  
take a little bit more time to worship -  
look at the bark of an old tree  
at the greening fields  
the scudding clouds  
the running waters -- and give thanks -- to the power - to the  
grace - to the beauty –

our Creator, Father, Mother God.....that made it all.

But there are many,  
who stop just there - with the clouds and the trees - with the  
land and the sea and the creatures that inhabit them,  
and while they get a spiritual message from them –  
they don't get the same message of goodness and of beauty that we do -  
we who know that God is One, Yet God is three.

Last Sunday was the festival of the Spirit of God  
- of the Spirit which is God....and we explored the person of the Holy  
Spirit on Wednesday

We celebrated the incredible goodness of God  
that God should come to us and inhabit us  
and give us powers and gifts by which we might do his will  
by which we might communicate him to others  
by which we might communicate with him.

Many people have thought of the incredible power of God

fewer have thought about God as a spirit that inhabits us -  
as a force within that can be touched and which can touch us

Some say this is an age of the spirit  
that there is a great awakening happening  
that even as people abandon  
the church and the temple and the mosque,  
they are reaching out to the power behind these institutions,

that they are longing for the divine

and seeking it in an enormous variety of ways and forms,  
from witchcraft to the worship of Gaia  
and from the goddesses to the new consciousness of the  
Celestine Prophecy

And that is true.  
There is such a longing

And there is such a diversity of things happening.  
But not all Spirits are good

Not all Spirits are of the One Spirit which we call God;  
the Spirit which we know from many days long before the day  
of Pentecost  
is a healing Spirit,  
a creative Spirit,  
a serving Spirit  
a truth telling Spirit  
a Spirit of Justice and of Order  
a Spirit of revolutionary mercy and of tender compassion,

the Spirit which works good works and speaks the Word of God.

The Spirit of God, God the Spirit, is the one which guides us -  
the one which comforts us - the one that convicts us and conveys  
God's mercy to us - the one who listens - and the one who speaks

- and in speaking never asks of us that which is wrong - and  
never does through us - that which would bring shame to the name  
of God

It is by the Spirit that our prayer is prayer to God  
and by the Spirit that our prayer is answered..

God is one, yet God is three.

God is a mystery -- a mystery so big, so awesome,  
so holy that our limited minds can never grasp the wholeness of it

but God has placed in us a capacity to appreciate the mystery that God is  
and to embrace that mystery --.

God has revealed himself

- not just in the act of creation - in nature and its  
manifest goodness and beauty,

- not just in the nudges and nods of the Spirit - in the  
prophet's vision and the old man's dreams,

God has revealed himself in the one called Jesus  
the one called Christ -

the one who was born by the Spirit  
and who worked all his works by the Spirit

and who healed and forgave by the Spirit  
and in all that he spoke he spoke the word of God by the  
Spirit.

In Christ, God reveals himself as the one who loves - and who  
does so in tangible, concrete, incarnate - in fleshed - ways.

And without this one  
without this revelation of God whom we call the Christ -  
you and I would not have the promises  
nor would we have the inheritance to come

Nor would we have the communion  
the spirit  
the assurance  
the strength  
the mercy  
that we have.

Jesus is the one who reveals the way to us, the one who speaks  
the truth to us, the one who gives life by his touch and by his  
word.

God is One, yet God is three.

We have - in God - the three in one - and one in three -  
something that is very precious.

We have the gospel - the good news - of the salvation that is  
for all humankind.

We have the message concerning God's love and his desire  
to grant wholeness to all his children

We have a light that shines into the darkness of human hearts and  
brings healing - a light that shines forth from thence into the  
life of all those around.

It has seemed good to hundreds of generations of our Spiritual  
Ancestors to remember this truth on this day of the year in a  
particular and special way.

And so we do today.

We remember Jesus' own words,  
the words he spoke shortly before his ascension into heaven  
when he said to his followers

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to  
me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations,  
baptizing them in the name of the Father, The Son, and The  
Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have  
commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, to the very  
end of the age."

As believers as we are, in the line of Abraham and Sarah and of Joseph and  
Mary we have a privilege of understanding and a duty of  
communicating and teaching the good news concerning God.

And God seeks us out;

- He displays himself in the heavens and through all that he made  
on earth

- He speaks to us in the Spirit - in our dreams and visions and  
in our holy silences

- He comes to us in the Flesh.- In Christ Jesus our Lord.

So;

1. We have and we know the God of Isaiah -  
the God who is high and lifted up in his temple  
the God who speaks and brings forth all of creation,  
the God who is judge, lord, ruler, king -  
the God who is in light inaccessible hid from our eyes..

This God is strange to us  
this God is beyond us  
this God we dare not touch  
even though we know this God and he knows us,  
even though we see this God's signs all around us in the earth, the wind,  
the air, and the fire.

2. And then we have the God who is in Christ.  
the God who is Christ -  
the God whom is lowly, and humble  
the God who reaches out and touches others,  
the God who serves others,  
the God who walks the earth with us,  
the God who is tempted with us  
the God who hungers and thirsts with us  
the God who embraces us and encourages us  
the God who died for us

3. And we have and know God the Spirit -  
God the bringer of visions and of dreams,  
God the source of strength and of hope,  
God the supplier of healing words and of comfort filling prayer  
God the wind, the breath, the air we breath  
God the transformer, the one who gives new birth, new life,  
God the presence within us and the presence all around us  
God calling to us - calling for us - calling through us,  
calling in us..

We are the children of God, says Paul, and God has no grandchildren  
As a Christian, and a priest, I do NOT know all about God that there is to  
know -

God is always greater than my knowledge of him -  
but I do know what God has shown about himself -

I do know God in three different ways,  
I know him in three ways  
I experience him in three ways.  
I love him in three ways.  
In body, mind and spirit and with all my strength

So today, don't try to understand the Trinity  
Grab hold of the mystery -- appreciate it and embrace it:

the mystery that not only is God one in three and three in one  
but the mystery that God loves you,

the mystery that God cares for you

the mystery that God can and will, if you let him, use you to do  
great things

that God can and will, if you are open to his bidding, use  
you to bring healing, and wholeness, and hope

first to your homes,

then to your neighbours

and finally, to the whole world  
through the gospel that we have received.

In the name of Christ, Amen

## PRAYER OF THE DAY

God revealed in nature

- in power of sea and land
- in beauty of plants and animals
- in intricacy of molecules and atoms and the webs of spiders

To you, the three in one and one in three, we give thanks.

Lord, hear our prayer...

God revealed in Spirit

- in visions and dreams and gentle nudges
- in whisper of the wind and the voice of strangers
- in heart and in mind and in love itself

To you, the three in one and one in three, we give thanks.

Lord hear our prayer...

God revealed in Christ

- who walks with us and before us
- who forgives our sins
- who reminds us there is only one true way and one true God
- and who gave himself to be that way.

To you, the three in one and one in three, we give thanks.

Lord hear our prayer...

Touch, O Lord, our hearts and our minds. Help us to hold to the word of truth. Help us to embrace the mystery of your nature and to proclaim the mystery of your love. Make our faith deep and true, our utterance wise and caring, and our actions bold and loving. Make us ones who proclaim the gospel through which your righteousness is revealed. Make us ones who worship you as Creator Father, as Spirit Mother, and as Christ Jesus, Son, three in one, and one in three. Amen.