



Trinity Sunday Sunday, May 27th, 2018

The Trinity God as Community: A Model for Living



Christianity is unique in its reading of God as three-in-one. This idea has presented problems within the Christian church, with some rejecting it, but more significantly, it has been a problem among the Abrahamic religions – Judaism and Islam – where the confession of faith is that God is One, not Three in One. That said, Christian Faith's celebration of the Trinity, gives Christianity real insight into what we claim to be the character of God as in relationship with himself, as well as the implications for the way we as Christians fundamentally see the world, the way we address cultural, social, political and economic questions. Today we will examine the window the Trinity offers us in understanding the world and each other more deeply.

OUR GATHERING

Announcements

Welcome

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

Amen

May God be with you

And with you

We light the Paschal Candle

We light the candle celebrating the Trinity:

Parent, Son and Spirit,

through whom God shows us how to live together.

**Hymn: All hail the power of Jesus' name (TIS, 224 (ii), Diadem,
Edward Perronet)**

A Prayer for Trinity: God of Surprises

In this meditation, I try to point to God's counter-intuitive way of being and operating. At heart, God is not just about community, God *is* community. God is not as we are prone to think, a solitary white haired and bearded wise man in the heavens handing down judgments - a Gandalf like figure (Lord of the Rings) - but instead, a creative neighbourhood, a commune, a co-operative, as suggested by Rublev – see the icon on the front page)

Trinity is less a doctrine than a poem, free verse, a cosmic love gift

Sending sound waves through earth

Hurling speech into the cosmos

Stirring radio waves to hum

Trinity is a dream

we and God have

about the human and the divine,

the matrix of connections

between the common and the sacred

Trinity is a counter-intuitive beat of the music,
 syncopated melody lines
 as sonorous as whales, pulsars and seismic waves
all held in tension

But we struggle with God's free utterance in indelible ink.
 We analyse God with precision,
***and we force the messy beautiful melodies
 into straight boring lines.***

And just when we think we have finished the job,
 ordering our world according to our own lights
 Trinity finds new allies, new friends to work and play with,
 even beyond the Church
***And dances out the door
 finding willing partners with whom to swirl***

Peace

The children leave for SMG

LET'S HEAR THE WORD

Some Clues about the Trinity and what it says about Community and Relationships

Trinitarian life is also our life...There is one life of the Triune God, a life in which we graciously have been included as partners... a comprehensive plan of God reaching from creation to consummation, in which God and all creatures are destined to exist together in the mystery of love and communion.

Catherine Mowry LaCugna

God for Us, quoted from Ruth Burrow's Essence of Prayer

The doctrine of the Trinity means that relationship, that fellowship, that togetherness and sharing, that self-giving and other-centeredness are not afterthoughts with God, but the deepest truth about the being of God. The Father is not consumed with Himself; He loves the Son and the Spirit. And the Son is not riddled with narcissism; he loves his

Father and the Spirit. And the Spirit is not preoccupied with himself and his own glory; the Spirit loves the Father and the Son.

C. Baxter Kruger

All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian statement that "God is love." But they seem not to notice that the words 'God is love' have no real meaning unless God contains at least two persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God were a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love."

C.S. Lewis

Isaiah 6:1-8

Heather Lakiss

These verses focus on the glory of God in his heavenly court – the ‘vocation’ of which is to constantly sing the praise of God. Even in such a context the passage conveys a sense of the mystery of God. The prophet only sees the hem of God’s robe which fills the temple (v. 1), not God’s ‘upper half’ so to speak. Moreover, the heavenly beings, the seraphim, even shield their eyes from the full vision of God. This overwhelming vision of God’s glory contrasts with all around it and the prophet is quickly aware of a deep sense of unworthiness (v. 5). However, at the other end of the reading we hear his courageous, almost ‘heroic’ response to the divine question ‘Who will go for us?’ ‘Here am I; send me!’ says Isaiah. The beginning and end of vv. 1-8 give us two wonderful pictures. The revealing of God’s heavenly glory calls forth costly human commitment.

⁶In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. ²Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew. ³And one called to another and said: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory.” ⁴The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.

⁵And I said: “Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!” ⁶Then one of the seraphs flew to me, holding a live coal that had been taken from the altar with a pair of tongs. ⁷The seraph touched my mouth with it and said: “Now that this has touched your lips, your guilt has departed and your sin is blotted out.” ⁸Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!”

The word of the Lord

Thanks be to God

John 3:1-17 (Good News Translation)

John Huckson

This reading is used on Trinity Sunday in the Church Lectionary because it suggests God as three-in-one, even though that suggestion is subtle. Let us recall that the Doctrine of the Trinity had not yet developed in Christian teaching in an explicit way. This was not formalized until the 4th century. In this reading we hear that Nicodemus is exposed to a new idea which is shattering. It is that the old religious thinking and rules have changed. It is not enough to claim fealty to the blood line of Judaism; indeed it is necessary to be *born from above*. In other words, the old historical certitudes have been abolished and rewritten. Jesus is pushing his followers to understand that *new life emerges constantly from the old*, but not without conflict, that God sends new life from above and that new perspectives interrupt our old habits.

3 There was a Jewish leader named Nicodemus, who belonged to the party of the Pharisees. **2** One night he went to Jesus and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher sent by God. No one could perform the miracles you are doing unless God were with him.”

3 Jesus answered, “I am telling you the truth: no one can see the Kingdom of God without being born again.”^[a]

4 “How can a grown man be born again?” Nicodemus asked. “He certainly cannot enter his mother's womb and be born a second time!”

5 “I am telling you the truth,” replied Jesus, “that no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. **6** A person is born physically of human parents, but is born spiritually of the Spirit. **7** Do not be surprised because I tell you that you must all be born again.^[b] **8** The wind blows wherever it wishes; you hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. It is like that with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

9 “How can this be?” asked Nicodemus.

10 Jesus answered, “You are a great teacher in Israel, and you don't know this? **11** I am telling you the truth: we speak of what we know and report what we have seen, yet none of you is willing to accept our message. **12** You do not believe me when I tell you about the things of this world; how will you ever believe me, then, when I tell you about the things of heaven? **13** And no one has ever gone up to heaven except the Son of Man, who came down from heaven.”^[c]

14 As Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the desert, in the same way the Son of Man must be lifted up, **15** so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. **16** For God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him

may not die but have eternal life. ¹⁷ For God did not send his Son into the world to be its judge, but to be its saviour.

The Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you Lord Christ

Film Clip: “The Chorus - Les Choristes”

In this film, a piece of which I have shown before, the story revolves around a new teacher to a French Reform School. The school is marked by abuse and violence, but with the arrival of Clément Matthieu, a new environment is born, drawing the boys out from the abuse they have learned to repeat with each other. This new born experience, generates a violence of its own, as Msr. Matthieu is sacked. This is a story about the cost of building community in an abusive society.

Hymn: Here in this place (TiS 474, Gather Us In, Marty Haugen)

Some Ideas...living ‘trinitarianly’!

Let’s Give: Our Offerings

Doxology

***Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,
praise him, all creatures here below,
praise him above, ye heavenly host,
praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.***

Prayer of Dedication

Prayers of the People

Lawrence Peak

After several petitions, the one who prays states, “*Lord*” and we respond “*brighten the way of the world*”.

Closing Hymn: Holy, holy, holy (TiS 132, Nicea, John Bacchus Dykes)

Blessing and Sending Out

The Trinity, God, Son and Holy Spirit
teaches us how to live
provides a way forward in our relationships

We see reality through the Trinity

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord

In the name of Christ

Sung Blessing: You shall go out with joy (TiS 755, Trees of the Field, Steffi Greiser Ruben)

***You shall go out with joy
and be led forth in peace
and the mountains and hills shall break forth in singing
There'll be shouts of joy
and the trees of the field, shall clap, shall clap their hands
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands
and the trees of the field shall clap their hands
and you'll go out with joy.***

(twice)

Musical Postlude

Pianist:

Rosemary Osborne

