



Trinity Sunday Sunday, June 16th, 2019

The Trinity God as Community: A Model for Living as God's Creative Partners



Rublev: "The Trinity"

Andrei Rublev was born in the 1360s, he died between 1427-1430 in Moscow and is considered to be one of the greatest medieval Russian painters of Orthodox icons and frescos. The only work authenticated as entirely his, is the icon of the Trinity above.(c. 1410, currently in the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow). It is based on an earlier icon known as the "Hospitality of Abraham" (illustrating Genesis 18). Rublev removed the figures of Abraham and Sarah from the scene, and through a subtle use of composition and symbolism changed the subject to focus on the Mystery of the Trinity.

These last two weeks I have attempted to emphasize that there is a connectedness between the Sundays of the Ascension, Pentecost and today, Trinity, that follow sequentially. The meaning of these Sundays is difficult to isolate because they represent either biblical stories which are in themselves mysterious (Ascension and Pentecost), or doctrine which seems so abstract (The Trinity: God as Three in One). In essence, the connection is tied up in the idea of *human beings rising to God's invitation to become his companions, co-creating with God in the world: that is our vocation*. On Ascension Sunday, Jesus left us, to get on with the job. On Pentecost Sunday, the nature of that job became clear: co-creating with God in the world meant and means rejecting the usual human attitudes and constructions, where identity is based upon traditions of culture or language (the basis of racism), and in its place experiencing unity in the Spirit's gathering of people *under the Lordship of Jesus*. Today - the last chapter of these three weeks, we think about God as Three-in-One, which is about God as *community* – talking and communicating within Himself (the immanent Trinity) and also with us (the economic Trinity).

GATHERING

Announcements

Preparation: The Lord is my light (TiS 747, Jacques Berthier, Taize). We sing as a mantra.

The Lord Is My Light

Theme A

The Lord is my light, my light and sal - va - tion:
 God I trust, in God I trust. The

Fine

Invitation to Worship

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
 The Lord be with you
And also 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: Christ be our light (Bernadette Farrell)

Longing for light, we wait in darkness.
 Longing for truth, we turn to you.
 Make us your own, your holy people,
 Light for the world to see.

***Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts.
 Shine through the darkness.
 Christ, be our light! Shine in your Church
 Gathered today.***

Longing for peace, our world is troubled.
 Longing for hope, many despair.
 Your word alone has power to save us
 Make us your living voice.

Chorus

Longing for food, many are hungry.
 Longing for water, many still thirst.
 Make us your bread, broken for others,
 Shared until all are fed.

Chorus

Longing for shelter people are homeless.
 Longing for warmth, many are cold.
 Make us your building, sheltering others,
 Walls made of living stone.

Chorus

Many the gifts, many the people,
 Many the hearts that yearn to belong.
 Let us be servants to one another,
 Making your kingdom come.

Chorus

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 man in the heavens, handing down judgments – albeit wise ones – 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***

The Peace

SMG

Introduction

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 rather than self-centredness, are not afterthoughts with God, but the deepest truth about the very 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 Herself and her 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

The readings that follow are a synthesis of the varied Trinity readings through the three-year lectionary. I have broken the rules a little, but in doing so I have wanted to bring together the best of the readings for Trinity.

Proverbs 8:1-11, 22-23, 30-31 - Wisdom: The Secret of Living Well

Emily Jacobsson

Proverbs is one of the 'Writings' or books of wisdom literature in the Hebrew Bible. It consists of collections of sayings or proverbs, most of which are couched as teaching for a young man to find his way in life. Like the other wisdom books of Job, Ecclesiastes, and some psalms, Proverbs sees wisdom as surpassing the boundaries of Hebrew culture. It draws on sayings from the surrounding cultures, especially collections from Egypt. In the passage from chapter 8, set down for today, Trinity Sunday, wisdom is personified as Woman Wisdom (or 'lady wisdom', as the older commentaries suggest). The passage concludes with a sense of delight in the dance of creation, as wisdom rejoices in God's creativity and what has been created: the world and all that is in it, including humanity.

Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?

²On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;

³beside the gates in front of the town,
at the entrance of the portals she cries out:

⁴"To you, O people, I call,
and my cry is to all that live.

⁵O simple ones, learn prudence;

acquire intelligence, you who lack it.

⁶Hear, for I will speak noble things,
and from my lips will come what is right;

⁷for my mouth will utter truth;
wickedness is an abomination to my lips.

⁸All the words of my mouth are righteous;
there is nothing twisted or crooked in them.

⁹They are all straight to one who understands
and right to those who find knowledge.

¹⁰Take my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold;

¹¹for wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.

²²The LORD created me at the beginning of his work,
the first of his acts of long ago.

²³Ages ago I was set up,
at the first, before the beginning of the earth.

³⁰then I was beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight,
rejoicing before him always,

³¹rejoicing in his inhabited world
and delighting in the human race.

Psalm 8 (Authorized King James Version) Read Responsively

Psalm 8 speaks of God as creator and so lends itself appropriately to Trinity Sunday readings. It is a short psalm of praise to God as creator with every single verse addressed to God. It has some similar expressions to Genesis 1 with which it is connected this week. One can easily imagine the psalmist gazing at the night sky and finding it both an exhilarating and a humbling experience. And yet, for some reason God is deeply concerned with these particular creatures, giving them dominion over all else. That said, it is not an unconditional or free-wheeling dominion, since we are still as human beings, creatures, immersed within and dependent upon that which we carry responsibility for.

O LORD our Lord, how excellent *is* thy name in all the earth!
who hast set thy glory above the heavens.

***² Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings
hast thou ordained strength because of thine enemies,
that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.***

³ When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;

⁴ what is man, that thou art mindful of him?

and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

⁵ For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels,
and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

⁶ Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;

thou hast put all things under his feet:

⁷ all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field;

⁸ the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea,

and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.

⁹ O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!

John 3:1-17 (Good News Translation)

Jeanette Barrett

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 even by the time of the final version of John's Gospel, the latest Gospel, 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 loyalty to the blood line of Judaism; at its worst a type of exclusionary religiously based racism, but instead, it is necessary to be *born from above*. In other words, the old historical certitudes have been abolished and rewritten. This reading is a little like the story of Pentecost from last week. It undermines, the idea that our identity is found in cultural, linguistic and even 'closed' religious identity. Rather, we find our identity, our centre of gravity, in the Lordship of Jesus: nothing else.

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."¹

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.² 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 the very heart of abusive institutions.

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

Jeremy Kim

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

