

Trinity Sunday 2020

Collect: Holy God, faithful and unchanging, enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth, and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love, that we may truly worship you, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God now and for ever. **Amen.**

Psalm 8

1 O Lord our governor,
 how glorious is your name in all the world!

2 Your majesty above the heavens is praised
 out of the mouths of babes at the breast.

3 You have founded a stronghold against your foes,
 that you might still the enemy and the avenger.

4 When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
 the moon and the stars that you have ordained,

5 What is man, that you should be mindful of him;
 the son of man, that you should seek him out?

6 You have made him little lower than the angels
 and crown him with glory and honour.

7 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands
 and put all things under his feet,

8 All sheep and oxen,
 even the wild beasts of the field,

9 The birds of the air, the fish of the sea
 and whatsoever moves in the paths of the sea.

10 O Lord our governor,
 how glorious is your name in all the world!

Gospel Matthew 28.16–20: Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’

Reflection given by Benefice Reader David Teall

Ever since Holy Trinity Church in Blatherwycke was made redundant in the 1980s it has been permissible to hold only one or two services here each year, one of them on the day of its Dedication Festival, Trinity Sunday. Thus, in normal times, we would have been holding a service here this morning.

Despite the fact that there are some 600 churches in the Church of England dedicated to the Holy Trinity, the word Trinity does not appear in the Bible.

There are, however, numerous mentions of the three traditional representations or persona of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in separate verses and a few passages where all three occur as part of the same story, one of which we heard earlier in our Gospel reading:

And Jesus came and said to them, '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 and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.'

Like countless millions over the ages I find the traditional persona of Father, Son and Holy Spirit particularly useful. God the Father as a loving creator; God the Son as an example of living as a Kingdom person and God the Holy Spirit as that part of God that dwells within us and inspires us to do his work.

During the present crisis I have found it particularly helpful to have these different persona to represent God in my thoughts and prayers. God the Father, I have to confess, has taken a little bit of a back seat. It is him, as the creator, that I can't help myself asking: 'did you create this virus' or 'why have you allowed this happen?' Such questions, of course, are negative in their outlook and can only lead to despair and despondency. How good it is then, to have the other persona of God to pray too as well.

God the Son is still there as an example to us and, what is more, a human example who felt like us, laughed like us and cried like us. We know from the Bible that he cured Peter's mother-in-law of a fever, healed lepers, cast out unclean spirits, cured the paralysed, opened the eyes of the blind, cured the deaf and loosened the tongue of a man who could not speak. Jesus was a front-line worker who remains the ultimate role-model to all who find themselves in that position.

God the Holy Spirit is the persona of God we can turn to when the going gets really tough. Whether we are struggling with our mental health at home or needing to venture out to face another day on the front line, the Holy Spirit will come into our hearts and give us the strength to carry on. It is the Holy Spirit too that inspires us to keep to the rules set down by the Government and to applaud the front-line workers every Thursday evening.

Useful as they are, the traditional persona of Father, Son and Holy Spirit are not the only persona of God that Christians find useful. Some see God as a guardian or a guide. Some see him as external; others as internal. Many see him revealed in Nature and the beauty that surrounds us, particularly I suspect, on their permitted walks in the beautiful countryside we are so privileged to live in. So what about you? What persona of God speaks particularly to you? However you visualise him, wherever you catch glimpses of him, treasure the moment and believe in him. For all the scholarship and centuries of debate, God's personal revelation to you is as real and as valid as his revelation to anyone else. And should you ever feel discouraged, take comfort from St Paul speaking in his first letter to the Corinthians:

For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; but when the complete comes, the partial will come to an end. When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. Amen.