

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2022**  
**Trinity Sunday (C)**

**Liverpool Parish Church**

**OT: Proverbs 8: 1-4, 22-31**  
**NT: Romans 5: 1-5**  
**G: John 16: 12-15**

**‘When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth’**

I am an avid reader, not I will admit of the great historical works of literature although I studied Winter’s Tale and King Lear at A Level, and I have read several of the Booker prize winning authors. No, my absolute pleasure is getting lost in the works of the great crime writers Ian Rankin, James Oswald, Jo Nesbo, Lars Kepler just a small selection of the authors that I have followed over the years and whose works fill my bookcase. Every book positioned in chronological order. I particularly like the genre described as Scandi Noir and the more Scandi and Noir the better. In each story the main characters are detectives whose personalities are often broken yet they doggedly follow the clues to unmask the murderers and thieves. Each of the novelist’s plotting through the pages a course to the final resolution and revelation of the truth.

The revelation of the truth, today as we move into Ordinary Time in the church calendar, Ordinary referring to the system of measuring the weeks of the year rather than to the commonplace. Trinity Sunday celebrates the doctrine of the Trinity, the three Persons of God: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit –interestingly this is the one festival in the Christian year that does not relate to events that have happened or that will happen in time. Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Passiontide, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost all relate to specific events in Christ’s life on earth.

But Trinity Sunday is different – it refers to a reality that has no date and it leads us to ask - when did God become the Holy Trinity? Was he always the three-in-one creator, redeemer, and sustainer - was he always Father Son and Holy Spirit? A difficult question and one I don't intend to try and answer this morning!

What we do know is that Trinity Sunday is the essential reminder, that we cannot manage God – we cannot even imagine him. How can three be one? It defies both logic and understanding for if we could understand God – contain him – then he would cease to be GOD.

When we are dealing with theology and faith, we are always dealing with something more than we can cope with. We are dealing with things too wonderful for us to know – and we speak of things which we do not understand. God will always be beyond the capacity of our human minds. As Rowan Williams has said – we can but “let God be God”.

However, this does not really let us off the hook! We live by faith as well as knowledge and it is FAITH that teaches us that God is indeed three in one, Father Son and Holy Spirit. This is spelt out clearly in our collect this morning when we pray that we may be led

‘by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal

Trinity and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity’

We can acknowledge it by faith even when we cannot understand it by knowledge. The unity of the Trinity is what holds it together. The ‘three-in-one’, when together, makes the whole. Each part is necessary and without all three it is not whole – it is not complete – it lacks integrity. For God, in the unity of the Trinity, is the epitome of integration and completeness. So it is for us the supreme example of utter integrity, integrity meaning completeness, honesty,

authenticity. And the opposite of which is dis-integration, brokenness, less than fully honest, less than whole.

And we only have to look around us to know that we live in a fractured and dis-integrated world. Yet, within this world, we are called to become real and authentic, whole people, believers who live, as it were, in two necessary dimensions and to strive, with God's grace, to integrate the two into one - the flesh and the spirit - the human and the divine - the earthly and the heavenly - within time and in eternity.

And our supreme example, our model, is of course Christ himself. Looking at Jesus we see a man – and we see God – two realities in one integrated life. The earthly and the heavenly become perfectly integrated. From his poor and humble birth to his prophetic life on the margins and ultimately by his resurrection expresses the Father's decision to make himself visible to all. So, in looking at the man Jesus we see God himself, a human person who becomes a sacrament of God. Christ is the representative of humanity before God. We are promised that, by the transformation of grace, we may live in Christ as he lives in us. So, we too, are to become sacraments of God to the world. We are never going to fully understand how it works because we cannot have God's perspective on it all. All we do know is that, through the gift of the spirit, we are called to pray, to trust and to live with the integrity before God (to live 'holy' lives) that leaves the door open to let things come together so that God's love can come through.

We believe in a God who is creator of all things visible and invisible, a God of the here and now, and in the life that is to come. This is in fact something of deeply practical and personal meaning, it is about the possibility of an integrated life. We have seen yet again, in the stories

of Easter, Jesus, in his resurrection appearances, doing what he always did, talking, eating, loving, making God present in his actual presence, in voice and touch. So God reveals himself as Trinity - from his inaccessibility in the Old Testament, where he is hidden in the ark of the covenant and in the temple and only approachable by a few special priests - to the New Testament where in the human person of Jesus, by his incarnation, He becomes accessible in one place and in one time and to a relatively small number of people - and then at Pentecost, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, He becomes accessible to all people, and for all time. God has breathed into his disciples, and into us, his 'spirit', the breath of life, so that we are equipped to do what he does – to speak with his voice to the world. So, the revelation in the Trinity is complete. God is one integrated whole.

The Bible talks a lot about wisdom; indeed, the book of Proverbs is part of what theologians call the "Wisdom literature" of the Old Testament, which also encompasses the books of Job, Psalms, Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. On a number of occasions, Proverbs makes explicit the link between God and wisdom. Here in chapter 8, wisdom and understanding are personified, and it is striking how many references are made in this chapter to vocalisation: wisdom cries out and raises her voice wisdom and knowledge aren't to be kept to ourselves we need to speak out the truth to those round about us, to communicate what God has given us. In many ways, this ability to speak the truth is reflected in the ministry of the Holy Spirit: in the Gospel reading for today, Jesus reminds His followers that the Holy Spirit will speak the truth to them. The Holy Spirit helps point us to God: "He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:14). Science, study, and human understanding are helpful, but we are well warned not to trust wholly or ultimately in those: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge

him, and he will make straight your paths. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and turn away from evil." (Proverbs 3:5-7.)

And so on this Trinity Sunday we have a renewed opportunity to look again at the supreme model of unity, integrity and wholeness – Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So let our prayer on this Trinity Sunday be that we might, little by little, become more fully integrated and Christ-like people, People who praise God the Father, the creator, who gave us bodies to live in this created world People who praise God the Son, who through his incarnation, his life in this world, his teaching and suffering, brought us salvation People who praise God the Spirit, who leads us beyond this world and into eternal life.

Fr Bill Addy

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