

Trinity Sunday is sometimes thought of as the scourge of preachers – nobody really wants to preach on Trinity Sunday, to try and get to grips with the complexities of doctrine and theology, to explain the intricacies of such a baffling concept, to risk slipping into heresy at every turn.

I wonder why Fr. Rob asked me to preach today?! I was preaching once on Trinity Sunday at a tiny country Church with a very small congregation and I thought I was fairly safe from in-depth scrutiny on my Trinitarian theology, when a retired Archbishop turned up and sat in the congregation. Since then I've learned to be wary of preaching on Trinity Sunday.

Many of the greatest theologians have over time set out to explain the mystery of God being three and yet one and have also gone to great lengths to explain how the way that most of us explain it using such devices as water, ice and steam, or even St. Patrick's classic three leafed shamrock are in fact not correct at all.

At Theological College I learnt a song about it which goes to the tune of supercalifragilisticexpialidocious which I won't sing now, but maybe on another occasion, or maybe not.

It is, however, possible to look into something too deeply and miss the obvious:

Sherlock Holmes and Dr Watson go on a camping trip. After a good dinner and a bottle of wine, they retire for the night, and go to sleep. Some hours later, Holmes wakes up and nudges his faithful friend.

"Watson, look up at the sky and tell me what you see."

"I see millions and millions of stars, Holmes" replies Watson.

"And what do you deduce from that?"

Watson ponders for a minute. "Well,

Astronomically, it tells me that there are millions of galaxies and potentially billions of planets.

Astrologically, I observe that Saturn is in Leo.

Horologically, I deduce that the time is approximately a quarter past

three.

Meteorologically, I suspect that we will have a beautiful day tomorrow.

Theologically, I can see that God is all powerful, and that we are a small and insignificant part of the universe.

But what does it tell you, Holmes?"

Holmes is silent for a moment.

"Watson, you idiot!" he says. "Someone has stolen our tent!

So rather than get too bound up in how exactly the Trinity works and works, I'd like to think a bit about what the impact of the Trinity is on our lives as Christians. In our Gospel reading this morning, Jesus sends his disciples out into the world to make new disciples, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is as a result of those first disciples steadfastly obeying Jesus' command, empowered by the Holy Spirit, that we are able to profess our belief in Christ today.

It is as a result of that great commission that we were baptised and that we continue to baptise new disciples in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

But what difference does it make to us that God exists in Trinity?

Well there are four things that come to mind.

The first is that we have a father figure in God the Father, whatever our experience of earthly parenthood (both receiving and giving) we have the perfect parent. We call him Father because that's what Jesus taught us to call him but there is much about him which reflects the love and nurture of a mother as well and some Christian traditions, the Methodists being one, which refer to God our Father and our Mother, and I think that can be a helpful image. A limitless source of love and acceptance. The knowledge that however far we stray and however badly we go wrong there's a welcome for us in the Father's arms.

The second is that we have a friend and brother in Jesus. The need for companionship and fellowship is fulfilled in Jesus who walked this earth before us and knows absolutely what it is to be human, both the joys and the sorrows. Wherever life takes us we know we have someone who has walked this way before and can be our guide and our companion.

The third is that we have inspiration and encouragement in God the Holy Spirit. The challenges which life presents with so often seem insurmountable. To follow Jesus brings with it tasks which we cannot even begin to complete on our own. To stand up for him when we'd rather crawl away and hide. To plant seeds of the kingdom in the most unpromising soil imaginable. These things are impossible in our own strength but with the Holy Spirit working within us we can not only know where to begin but can bring the work to a great conclusion. The Holy Spirit, the comforter of the disturbed and the disturber of the comfortable.

And fourthly is that we worship all three in one God. That they exist not as separate entities but as a unity, whole. The one God in whom we find nurturing love, companionship and inspiration. Everything we could ever need is found in the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Of all the images of the Holy Trinity, the one that I like the most is of the three people dancing in a ring. If two people dance together then there is no space between them. But if three dance there is space in the middle. And that for me is Trinity – the creator of space, the space in which we exist, in which we live out our lives, nurtured, befriended and inspired by our God. It helps me to remember that we live, not apart as an outsider, but at the very heart of God, in the space which is created by the relationship of the three persons in one God.

God in Trinity, God in relationship creates space for us as human beings to live in relationship with God and with each other. If there is a message which the Church needs to proclaim following the terrible events in the USA this week, it's that all human beings are of equal value in the site of God. When we proclaim that Black Lives Matter, it's a message which originates from the heart of God in Trinity. And it is to that relationship, embodied by God that we are called. We are not called to be Human Beings alone, we are not called to be Christians alone. We are called to relate to one another, to model our lives on that of the Holy Trinity

When Jesus leaves his disciples on the mountain top he sends them into the whole world to baptise in the name of the Trinity, to be open to absolutely everyone, to build relationship with all we encounter, that the God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the God who exists only in relationship may inspire us to draw the world He has made into that circle of love, that we may mirror the love of God, in our love for one another. We won't change society overnight. But if we take this task seriously, I mean really seriously, then things will change because of what we do. I firmly believe that to be the case and this Trinity Sunday and every day we need to pledge ourselves to the task and never give up.