

Lyn Valley Mission Community

Trinity Sunday

Isaiah 6:1-8      Psalm 29      Romans 8:12-17      John 3:1-17

In speaking and listening, writing and reading, may God be known, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen

Since Christmas, with the guidance of the Biblical accounts of our readings and the feasts celebrated on the Way, we have been traveling the journey of faith that led the earliest Christians to affirm a distinctive faith in the God as Trinity. In their encounter with Jesus and through his death and resurrection, the ascension and the experience of the Spirit at Pentecost they found new language to express the full dimensions of the relationship with God Jesus had revealed to them. The God worshipped as Creator of all things, the source and sustainer, has revealed Godself in person in Jesus Christ and is known in the intimate presence of the Holy Spirit in the world.

Whilst much theological ink has been expended and spilt in giving philosophical and theological explanations of this central Christian belief, I believe that the way we best draw close to its meaning is to recognise that it is a mystery to be lived within rather than a puzzle to be solved. A mystery is something we glimpse and step into rather than something we will ever fully comprehend.

I think this is what our readings today point towards too.

Isaiah's response to a vision of God is to be totally overwhelmed and to desire to go out in God's name to God's people.

The Epistle set for today Romans 8:12-17 talks of the action of the Spirit praying within us even when we cannot put prayer into words.

And in today's gospel Nicodemus recognises something of God in Jesus through the action of his signs (the words for miracles in John's gospel) and he is seeking for greater knowledge, but Jesus shows him how he needs to travel beyond literal deduction towards the experience of being born in the Spirit. Jesus likens the

Spirit to the wind in the trees – you see its effects even if you can't work out everything about it. And he makes the great statement of God's commitment to Creation which rings through the ages: God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.....God did not send the Son to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him....In other words Jesus gives voice to his own conviction that his mission is to restore all Creation to life, the life given by the Father, redeemed by the Son and shared in the Spirit. This is the vision that attracted many to Jesus and to life as in the community we now call the church. It is a beautiful vision – that God has the best interests of this Creation at heart and has acted in our best interests to offer us our flourishing.

This vision of a fully restored Creation seen in the perspective of faith in God the Trinity is something the spirituality of the early church in these island offers in an attractive way too.

There is a beautiful hymn, based on words attributed to St Patrick which is often used on Trinity Sunday, and for the rest of my reflection today I'm going to stay with its words and see how they make space for us to recognise the way we are held in the life of the Trinity, and perhaps, how we might want to attract others to discover its life, its love and its joy.

The hymn begins:

I bind unto myself today  
the strong name of the Trinity  
by invocation of the same,  
the Three in One and One in Three.

It is why it is often called St Patrick's breastplate – the warrior's protection worn in danger. It invites us to draw to ourselves for our resilience our faith in the Trinity.

Then the hymn shows us what we are binding ourselves into:

2 I bind this day to me forever,  
by power of faith, Christ's incarnation,  
his baptism in the Jordan river,  
his death on cross for my salvation,  
his bursting from the spiced tomb,  
his riding up the heavenly way,  
his coming at the day of doom,  
I bind unto myself today.

We are bound into the life of Christ by our own baptism and it is his life which enables us to share in eternal life as a child of God. We have his guidance in the way we live, and his promise that we will be carried through death. The life he shows us will have distinct attraction for each of us – what is it about Jesus' life you particularly bind yourself to, or want to share with others in the way you live?

3 I bind unto myself today  
the virtues of the starlit heaven,  
the glorious sun's life-giving ray,  
the whiteness of the moon at even,  
the flashing of the lightning free,  
the whirling wind's tempestuous shocks,  
the stable earth, the deep salt sea  
around the old eternal rocks.

This verse takes us to the heart of the Creator known in the love of the Creation: the God who holds us all in being, and is the source of the remarkable super moon that rose over us this week, the

glorious sunshine of this weekend, the land and sea we marvel at: stable earth, old eternal rocks, our foundational force. Can we let ourselves know that stability as we wonder at the world around us?

And what of our inner life:

4 I bind unto myself today

the power of God to hold and lead,

God's eye to watch, God's might to stay,

God's ear to hearken to my need,

the wisdom of my God to teach,

God's hand to guide, God's shield to ward,

the word of God to give me speech,

God's heavenly host to be my guard.

Can you recognise your connection with God in the inner conviction and motions of your heart and soul? Times of inner knowing about what you should or shouldn't do. Times of discovering an inner strength you didn't know you had or words of wisdom that surprise you as you speak them?

We know the Trinity in the everyday experiences in which we live with faith.

These experiences are the gift we have to share in the world that God so loves that he has sent Jesus to bring it new life

We have a life guided by a man who loved people, who healed people, who taught simplicity of life and unity in compassion which has a resonance with what people are looking for now. We have a life rooted in the Creative power that holds all things in being, and draws forth wonder from us in the beauty of the natural world. We have an inner compass that when we follow it, brings us to integrity and fulfilment in life.

St Patrick and those who like him travelled to bring faith across these islands, bound himself to the Trinity in order to share the gifts of faith to those around him. His prayer was not just for himself, but to enable his life to communicate the life giving love of the Trinity in the world. This is our calling too, and like St Patrick's hymn we are called to share what is attractive about what we believe through words and action.

May his prayer inspire us to find one way this week to speak of or show the living power of God the Holy Trinity at work in us this week:

6 I bind unto myself the name,  
the strong name of the Trinity  
by invocation of the same,  
the Three in One and One in Three,  
of whom all nature has creation,  
eternal Father, Spirit, Word.

Praise to the Lord of my salvation;  
salvation is of Christ the Lord!

Amen