

Trinity

26 5 13

Almighty and everlasting God,
you have given us your servants grace
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:
keep us steadfast in this faith,
that we may evermore be defended from all adversities;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you
in the unity of the Holy Spirit
one God, now and for ever.

Our text today is from Paul's Letter to the Romans, chapter 5 and verses 1 and 5:

'We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . .

God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.'

May 8th in France is a Bank Holiday. It marks the end of the Second World War. Here, in Dinard, we mark the day with a service at Notre Dame, followed by the laying of wreaths at the war memorial outside the church in sight of the sea. This year, more children than ever took part in the ceremony, carrying flags and laying commemorative wreaths in honour of the fallen. As I sat in the service in church, I looked up at the stained glass window above the altar, a triplet with Christ on the

cross at the centre, his mother, the Blessed Virgin, on his right and St John, the beloved disciple, on his left – a lovescape of Christ in glory.

As I reflected on this key moment in history, the three figures reminded me of our particular and distinctive Christian understanding of the God we love and worship: that He is One God but Three Persons: that God is one in three and three in one; that at one and the same time, God is both God and also God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Of course, I'm not saying that Mary and John are God though Jesus clearly is: it is simply the fact that in the stained glass above the altar in Notre Dame de Dinard there were three figures that made me think of the Trinity.

And today, on Trinity Sunday, I would like again to reflect on the nature of the Trinity. I am not going to try to explain it again to you today. The nature of the Trinity is a Holy Mystery and we can never fully comprehend what is truly beyond our comprehension. It is a divine truth which is so different from anything we as creatures in space and time, four dimensional, can experience or grasp because it is a challenge to our logic – how someone can be both one and three, singular and plural, at one and the same time.

So let's not go there but instead let's just consider briefly the three that make up the one. We may not be theologians or philosophers but as believers pragmatically, practically, we can all understand something of the individual character and functions that make up the God we worship and adore.

God the Father is the creator, sustainer and ultimately the destroyer of the universe. He is eternal and unchanging, outside time, omnipotent, omniscient and benevolent. He is the ground of our being and we are made in his image, conscious beings with a sense of right and wrong. He loves us and we, the stewards of his creation, are restless till we find our rest in Him.

God the Son is Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, our friend and brother, our teacher and our guide. He was born of a woman and lived and moved among us. He taught us the way back to God and by his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead and ascension into heaven, he has opened the door for us onto a real and living relationship with God.

God the Holy Spirit is with us even as I speak. He gives us the energy to act; he inspires us to act; he informs us so we know how to act and are able to act; and he enthuses us with the sense of the presence of God in our lives. He is the Comforter promised by Christ who in fact makes us strong as the people of God. The fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit make us mature Christians.

It is the bond of love that flows between the three that keeps all three in unity. They are at one in love and the challenge to us as Christians is that we may put that love into practice. Nowhere in our Bible is the doctrine of the Trinity set out but in today's verses from Romans, 'We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ . . . God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit,' it is clear to see that the particular insight that God is Father, Son and Holy

Spirit is part and parcel not just of Paul's writing but also of the four evangelists and the Early Church too.

I have spoken in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
Amen.

Preached at the Eucharist

St Bartholomew's, Dinard

26th May, 2013

G: Sermon 28 : Trinity

