

Sunday 30 May 2021

Trinity Sunday



Sermon © Lucie Reilly.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

All the Bible readings come from the *New Revised Standard Version*.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration are included at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,

<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [Father in Heaven](#)

(please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Holy, holy, holy. When our eyes have seen the Lord of hosts we echo the words of Isaiah, ‘Woe is me! I am doomed’. We long for the fire of God’s cleansing to touch our unclean lips, for our iniquity to be removed and our sins wiped away. So we meet Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with confession on our lips.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This version of the Gloria is sung to the tune of 'the Ash Grove'.

All Sing glory to God in the height of the heavens,
salvation and peace to his people on earth;
our King and our Saviour, our God and our Father,
we worship and praise you and sing of your worth.

Creation unites in the power of the Spirit,
in praise of the Father, through Jesus the Son.
So complex, so simple, so clear, so mysterious,
our God ever Three yet eternally one.

Lord Jesus, the Christ, only Son of the Father,
the lamb who has carried our burden of shame,
now seated on high in the glory of heaven,
have mercy upon us who call on your name.

Refrain

**For you, only you, we acknowledge as holy,
we name you alone as our Saviour and Lord;
you only, O Christ, with the Spirit exalted,
are one with the Father, for ever adored.**

Refrain**The Collect for Trinity Sunday**

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.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another:

‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
the whole earth is full of his glory.’

At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.

‘Woe to me!’ I cried. ‘I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the Lord Almighty.’

Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, ‘See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.’

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?’

And I said, ‘Here am I. Send me!’ *Isaiah 6:1-8*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's Letter to the Romans

Brothers and sisters, we have an obligation—but it is not to the flesh, to live according to it. For if you live according to the flesh, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live.

For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.

Romans 8:12-17

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 Father, we adore you [\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

There was a Pharisee, a man named Nicodemus who was a member of the Jewish ruling council. He came to Jesus at night and said, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him.'

Jesus replied, 'Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.'

'How can someone be born when they are old?' Nicodemus asked. 'Surely they cannot enter a second time into their mother's womb to be born!'

Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit.'

'How can this be?' Nicodemus asked.

'You are Israel's teacher,' said Jesus, 'and do you not understand these things? Very truly I tell you, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony. I have spoken to you of earthly

things and you do not believe; how then will you believe if I speak of heavenly things? No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him.’

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. *John 3:1-17*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

This week we celebrate the Trinity: the three ways we have to encounter God, three ways God has revealed himself to the church. The doctrine of the Trinity is the Christian belief that there is One God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

A doctrine is a belief (or set of beliefs) held by a Church, faith group, focus group, political party and so on. That doctrine could sound quite difficult to follow.

There is a real temptation to just switch off and start reading the stained-glass windows when we don't know the meaning of something or when we are afraid to ask through a fear of looking inadequate. There is an option to drift away into a daydream.

In the passage that we have just heard read from John's Gospel, Nicodemus was struggling to understand the exact nature of Jesus and his relationship to God the Father. But Jesus turns the conversation into one about how Nicodemus can experience God, which is far more important.

Some of us may identify with Nicodemus in so many ways. Like him, we may first have started asking faith questions under the cover of darkness. Like Nicodemus we may prefer a world of certainties where things fit together in a neat, tidy and easily understandable way.

But that is not how faith works, as we say in the Eucharistic prayer: *'great is the mystery of faith.'* And we could also note how the Latin word 'sacrament' translates the Greek word 'mystery'. These sidelights mean we're actually celebrating the way we cannot understand. As Jesus tells Nicodemus, he has to enhance his ideas about God and spirituality.

Nicodemus' fault is thinking that he understands and has stopped learning and stopped growing. God is infinite and we are not. Indeed, we fail in proportion that we live as though our appreciation and understanding of God is static and not growing. The purpose of life is to acquire more, to grow.

The Trinity is in some ways our greatest mystery, but it is also our greatest source of freedom and liberation. As Christians, we need to make sure that the Trinity is central to how we think, pray, and undertake various aspects of our mission. We need (like Nicodemus) to allow ourselves to be renewed, reborn even, by and in the Spirit.

If we are indeed open to the work of the Holy Spirit within us, we—like Nicodemus—will grow and change for the better. If we are open to the work of the Holy Spirit we will grow, as Nicodemus did. Notice how we next hear about him after the resurrection. He demonstrates fascination, intimacy and friendship with Jesus.

If we are open to the work of the Holy Spirit, again like Nicodemus, we begin to become the kind of people whose faith moves from the cover of darkness into the glorious light of day. If we are open to the work of the Holy Spirit in us, we can begin to understand that God the Father really is the source of our very being and that we were literally loved into life, and that we will be loved into, through and beyond death.

Nicodemus can (and maybe should) be a role model for us concerning what it means to grow, in faith, towards an unwavering trust in God as creator, redeemer and upholder.

It's alright for us not to know some of the big words and ideas. After all, some of us are new to the faith and all of us are still learning. But we can seek guidance from our congregational peers or from our mentors and/or role models. We can learn from books and the Internet. We can learn from God Himself. I have learned recently to deepen my knowledge in faith and with the Trinity. And in questioning the doctrines, I've realised that there are no silly questions, and that people are happy to answer our question no matter how big or small. Stated another way, the only silly question is the one we do not ask.

The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit. Many of us find it hard to get our minds around the Trinity. Even great theologians struggle with the idea that they are one God but just three different persons of God. There are many images that are used to try and explain this great mystery, water, ice and steam is one. The peel, fruit and core of an apple is another. The chocolate, the cake and the orange of a Jaffa cake is a wholly different way of looking. In fact, there are many examples in which three things come together to make part of a whole.

We worship one God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That idea is of course completely mind-bending: how can one God be equally *three* Persons? How can he be Father, Son *and* Holy Spirit? We can tie ourselves up in knots trying to understand how that can be. We can devise various analogies to help us. But in the end,

every analogy falls short of the reality of God ... we end up no nearer the truth and perhaps even more confused.

Trinity Sunday should be easier than that. Perhaps, instead of trying to work out *how* God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, maybe we should concentrate instead on the wonderful fact that this is how we *experience* God ...

- We experience God as our heavenly Father, loving us, holding us, guarding our life.
- We experience God as the Son; forgiving us, praying for us, leaving an example for us to follow.
- We experience God as the Holy Spirit; he sponsors and enables our praying; he empowers us to live for him and to live for others.

At the end of the day, it is not the doctrine of the Holy Trinity that is important. What is important is how we experience God in our lives *and that we do indeed experience God*. And it is that experience of God that we hold onto in faith, and it is that experience of God that we want to share with other people so that they can experience God for themselves.

In summary, then: Trinity Sunday is a day not to tie ourselves up in theological knots but an opportunity to celebrate our experience of God in our everyday lives: God the lover, God the forgiver, God the empowerer. That is something truly worth celebrating and truly worth sharing with others!

In this Trinity season, my invitation and encouragement, is that we allow ourselves to be renewed, refreshed, and even reborn, through the blessing of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

We believe and trust in one God,

Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Prayers of intercession

We come boldly to the throne of grace,
praying to the almighty God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
for mercy and grace.

All We plead before your throne in heaven.

Father of heaven, whose love profound
a ransom for our souls has found:
We pray for the world, created by your love,
for its nations and governments ...
Extend to them your peace, pardoning love, mercy and grace.

All We plead before your throne in heaven.

Almighty Son, incarnate Word,
our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord:
We pray for the Church, created for your glory,
for its ministry to reflect those works of yours ...
Extend to us your salvation, growth, mercy and grace.

All We plead before your throne in heaven.

Eternal Spirit, by whose breath
the soul is raised from sin and death:
We pray for families and individuals, created in your image,
for the lonely, the bereaved, the sick and the dying ...
Breathe on them the breath of life
and bring them to your mercy and grace.

All We plead before your throne in heaven.

Thrice holy! Father, Spirit, Son,
Mysterious Godhead, Three in One:
We pray for ourselves,
for your Church, for all whom we remember before you ...
Bring us all to bow before your throne in heaven,
to receive life and pardon, mercy and grace for all eternity,
as we worship you, saying,

All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Amen.

Merciful Father,

All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.

The peace

Peace to you from God our heavenly Father.
Peace from his Son Jesus Christ who is our peace.
Peace from the Holy Spirit, the Life-giver.
The peace of the triune God be always with you.

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 Holy, holy, holy is the Lord (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

The Lord God almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
the holy and undivided Trinity,
guard you, save you,
and bring you to that heavenly city,
where he lives and reigns for ever and ever.
And the blessing of God the Almighty
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 Holy, holy, holy (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
For with your only-begotten Son and the Holy Spirit
you are one God, one Lord.
All that you reveal of your glory,
the same we believe of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit, without any difference or inequality.
We, your holy Church, acclaim you,
Father of majesty unbounded,
your true and only Son, worthy of all worship,
and the Holy Spirit, advocate and guide.
Three Persons we adore,
one in being and equal in majesty.
And so with angels and archangels,
with cherubim and seraphim,
we sing for ever of your glory:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Almighty and eternal God,
you have revealed yourself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
and live and reign in the perfect unity of love:
hold us firm in this faith,
that we may know you in all your ways
and evermore rejoice in your eternal glory,
who are three Persons yet one God,
now and for ever.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.