

## Trinity Sunday Homily 2021



Sitting in my office as a lawyer, various people could come through the door. If it was the boss then that was usually not good news and I would not say I was actually cowering, but ready to take whatever reprimand was about to be delivered. If it was a client, as the office was at the Elephant and Castle in London, I could expect anything; burglary, smuggling, mugging, housing problems, conveyancing, matrimonial or probate. If it was matrimonial my heart sank as they never agreed on anything, criminals were the easiest as they usually knew the score.

Or it could be my secretary, a great woman from south London, or possibly the alcoholic temp who typed with cans of Carlsberg Special Brew balanced on the type-writer and put bets on for us at the bookies and then we listened to the results, smoking as you could in offices then.

To each person who came through the door I responded in a different way, and yet it was still me.

And sometimes we use fairly easy metaphors like this to explain the different ways we meet God. God can and will relate to us or come into our lives in different ways at different times.

The problem with this analogy is that both the Bible and Scripture make it clear that the Trinity is more than just different attitudes of God, or even different faces.

And the problem is love, and love is at the heart of the mystery. God is one, that we know, as I was one person sitting in my office. But we are clearly told that God is love, and for it to be real, love needs another, other people or even animals. You cannot express love on your own. God is perfect love and so for that there has to be what the scholars come to call 'persons', and we are introduced to three as God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The word 'persons' is not that important, it is human language, but it just has to show that they can relate to each other in love. Now we are clearly beyond human experience and we have to believe or not.

The problem becomes more tricky when God the Son, as we call this person of God, also becomes a human being named Jesus, while still being part of the Trinity. A simple question might be, 'So how can he be both here and there?' On earth and in heaven.

But then that is a very human way of looking at it. The Danish theologian Kierkegaard (of whom I know very little I must add), used this following example. A prince in a fairy story rides by a peasant's hut one day and he sees the peasant's daughter outside, who as you can imagine just happens to be very beautiful. He falls in love straightaway. (I assure you this is Kierkegaard and not Hans Christian Anderson.) But how can he be sure that she would love him for himself and not just because he is the prince and has lots of money? The only way he can be sure that their love is true and between two equals is...? For him to become a peasant. Her equal. Which he does, giving up all his princely life. But remember he is still a prince. So, as St. Paul says in Philippians 2, out of love for us Jesus becomes like us: 'who, being in the form of God, did not count equality with God something to be grasped. But he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, becoming as human beings are, and being in every way like a human being, he was humbler yet even to the point of accepting death on a cross.' Like the prince, Jesus does this out of love, love for us, to be equal with us, to get us to love him. This is the incarnation. But he is still the Son of God and part of the Trinity.

What the Prince wants to do is share his life with the peasant's daughter, and when they eventually marry (as they tend to do in fairy stories) he does so. This is just what God wants to do with us. In the first place Christ makes us equal brothers and sisters with him. In today's second reading it says: 'If we are children (of God) then we are heirs as well, heirs of God and coheirs with Christ.' Heirs or inheritors to what the Father, the Creator, will give and does give his children, Jesus and us.

But as Jesus is no longer with us in human form how will we share in this? And so from the cross in John's gospel and at Pentecost in Luke's we have the gift of the Holy Spirit, who we are introduced to specifically at baptism, as it says in the gospel. But we are united not only to Jesus, or just to the Spirit, but to that whole relationship which is the Trinity, which is the source of all love.

It is a mystery and yet if we can accept it, believe in it, we have that foundation that comes from knowing that God is indeed with us always to the end of time. Nothing can give us more hope for this world, God's creation, than that.