Trinity Sunday - 12 June 2022

Anthony Doran

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Introduction
While all human language struggles to speak meaningfully about the mystery of God at the best of times, it is particularly acute on today’s solemn feast of the Most Holy Trinity. Images of three and one are not all that helpful. Perhaps this mystery is not something to be explained so much as to catch a glimpse of here and there: in the beauty and wonder of Creation, in art and in poetry, in song and in science.

Penitential Act
Use one of the Roman Missal texts or this optional litany form:

Lord Jesus, you draw us to the Father.
Lord, have mercy.

You gave us your Spirit.
Christ, have mercy.

You make us one in God.
Lord, have mercy.

Collect
The oration
God our Father, who by sending into the world the Word of truth and the Spirit of sanctification made known to the human race your wondrous mystery, grant us, we pray, that in professing the true faith, we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal glory and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty.

Commentary by Gerard Moore
The feast of the Trinity was first celebrated early in the second millennium, and so the Mass prayers have a slightly different feel to those found in the earliest sources. Our current prayer for Trinity Sunday is even more contemporary, as it was first created for the reform of the Missal after Vatican II. Its most unusual feature is to name God as ‘Father’. The ancient prayers are most reserved about this form of
apellation. Here, it identifies the divine Trinity as Father, Word and Spirit, whereas normally the language of Father would be set with that of Son as a more complete filial metaphor. In this, the prayer signals the difficulty of speaking about the triune God! The sense of the prayer highlights God’s self-revelation as triune through the incarnation of the Word and the gift of the Spirit. The response sought from God is that we profess the mystery and adore. This is a most wonderful reminder of the nature of God as revealed and sits well at the conclusion of the celebrations of the Paschal mystery and the power of the Spirit in our midst.

First Reading
Proverbs 8:22-31
God’s Wisdom reveals her origins in this poetic reflection on Creation: before ever there was anything else, Wisdom was born, by the Lord’s side, ever at play, delighting and laughing at God’s side.

Responsorial Psalm
Psalm 8:4-9. R, v, 2
Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!
This psalm follows the pattern of a classic hymn of praise. Beginning with an invitation to praise God, the reasons why we praise God follow: the splendour of God’s creation and the extraordinary dignity given to humanity by God.

Second Reading
Romans 5:1-5
This short reading is a reflection by Paul on the many gifts of God given to us through Jesus Christ our Lord. It concludes with the most beautiful image of the love of God being poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

Gospel Reading
John 16:12-15
Overt Trinitarian references in the Gospels are rare – today’s Gospel Reading comes close. Jesus, in talking to the disciples about the time when he will no longer be with them, promises the Spirit who will glorify Jesus, reminding them of all Jesus taught them, who in turn received all he has from the Father.
Reflection

Some years ago, while reading one of the Saturday papers, I came across an article where famous people were asked to name the one book they have read which has had the most profound influence on their lives. And it set me to thinking: Which book has changed my life? When I had thought about it for a while, the answer was easy. And no, it was not the Bible. It was C. S. Lewis’s “The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.” It was read to us in Grade 5.

“The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe” is actually part of a series of seven books written by C. S. Lewis. The series of seven books is known as The Chronicles of Narnia. Perhaps you have read them. You might have seen the movie adaptations which began to appear some years ago. While many consider them to be children’s books, they are in fact, some of the most powerful books of poetic theology that I know. I have lost count of the number of times that I have read these books. I tend to read them—all seven—whenever I go on retreat. And, I never fail to get something out of them. Some fresh insight into God’s relationship with us.

In “The Magician’s Nephew”, the first of these Chronicles of Narnia, the Great Lion, Aslan, creates the world of Narnia:

In the darkness something was happening at last. A voice had begun to sing. It was very far away and Digory found it hard to decide from what direction it was coming. Sometimes it seemed to come from all directions at once. Sometimes he almost thought it was coming out of the earth beneath them. Its lower notes were deep enough to be the voice of the earth herself. There were no words. There was hardly even a tune. But it was, beyond comparison, the most beautiful noise he had ever heard.\(^1\)

A song too beautiful for words…

We have long struggled to find words that depict the work of God’s creation. Different images have been used; different metaphors employed. C. S. Lewis employs one image—that of the world being sung into being.

Today’s First Reading uses a different image. In the Book of Proverbs, the creation of the world is described almost in architectural terms. God builds a house in a vast barren domain that he first marks out and makes clear. But alongside this picture of God who creates the world by building it, the author of the Book of Proverbs provides us with another image.

While God is creating, the Wisdom of God was beside him. At the beginning of this reading, Wisdom is God’s artisan, at his side. An associate of the Creator, his co-worker and inspiration.

Later on in the reading, Holy Wisdom paints herself as the child happy and proud to be with her parent at work. If you have ever watched a small child who is together with their parent doing something, you have some idea of the affection and closeness between parent and child. Of course, what binds them together is love.

And love, I think, is the key to understanding the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity which we celebrate this Sunday. Just as we have struggled to find words that depict the work of God’s creation, we have long struggled to understand the Trinity. We are all familiar with various ideas of three and one, three into one, one not three, and so on. But these, for the most part, are unhelpful. For God is not a set square. And how God exists as both one and three is a mystery. Not just something that we can work out, like a puzzle, if we try hard enough. No. It is truly something which is beyond our human comprehension.

So, instead of trying to understand the mystery of the Trinity, if we try simply to catch a glimpse of the mystery of the Trinity as the overflowing love of God, perhaps we can grasp something of it. This love of God, which as St Paul reminds us in today’s Second Reading, “has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given us.” And the love of God has been poured into our hearts that we might give praise to God. There is nothing much that we can do in return for God for his great love for us. Perhaps all we can do is to give praise to God’s holy name. And so, I think the image of the song is an apt one. A great song of praise to God whose love for us is strong and faithful.

Just as Aslan, the Great Lion of Narnia sings his world into being, so too, out of his great love, the Father sings all creation into being. And this song reaches its high-point when the Father, at last, sings the Son into being. The Father can sing no greater song than he sings in his Son. And the music we hear is no less than the Holy Spirit.

And like all good songs, we find that we want to join in, and sing along. Years after we first hear the song, we find ourselves whistling the tune. And it is truly a tune we can’t get out of our heads, or out of our hearts for that matter. Nothing more sublime nor joyful can be sung in heaven or on earth than to love God, and to then love others because of God, and in God. The art and the science; the melody and music; the rhythm and beat of this song are given to us by the Holy Spirit.

Christ, our cantor and singing master, sang from the beginning and will eternally intone this canticle of faithful and endless love. Then, all of us, with all our might shall sing after him, here below as well as in the midst of the choir of God’s glory.

Thus, true and honest love is the common chant that we must all know in order to join the choir of the angels and saints in the Kingdom of God.

And this is why we celebrate this Solemn Feast of the Most Holy Trinity. This great feast, celebrated the Sunday after Pentecost, is a majestic song of praise and worship to the Father who raised his Son from the dead and brought him into glory where he reigns with the Holy Spirit whom he has sent to us.

This is our song, too beautiful for words…
Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

Friends, God has crowned human beings with glory and honour. So let us pray that we may cooperate in loving and protecting all God’s handiwork.

Petitions

We pray for our Church leaders. May the Spirit of Truth guide them as they lead all people to grow in the truth and wholeness promised by Christ.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for persons in our world whose basic human rights are denied. May civic leaders be guided in wisdom to uphold the God-given unique dignity of each person, regardless of their faith, race or status.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for Plenary Council members. May they be guided to listen and discern the many things that Christ has to say to the Church in Australia through the second Assembly.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our parish community. May the love of God poured into our hearts move us to deeply respect and listen to each other in our gatherings as we prepare for the Synod in 2023.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for our earth, the work of God’s hands. May we take urgent and effective action to limit climate change and protect all creation. May we dare to hope that the actions we take will make a difference.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

We pray for persons in the world and in our community enduring untold suffering due to the pandemic. May they receive the healing care and comfort they need.

(Pause) Lord hear us OR We pray to the Lord.

Conclusion

O God, how wonderful your name through all the earth.

Hear these prayers we make to your glory, Father, Son and Spirit.

Amen.
Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

GA
All creatures of our God and king. W Draper/ R V Williams. 395
Baptised in water. M Saward/ Gaelic Melody. 179
Firmly I believe and truly. J H Newman/ Sir E Elgar. 382
For the beauty of the earth. F Pierpont/ D Evans. 427
Forth in the peace of Christ we go. J Quinn SJ/ O Gibbons. 495
Glory and praise to our God. D Schutte. 417
Holy God, we praise your name. C Walworth/ German melody. 411
Holy Father, God of might. R Connolly. 424
Lord, you give the great commission. J Rowthorn/ C V Taylor. 313
Now thank we all our God. C Winkworth. 425
Praise God from whom all blessings flow. T Ken/ L Bourgeois. 384
Today I awake. J Bell. 535

AOV1
For the beauty of the earth. F Pierpont/ C Kocher. 123
Glory and praise to our God. D Schutte. 16
Now thank we all our God. C Winkworth. 189
Praise God from whom all blessings flow. T Ken/ L Bourgeois. 10

AOV2
Holy God, we praise your name. C Walworth/ German Melody. 129

AOV4Kids
Father bless us. R Mann. 38

CWB
Father of mercy, God of consolation. James Quinn SJ. 670
Firmly I believe and truly. John Henry Newman. 677
Holy God, we praise your name. Ignaz Franz. 710
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty. Reginald Heber. 712
I bind myself to God today. Attr. St. Patrick, tr. Cecil Frances Alexander. 719
Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Thomas Ken/ Ave colenda trinitas. 788

CWBII
I believe in God the Father. Michael Perry. 392
Sing praise to our Creator. Omer Westendorf. 393
Praise God, from whom all blessings flow. Thomas Ken, tr. John David Chambers. 394
Firmly I believe and truly. John Henry Newman. 486
Go, make of all disciples. Leon M. Adkins. 493
Holy God, we praise thy name. Ignaz Franz, tr. Clarence Alphonsus Walworth. 504

S&S2
Holy, holy, holy. Reginald Heber. 333
O Lord, our God. Curtis Stephan. 247
Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy
Psalm 8: O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name in all the earth!
Psalm 8: Noel Ancell. CWB 320
Psalm 8: O Lord, our God, how wonderful: Noel Ancell. GA 19
Psalm 8: Jenny O’Brien. JOBC pg. 52
O Lord, our God, how wonderful your name. Tony Alonso. LPC pg. 80

Music selections by Michael Mangan
Hearts on fire (SHOF) [Gathering, Recessional]
Maybe we can imagine (TWB) [Gifts, Communion]