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Trinity - 26 May 2024

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26 May 2024

The Most Holy Trinity (Trinity Sunday)

Reflection by Pina Ford

Introduction

The centrality of the Holy Trinity to the life of the believer cannot be overstated, though we may not be overtly conscious of it. Our readings are replete with the fidelity of God to creation and the people of the earth, a relationship grounded in the mercy, graciousness, love and self-giving of the Divinity. God's being is one of love, God's actions are always loving, and baptism enfolds us into the community of divine love.

Penitential Act

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

Lord Jesus, you are one with the Father and the Spirit. Lord have mercy.

You bring us to a relationship of love. Christ have mercy.

You were lifted up on a cross for us. 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.
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever.

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 appellation. 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.

Acknowledgement

The discussion of the collect, slightly adapted, was composed by Gerard Moore for the Canadian liturgical journal *Celebrate!* (Novalis Press). Our thanks to them for permission to reuse the material.

First Reading

Deuteronomy 4:32-34, 39-40

God is a God who hears the cries of the enslaved, saves the oppressed and in the promised land gives hope, comfort, prosperity, long life and security.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 32(33):4-6, 18-20, 22

Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.

The psalmist extols the wonders of God, a cosmic God, and declares that the chosen ones are happy.

Second Reading

Romans 8:14-17

We are God's adopted daughters and sons and treated as heirs; we have been given a place within the love of the Trinity.

Gospel Reading

Matthew 28:16-20

Christ gives us the enduring promise of his ongoing presence of Christ, and with this the great evangelical mandate: go, teach, baptise amongst all nations.

Reflection

Our first reading from Deuteronomy sets the scene for every reflection on the holy Trinity. It is a summary of the grace of God in the people of Israel, and indeed all time and place. From the divine one emerges creation, an ongoing action of God. This ongoing concern and love is made clearer to us in God's enduring relationship with humanity through the choice of Israel, the rescue of the people from slavery, and the provision of the land. God is a God who hears the cries of the enslaved, saves from oppression and in the promised land gives hope, comfort, prosperity,

long life and security. This security is ongoing, it is forever. The required response is obedience that is 'fixed in our hearts'.

The passage from Romans allows the Deuteronomy text to be given added depth, a task that perhaps only someone such as Paul could do. It seems that the compilers of our lectionary have chosen the most central texts in the scriptures for today's feast. Paul brings into relationship Father, Christ and Spirit in a dynamic review of our salvation. Here the context is beyond the borders of a nation (as prophets such as Isaiah came to teach) and is directed to each individual, and follows the Deuteronomic sense of being deeply interior, reaching into the heart.

In Christ our relationship to God is no longer ruled by slavery or by fear, anxiety or sin. This is not the Christian spirit that is on offer. Rather, for humans who remain fully and always human, it is one of adoption. In the ancient Roman world, there was the possibility of humans being related to the gods, something common enough in Homer and currently all the rage in the teenage Percy Jackson series of books! Paul will have none of this. God has taken us into the life of the trinity as we are; human creatures now heirs and fully belonging through our being adopted.

Our being heirs is God's choice. The fullness of God's intent is seen in the self-emptying of Christ just celebrated across the season of Easter. The quality of our belonging is revealed in Paul's revelation that we cry to God as 'Abba'. Not to be misunderstood, this term of deep endearment is used by adult children of their father. It signifies all that is caught up on the ongoing relationship of Father to child. Any shyness or awkwardness on our part is complemented by the work of the Spirit. The Spirit is alive in us and alert to us. The Spirit replaces fear and anxiety with witness before God. The Spirit accompanies our prayers, wishes and needs so that they are always recognized as the needs of God's children.

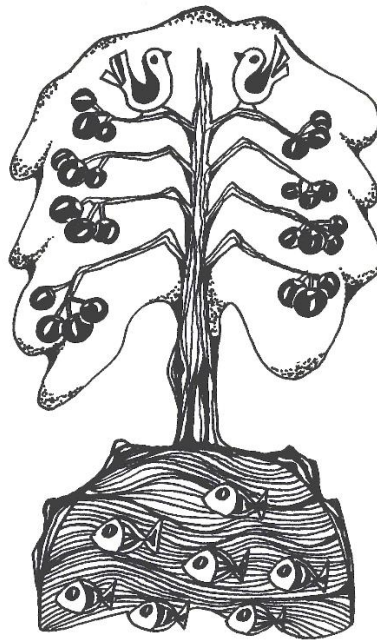
This dynamic spirituality of being enveloped in the life of the Trinity also brings with it an identification with Christ. Suffering is not taken away in this, as if in a mystery cult or escapist framework. Rather we identify our sufferings with Christ and learn to be as Christ through our suffering. In this, Paul reminds us that the invitation to be heirs of Christ is to be involved in the plight of all creation just as he was.

Paul will tie this to Baptism, though not in our passage today, but soon enough the connection will be heard in the Gospel reading. But it is an important church dimension. If we are heirs, it is God who chooses, and our own circumstances are secondary. In our adopted status, the differentiations we make between members of our community stand for nothing. They are not how God sees. The love that embodies the Trinity and founds our adoption ought to be evident in all our dealings and choices.

The Gospel text proclaims the activity of the Trinity in our baptism. This most singular ritual of belonging had from earliest Christian records been an action within the Father, the Son and the Spirit. While a more formal theology of the Trinity was in its earliest intellectual development, the community recognised the threefold nature of God through examining its experience of the presence of God.

The passage is a most interesting summary of ecclesial life on the brink of a new era. The eleven are gathered, diminished but somewhat resilient. They are also hesitant. The risen Jesus does not ascend leaving a determined bunch of leaders, but a group who simultaneously hold worship and doubt. They are back where they started in Galilee – Jerusalem is no longer the centre of faith. They are on a mountain, as was Moses when he received the Ten Commandments, and as was Jesus in Matthew's account when he gave the Beatitudes. Matthew is calling on an ancient memory in the Jewish people of the time that YHWH was a God of the mountains, and so they are placed where the divine presence is close.

The depleted leaders are not given all power. Rather, they are given that enduring promise of the ongoing presence of Christ in the midst of the disciples. Their power is Christ in their midst. And with this they are given the great evangelical mandate: go, teach, baptise. Two things bring out the trinitarian perspective. They are to go to all nations. The reach of salvation encountered in the Deuteronomy text is expanded explicitly to embrace all of humanity. The love of God cannot be taught as restricted or restrictive. Entry to the community of believers is couched in trinitarian terms. In Christianity, from the first, baptism is an incorporation into the life of the Trinity, of Father, Son and Spirit. There can be no greater moment.



*O God, how
wonderful your name
in all the earth*

Prayer of the Faithful

Introduction

People of God, the psalmist declares that the people who God has chosen to be his own are happy. In that sense of belonging, we offer our needs to 'Abba, Father!'

Petitions

We pray for the leaders of our Church, especially Pope Francis, that they will be moved by the Spirit to live as sons and daughters of God.

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

We pray for the Church in Australia and our leaders. As we work together towards the conclusion of the Synod, may we always understand that the most important thing is that we live in relationship with God and each other and that our discernment will be led by the Spirit.

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

We pray for our Australian leaders and our leaders of the world. May they always work towards just relationships within their own countries and with other nations of the world. May those nations torn apart by conflict be healed and come to peace through the efforts of Spirit filled people.

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

We pray for those who suffer ill health in mind and body. May the relationships that they form with their carers and medical staff support them during their difficult times.

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

We pray for our community gathered in your love. May we continue to grow in our love of the mystery that is God: Father, Son and Spirit.

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

We pray for those who have died without knowing the love of the Trinity. May they now be embraced fully in that loving relationship towards which we all move.

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

Conclusion

We offer our petitions to in the grateful knowledge that all we need will be given to us by our Father, through the power of the Spirit, in the name of the Son.

Amen.

Music selections by Alessio Loiacono and Chris deSilva

Title	AOV1	AOV2	AOVK	CWB	CWBII	GA
All creatures of our God and king				618	446	395
Baptized in water					99	179
Father bless us			38			
Father of mercy, God of consolation				670		
Firmly I believe and truly				677	486	382
Forth in the peace of Christ we go				681	489	495
For the beauty of the earth	123			678	487	427
Go, make of all disciples					493	
Glory and praise to our God	16				491	417
Holy Father, God of might				705	503	424
Holy God, we praise your name		129		710	504	411
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God almighty				712		
I believe in God the Father					392	
I bind unto myself today				719	510	
In Christ there is no east or west				721	519	
Lord, you give the great commission					308	313
Now thank we all our God	189			755	561	425
On this day, the first of days				781		
Praise God from whom all blessings flow	10			788	394	384
Sing praise to our Creator				809	393	

Title	S&S2
Holy, holy, holy	333
O Lord, our God	247

Psalms Selected by Chris deSilva and Angela McCarthy

Psalm 32: *Happy the people the Lord has chosen to be his own.*

	CWB	JOBB	LPB	PM3
Psalm 32	22	pg. 46	pg. 83	pg. 31

Music selections by Michael Mangan

Hearts on fire (SHOF) [Gathering, Recessional]

Maybe we can imagine (TWB) [Gifts, Communion]

In the Body of Christ (LCC) [Esp V4, Communion]