

Trinity Sunday - the first Sunday after Pentecost is a time of year that Popes and Bishops, Councils and Synods, Preachers and Teachers have thought it good and wise to remind the millions of seekers for whom they care that God is a mystery which is best understood in three ways:

As creator (Father),  
as redeemer (Son),  
and as sustainer (Spirit).

God is one. Yet God is three.

That's not easy to even begin to get your head around. Many different people have, over the years tried to come up with a nice picture to help us to understand it better. St. Patrick famously likened the Trinity to the national flower of Ireland, the shamrock, explaining that as the three leaves form a part of one plant, so the three persons in the Trinity form one God. I must confess that I never liked this particular explanation as the three persons aren't somehow physically linked as a shamrock's leaves are.

Another helpful way of understanding it is to think of water. At room temperature it's a colourless liquid. Freeze it and it becomes a hard object, capable of sinking the Titanic. Boil it and it becomes an odourless gas capable of powering locomotives. It's the same stuff but showing three very different sides of it.

Neither explanation is really very good though because God is beyond our capacity to understand. Let's look at what we do know.

God is the creator. The Big bang that God triggered caused everything that ever is was or will be to spring into creation – it was the mechanism by which God created the universe. Nothing has been created since that event 14 billion years ago. Everything around us is as a direct result of the creative power of God. But there are more ways of experiencing the mystery that is God.

Last week we celebrated the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon the followers of Jesus. We celebrated that presence - that force - that all of us here have experienced to a greater or lesser extent. We've experienced that person who gives shape to much that we see and hear, what we do and say.

Just as only a few weeks earlier we celebrated the resurrection of a man who is somehow more than a man one who was a child of promise – one whom our minds and our hearts tell us was more than a good person, more than a saint, more even than an angel – and yet was so much one of us.

Three facets to God. Three ways of experiencing him.

God the creator,  
God the redeemer  
God the sustainer

God is One, Yet God is Three.

For me the Trinity is something like science. Much of science involves making models of how we think things work in order to try to explain them. We learn that atoms are tiny things

with a nucleus and electrons whizzing around them a bit like billiard balls. But its' just a model – real atoms are far stranger than that and far more difficult to understand.

So it is with the Trinity. The idea of the Trinity tells us something about how God is revealed to us, how God works in human events. But it doesn't fully tell us WHO or WHAT God is. That is the secret of this experience we have of God; this understanding we have of God as a trinity. It doesn't tell us fully, but it tells us some important stuff none-the-less. Life changing stuff.

Sometimes you just have to celebrate the faith we have and the doctrine we have, because the full understanding of that faith and doctrine will not be revealed to us on this side of the veil between life and death. Some things will remain a mystery and I believe that understanding the trinity is one such thing.

The doctrine of the Trinity is not a mathematical puzzle or an academic formula for theologians to debate as they have done for so many centuries. Instead, it is a belief born out of the experience of ordinary Christians as a real life answer to the question, "Where do we find God?"

It is an answer that we believe God has given us: God has made God's self known to us in three unique ways that there is only one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

One God who is Loving, Just, Holy, Intimate, Powerful, Wrathful, Forgiving, Life Itself. Light. And More.

God is one, yet God is three.

God is a mystery, a mystery so big, so awesome, so holy that our limited minds can never grasp the wholeness of it. Yet God has placed in us a capacity to appreciate and know the mystery that is God. And more. God has taken on flesh in our midst.

In Christ, God reveals himself. In Christ God became Incarnate; without this one revelation of God whom we call the Christ you and I would not have the promises nor would we have the inheritance to come.

Jesus is the one who reveals the way to us, the one who speaks the truth to us, the one who gives life by his touch and by his word. Jesus is the one who died and who rose again. Jesus shows us the way and is the way. Jesus is the child of Mary and is the child of God. In him the fullness of deity dwells.

We have something that is very precious. We have the good news of the salvation that is for all humankind. We have the message concerning God's love and his desire to grant wholeness to all his children. We have a light that shines into the darkness of human hearts and brings healing: a light that shines forth from thence into the life of all those around.

It has seemed good to hundreds of generations of our Spiritual Ancestors to remember this truth on this day of the year in a particular and special way. And so we do today.