

Reflection for Trinity Sunday

Sunday, 7th June 2020

If you do not have a copy of the missalette, you can find today's readings at www.universalis.com

Today is the feast of the Blessed Trinity. In Theology one of my professors used to say that it is almost impossible to say anything about the Trinity without committing some heresy or other. Rather than leave this page entirely blank, I will try. Please don't send a copy of this homily to the bishop.

The early church fathers were at a loss to find terms to describe how a single God could choose to reveal himself to us through three different modes of relationship. In the end they borrowed terms from ancient Greek theatre! Let me explain.

The plays of ancient Greece often had a cast larger than the number of actors available to play the parts. Like our radio plays today, one actor might have several parts to play. As the plot would not allow time to change clothes and re-do makeup, the actors held a mask in front of their face – a different mask for each character they were trying to portray. In addition to the mask, they would change their voice and alter their body language as they got into character. Of course it was a bit tricky if the two characters played by a single actor needed to have a conversation with each other. Then we would have to imagine that one of the characters was just off stage, and the actor on stage would do both voices.

The mask held up was called a “prosopon” – just the Greek word for face, and the character of this face was the “persona” or perhaps we would say role. So God is one (one actor), but we know God through three personae (the three roles that the actor plays). In English “persona” has become “person”. So when we say God is three persons, we have to remember that we are using the word “person” in a theological sense which is different from its ordinary everyday usage.

God is one. The ancient fathers were sure that he had just one nature (they used the term “substance” – again confusing for us as God is not made out of physical material). “God is one” is the answer to the question “What is God?”. The word that best describes his nature is “Love”. But God has three personae. “God is three persons” is the answer to the question “Who is God?”. The one thing God has done throughout human history is to reveal himself to us and we have received that revelation in three distinct ways. We are called to love God either as Father, or as Son or as Spirit, or better still, in all three ways.

This is where the analogy of the actors in Greek theatre breaks down. God in relationship is eternally in love with the God's own self. An actor might have to portray one of his characters in love with another of the characters he is playing – but unless the play is about Narcissus – we know the actor cannot actually be in love with himself. But God is Love: The Father is eternally in love with the Son; the Son in love with the Spirit and the Spirit in love with the Father. Love relationships presuppose an equality in the partnership, and so all three personae of the Trinity are “equal in majesty, but undivided in unity..

Love is always creative. We are the fruit of the love that the Father, Son and Spirit have for each other. They have revealed themselves to us so that we can know that we are objects of their love and can learn to love them in return. Creation is the fruit of their loving. In celebrating the feast of the Trinity, we celebrate the fact that we are loved by God in three separate relationships. In trying to love God back, we give glory to the Father who has made us, we give glory to the Son who has saved us, and we give glory to the Spirit who has given us life, inviting us into the intimacy of the eternal triune relationship.

Well done for getting near the bottom of this page. Maybe I lost you at “let me explain”! If that is the case I am sorry. Learning about the Trinity should not be like a complicated maths lesson. Rather it is an invitation to enter into relationship.

Let the Gospel have the last word: “God so loved the world that he gave us his only Son”. Revelation is so that we might become part of the happiness of God. Seeing his intentions, and seeing that they are good intentions, should help us on our journey to be lost in the one who loves us without measure.

St Peter's/St Joseph's Bidding Prayers

6th / 7th June 2020

Priest:

Today is Trinity Sunday. We celebrate the knowledge we have of God and rejoice that we are loved beyond measure.

Reader:

We thank God for creation – the work of the Father: May we respect our planet and protect it from the harmful consequences of human activity.

Lord in your mercy.

We thank God for salvation – the work of the Son: May every human being come to realise that they are special and saved by God's love.

Lord in your mercy.

We thank God for life – the work of the Spirit: May we work to ensure that every human being enjoys the best quality of life possible.

Lord in your mercy.

We thank God for love – the glue that keeps the Trinity in being: May our love of God and for each other bear much fruit.

Lord in your mercy.

We commend to the loving mercy of God those who have died recently and those whose anniversaries occur at about this time: May they rest in the place prepared for them by the Father.

Lord in your mercy.

As we reflect on God's love for each one of us, let us take a moment to tell God that we wish to love him in return.

[After a pause]

Lord in your mercy.

Mary bore Jesus as a gift from the Father, conceived by the power of the Spirit. Let us ask her to pray for us too.

Hail Mary....

Priest:

Glory be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, who was, who is and who will be, for ever and ever.

Amen.

ST PETER'S CHURCH

(with St Joseph's, Hurst Green)

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7th June 2020

THE NEWSLETTER

Trinity Sunday (Year A)

Mass Schedule for this week

Fr Tim will offer a private Mass each day for the following intentions

Date	Time	Fr Tim's Private Mass Intention	Feast
Sa 6 th		Gordon Nicholson L	Vigil of Trinity Sunday (Yr A)
Su 7 th		For the parish	Trinity Sunday (Yr A)
M 8 th		Private Intention	St James Berthieu SJ, PM
T 9 th		Claudia Catino (OS '17) L	Weekday in Ordinary time (week 10)
W 10 th		Our health workers	Weekday in Ordinary Time
Th 11 th		For SMH	St Barnabas
F 12 th		Jack and Margaret Shuttleworth A	Weekday in Ordinary Time

(No Holy Hour or Benediction until further notice.)

L = Lately Dead, A = Anniversary of Death, R = Remembrance

M = Martyr, V = Virgin, B = Bishop, Pp = Pope

P = Personal Intention, S = Sick, B = Birthday F = Founders Mass

D = Doctor, P = Priest, R = Religious

Please pray for the following, the anniversary of whose deaths occur at this time: Paddy Quinn, Bill Downie, Peter Bolton, Edith Quinn, Mary Wilcock and Clifford Haworth. *May they rest in peace.*

Readings at Mass

	Trinity Sunday (Year A)	Corpus Christi
First	Exod 34; 4-6, 8-9	Duet 8; 1-3, 14-16
Second	II Cor 13; 11 - 13	I Cor 10; 16 - 17
Gospel	John 3; 16 - 18	John 6; 51 - 58

Diocesan Website:

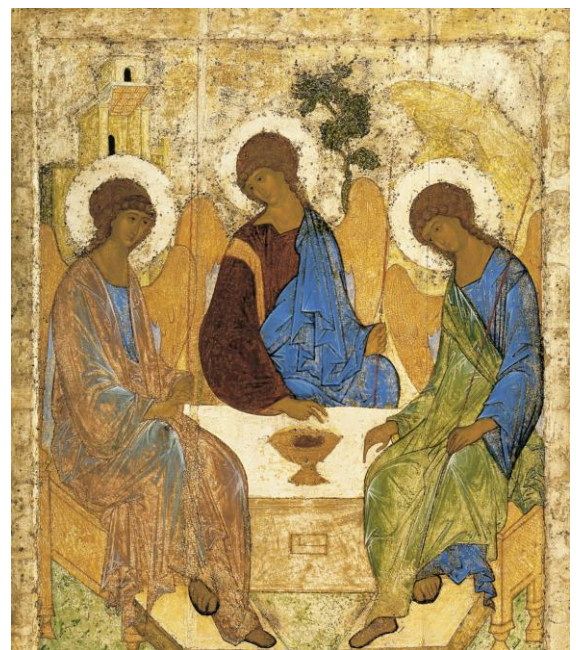
<http://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk>

for information on our Diocese and what is happening.

Praying with the Pope in June 2020

We pray that those who suffer may find their way in life, allowing themselves to be touched by the heart of Jesus.

Look at www.ThePopeVideo.org for more information



We shall continue to send out the newsletter until we are able to gather again in church. Together with other resources, it is also available on line on the parish website and in the parish resources box by the Cenotaph.

Fr Tim's availability

Each day Fr Tim will be in the Parish Office from 9am to 10am and available on the parish number (01254 826268). At other times, leave a message on the parish answer machine, which will be responded as soon as possible. A daily prayer sheet is now available on-line and in the box by the cenotaph in the village.

Today

Is Trinity Sunday. We rejoice in the knowledge of the fullness of God's revelation. Fr Tim will say Mass in St Peter's at 5.30 pm on Saturday and in St Joseph's at 9.30 am on Sunday.

Return to School

Neither SMH nor St Joseph's were able to open last week. The hope is that classes will resume for some pupils this coming week. Keep them and their teachers in your prayers. Stonyhurst is continuing to teach all students on line.

Saints this week

Monday is the feast of St James Berthieu, a French Jesuit Missionary to Madagascar, who was martyred in 1896. The first Madagascan saint.

Next Sunday

Is the feast of Corpus Christi. We have not been able to come to Mass and receive communion for some time. On this feast day let us be aware of our hunger for these sacraments.

Box by the Cenotaph

Contains daily reflections and current booklets that are usually available at the back of the church. This week there are some copies of the *Jesuits and Friends* magazine.

Statistics

Last week we delivered 120 copies of the newsletter (thanks to those who deliver them) and 98 people accessed it on line. 8 people took printed copies of the daily reflections and 22 people read these on line!

Book of remembrance and prayer

Many people have sent in names for the book of remembrance and prayer for those connected with the parish and the Stonyhurst/SMH community who are sick or who have passed away. If you would like some names to be added to this book, let Fr Tim know. They will be remembered at Mass every day.

Cards from the piety stall

While the repository is closed, there is a small selection of cards available in the parish box by the cenotaph.

Preparing for the reopening of churches

It looks like churches will not be open for Mass until July. If permission is granted, St Peter's will be open for private prayer, but with a Covid-19 risk assessment in place. It will not be possible to open the church all day, every day, so we will publish a schedule indicating when it will be open for prayer. The Diocese of Salford intends to open churches gradually, with one or two churches per deanery open for prayer. It is essential that this does not contribute to a second spike so social distancing and cleaning measures will be in place. Watch this space!

Donating to the parish on line

The Diocese of Salford has put a donate button on their website, so that you can donate to individual parishes. Click on the link, and type "Stonyhurst" in the parish box, and your donation will end up in our parish bank account. Go to <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/>

Baptisms and Weddings

Many baptisms and weddings were booked to take place in St Peter's at around this time. Unfortunately these have all had to be postponed. Let us keep those awaiting these sacraments in our prayers.

RCIA

We have five adult candidates waiting to be received into the church, together with some of their children. Hopefully we will be able to receive and confirm them soon.

*Glory be to the Father and to
the Son and to the Holy Spirit*