

Dear friends,

We rarely make much use of the psalms in Sunday morning worship – it is different at Evensong – so I am starting with the psalm set for this Trinity Sunday to which I have kept the (added) title because I think it sums up the psalm very well.

Psalm 8

Divine Majesty and Human Dignity

- ¹ O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.
- ² Out of the mouths of babes and infants
you have founded a bulwark because of your foes,
to silence the enemy and the avenger.
- ³ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
- ⁴ what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals^[a] that you care for them?
- ⁵ Yet you have made them a little lower than God,^[b]
and crowned them with glory and honour.
- ⁶ You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under their feet,
- ⁷ all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
- ⁸ the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
- ⁹ O Lord, our Sovereign,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

Handwashing

Thanks to Colin Randall for pointing out that saying the Lord's prayer thoughtfully when you wash your hands comes to about 20 seconds. Better than singing Happy Birthday twice!

I really enjoyed the Anglican Pentecost service at 9am on Sunday because it emphasised what Christian denominations share in common rather than on what divides us. From my own perspective I appreciated the message from Pope Francis who represents that vast majority of worldwide Christians and the Coptic Orthodox priest – representing Orthodoxy, the second largest

expression – Anglicans are the third largest communion in the world. The service was introduced by a Methodist and a Pentecostal leader represented that fast-growing expression of Christianity.

Sunday 7th June is Trinity Sunday

Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a. The poetic majesty of the story of creation in Genesis affirms that God is the author of all creation – nothing exists outside of God. It also affirms the notion of “original blessing” that everything in creation is very good. The third affirmation is that humankind, male and female, were created together in the image of God which at the very least affirms our slightly elevated position in the created order.

2 Corinthians 13: 11-13. This reading and the gospel reading from Matthew are two of the very few places in the New Testament that lend themselves to supporting the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity which hadn't yet been formulated by the church when they were written. And here the order - Christ, God, Spirit – distinguishes it from later theologising. The conundrum was that Christians believe that God is ONE and yet experienced God in three distinct ways and the Trinity is the result of their experience. In the end, the Trinity is revealed to us by God, not the result of human reason

Matthew 28: 16-20. This experience of God forms the baptismal formula at the end of Matthew's gospel. The 11 disciples to whom Jesus was speaking were a mixture of awe and doubts and questions and this is a significant blessing to all of us because despite the doubts they are all included regardless. God is experienced as the Father, also incarnated, and revealed through the Son, and experienced as a guiding force on earth through the Spirit. Traditionally described as God above, God alongside and God within. All are experienced as an abiding presence which Matthew describes in the last words of his gospel. “I am with you always to the end of the age”. It is all about relationship. We are in relationship with God who is in his very being relationship. The Greek term that expresses this divine relationship is perichoresis which means a divine Dance. So in the words of Tess and Claudia on Strictly - Keep dancing!

The Trinity

One revelation of the Trinity in scripture is the Baptism of Christ, when the Father speaks of his beloved Son and the Spirit descends on Jesus and dwells on him, but one of the more immediate ways in to experiencing the Holy Trinity is by engaging in Holy Communion. All three persons are involved. The Eucharistic (Thanksgiving) prayer is a prayer to the Father to bless the bread and wine representing the body and blood of his Son and this is achieved

through the animating Holy Spirit acting on and in the Eucharistic assembly and elements.

Musical interlude!

“Let all mortal flesh keep silence” for me brings together East and West and you will know that I often sing it before praying the Eucharistic prayer. Reckoned to be the oldest Eucharistic rite in existence, the Liturgy of St. James is still said in Eastern and Oriental orthodox churches and sometimes used as an Antiphon in the Roman Catholic Latin rite. I particularly enjoyed this version. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jVTg0p3uiS4>

Thought for the day

Having finished John Barton’s book on “The Bible and its faiths” I was pleased to discover that amongst all the various versions that I possess I have amongst them the best versions (according to criteria too complex to go into here) that exist. They include the NRSV (habitually used in the C of E nowadays) the Jerusalem Bible (used mainly by the Catholic church) and the original RSV (without the inclusive language and sanctioned for use in the Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox church). He also holds the King James version in high regard, a copy of which was presented to me at my licensing here in the RMC. The first three Bibles all include the Deuterocanonical books – called Apocryphal by protestants – but I am pretty ignorant of their contents because most Bibles commercially available don’t include them and we rarely read from them liturgically. I will certainly start giving them a bit more attention in future. They all emanate from the 300-year period immediately before Jesus and were almost all written in Greek and they chart certain developments in Judaism that found its fruition in Jesus Christ. The fact that they were written in Greek is the main reason mainstream protestants reject them as scripture, in favour of just accepting books that were originally written in Hebrew. If this all sounds very confusing – just try reading John’s book, which with enviable and deep scholarship, John examines every twist and turn of the Bible’s genesis, contents, use and abuse. You may never look at the Bible in the same way again.

The Prayer for Today is by Mary Robins

**Giver of life,
Infinite God,**

**Penetrating and containing,
Gestating and birthing,
Open our being to yours.**

**Bearer of pain, Gracious beloved,
seeded with truth,
yearning, dying for new life,
open our being to yours.**

**Maker of love,
Hungry and passionate,
Refining and enlivening,
Open our being to yours.**

**Holy Trinity, looking at one another,
Earthing and impregnating,
Evoking life between you,
Open our being to yours**

Love and peace,
Martin

Please note my new email address is vicar@rmcommunity.co.uk