

St Peter's, Ealing
Sunday 11th June 2017
Trinity Sunday

Knowledge is everything

There seems to be in human beings a passionate desire to know. Those of you who are parents will remember that phase your children went through of asking "why?". Why does this happen mummy? Why is it that colour? Where does this come from? And so on, occasionally seemingly relentlessly. Many of the questions are easy to answer. Some are stretching and then there are those existential questions that are really tough and even impossible to answer. Then there are the ones you direct to me!!

In some of us that desire for answers slowly mellows and even subsided, especially as we recognise the complexity of this world. In others, it remains a burning passion leading us into many life decisions that mould who we come to be.

As we get older, I seem to be noticing more and more, answering these questions becomes less important, accepting that some answers are not possible or rather are expressed in ways more poetic and lyrical than scientific and practical.

Isaiah struggles in expressing the nature of God. In this beautiful passage from Deutero-Isaiah in chapter 40 God is the one doing the inscribing and measuring, taking account of nature. This image of God holding the waters in the hollow of his hand resonates great power and draws to my mind an image of beauty and freshness, of new creation. Measuring the heavens and weighing mountains. A poetic image of God who is greater than anything we may imagine (to borrow from St Anselm). And yet in language we try to do exactly that, to describe and explain God.

All over the world today Christian leaders and teachers will be attempting to explain the Trinity, the three-fold nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit using visual aids, shamrocks and bottles of wine. I wonder if that misses the point. To recognise that somethings in our world are outside our language if not our imagination and are best expressed through action, word and art. This

may seem to take the easy option. I would argue it is to take this road that offers no defence that is more difficult. We offer no proofs, only revelations which have no weight other than that offered by the example of a Christian life well lived, fulfilling the gospel message and the command to love.

To express then the triune God who we love and serve is, for Paul at least, to do so in the context of the Christian community. To be expressed by the way we live and share and engage and carry ourselves with each other. To stop squabbling, nit picking and gossiping; to show honour and love to those with whom we share this planet, this neighbourhood, the air we breathe; to lovingly greet our fellow believers and human beings with a kiss that is from God, that is holy and true.

The Trinity is not grasped with visual aids, diagrams or models. For these can only be imperfect representations of a loving and engaging relationship within the divine. We understand the Trinity in the life we lead; in understanding that it is our belief in God the Father, taught and guided by Jesus who is God the Son and enlivened by the wonder and energy and wisdom of God the Holy Spirit. That this one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is expressed in our daily life of faith, in how we live in this world, how we share in community, with our neighbours, our friends and our colleagues. Through our constructive and engaging participation in the world.

In expressing our understanding of who and what God is, by the way we make decisions and take action, is how others will be drawn to faith in this one triune God. People come to faith through our actions and words, through our sharing with them and our encouragement to them to come and meet with God for themselves. This is how we will fulfil Jesus' command to make followers of all nations who too will know the threefold God through baptism and a closer walk with God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.