

Homily for Trinity Sunday 2021

In front of the altar is an icon by Andrey Rublev called the Trinity. It captures a scene from the Book of Genesis when Abraham and Sarah receive three visitors, offering them hospitality and receiving in return the assurance that Sarah would have a child. The explanation of the icon is fascinating but too long for a brief homily, so the invitation is to google it after Mass.

However long and hard we examine the Scriptures we will not find the word Trinity and it took Christian theologians centuries to define it. What we do find though are references to Father, Son and Spirit, as in today's passages. We were baptised in the threefold name, we bless ourselves in the same threefold name, we will be sent from this Mass in the threefold name. So, it is part of our Christian heritage and culture, a mystery to be lived rather than to be understood, knowing that whatever words we use will never define God who is beyond our imagining.

In today's gospel we get a mission and a promise. The mission is 'Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you.' So the mandate is global, and if we are to fulfil this we will be helped enormously if we have a global mind set. If we are more familiar with a local mind set the current pandemic has certainly broadened our horizons. In this country we are rightly grateful for the number of people who have been vaccinated, but we know that until all countries are safe from the virus, none of us is truly safe. The red, amber and green colour code for travel is ample proof of this.

Last week the bishops of E and W raised the issue of Climate Change and the impact this is actually having in different parts of the world, for example in Sri Lanka, where the sea is literally taking over land where people lived until very recently. The choices we make will either accelerate these changes or put a brake on them. The recent hijacking of a Ryanair plane, forced to land in Belarus, with the subsequent apprehension of Roman Protasevich, is just one example of the widespread violation of human rights in so many different parts of the world. The detrimental impact of fake news, the reality of modern day slavery, impacts on us all, and today's gospel reminds us that we share in the responsibility of trying to put things right, of getting involved and being the difference that makes the difference.

All of this is huge, daunting even overwhelming, but we remember that with the mission came a promise, 'And know that I am with you always, yes, to the end of time.' Jesus, the human face of God, promises us to be with us through the Holy Spirit, the very life of God within us, guiding, encouraging, strengthening us. St Paul writes 'The Spirit and our spirit bear united witness that we are children of God.' It is as such that we accept the global invitation issued in today's Gospel and continue that mission begun by so few, and yet lived by so many throughout the centuries and throughout the world.

Bidding Prayers for Trinity Sunday

Celebrant:

Our God of love is Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier inviting us to share in the life of the Trinity and to baptise in God's threefold name.

Reader:

For the Church – that the Church may be a sign of God's love for the world, embracing diversity and building community.

Lord in your mercy

For leaders of nations who lack real love for their people – that they might realise their unity with those they serve.

Lord in your mercy

For ourselves – that we will accept the global mandate in today's Gospel and live and act in such a way as to be the difference that makes a difference in our world.

Lord in your mercy

For those who are suffering in body, mind or spirit, especially those near to death, those with dementia and those with debilitating illnesses – that they and their families will receive the love and support they need at this time.

Lord in your mercy

For those who have died, all victims of violence, accident, natural disaster and the COVID-19 pandemic and Anne Lewis, Tony Ellis, Margaret O'Driscoll and Pat Collins whose anniversaries occur this week – that they and all who have died may rest in peace and rise in glory.

Lord in your mercy

Either aloud or in silence we pray for our own special intentions...pause...then

Lord in your mercy

We ask the prayers of Mary as we say, Hail Mary...

Celebrant:

All loving Father, you sent your Son into our world to save us and your Holy Spirit to make us holy. You reveal yourself to us as a God of perfect relationship, love that knows no end. May our relationships bear witness to your presence in the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.