

Trinity, Time and Talents (11.06.2017)

Pease have available the leaflet you were given this morning on your gift of time and talents

May I speak in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

On this day, the Feast of the Holy Trinity, it seems appropriate to use this simple prayer to initiate my thoughts. I'm actually not going to speak a great deal about the Holy Trinity as this is the second sermon in our stewardship campaign focussing on the giving of our time and talents. However here are some brief thoughts first about this separate, yet unified, concept of one in three and three in one, the Holy Trinity.

The first thing to say is this confusing concept is not a matter to discuss or become heated about. It is not a problem to be solved, but rather an awesome wonder to be prayed over. It is a powerful doctrine of our faith which transcends human understanding, is not of this world but rather of the 'other'. St. Augustine said, "When we speak of God and the Trinity, we do so in a learnedly ignorant way, and that requires a great humility." Of course, with our figurative language and popular diagrams, Christians through the ages have tried to make sense of the Holy Trinity. Popular diagrams for the Trinity are three leafed clovers or St. Patrick's shamrocks, Venn diagrams or I rather like the triangular Christian fish diagram. Most powerful for me is the idea of the cross as a symbol of the Trinity. The vertical beam symbolises God, the Father, the Creator, the transcendent aspect of God coming down to earth. The horizontal beam of the cross symbolises the Holy Spirit who extends across our whole lives. The heart of the cross symbolises Jesus, whose heart loved us so much that he gave his life for you, for me, for all on that cross. So for those of us who cross ourselves we are reminded of the Holy Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit or perhaps you prefer the more inclusive language of Julian of Norwich's "Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer" or the relationship language of St Augustine "Lover, Beloved, Love" or the Lutheran expression of "May God be in my mind, in my heart, in my whole being."

But let us turn now to more understandable thoughts - thoughts on which we can reflect and pray on how each one of us can build and deliver the kingdom

of God here in our own Parish, our own church of St David. At morning prayer on Tuesday, the pre-interview day for our candidates, Christopher prayed for our Church and Parish. He did this by praying by name all 220 on our electoral roll, praying by name for all priests presently supporting our church in this interregnum including himself, praying for all those who will eventually come on to the roll - children or newcomers - praying for those who are members of our church but not on the electoral roll and praying for all those who have died who were once on our electoral roll. He then placed the 2017 electoral roll and his prayer on the altar between two lit candles and next to the icon of St David. It was a very moving experience and as I listened to all those names, most, but by no means all, that I knew, I thought "St David's got talent." So many of you give so much of your time and talents to the benefit of our church and Parish so we can build the kingdom of God right here. Thank you. And this is an appropriate moment to thank all those priests who have given us support during the vacancy. I'm going to especially mention our curate, Christopher, who has given so much time of his considerable talents. I can assure you he has been tireless in his energy to minister at both churches no more so than during the last 6 months of this interregnum....and it has not been easy. Remember he is still studying yet he has acted as Priest in charge. We have been extremely fortunate in his curacy. We must continue to support, value and treasure him. Thank you Christopher.

So what about your talents? The essence of Christian life is in obeying and worshipping God and helping others. God has given us important gifts for those purposes. No matter how small our abilities and talents, we are required to put them to good use, to give them back to God. As God reveals himself to us today in the feast of the Trinity, he reveals who we are and the destiny for which we are made. So take a moment now to consider how you can use your talents here at St David's. Look at the two lists, the spiritual and the practical, on the leaflet you have and consider how you might become more involved here. The list will not be exhaustible. I'm sure you'll think of others. We'll take a moment of quiet to do this.

PAUSE

So how are we doing? Is God calling you to use your talents in a special way? And what about your fellow parishioners? Perhaps you recognise The gifts God has given to them. Remember that destiny for which we are made is about community, togetherness and unity and the heart of this is in relationships. Working openly together develops our church community. Are our fellow parishioners stretching us, teaching us how to be close, reconciled, intimate and united? Are we overcoming our fear or reluctance of being involved, our reticence, our vulnerability, our petty excuses. Yes using your talents means giving your time, but remember you give it to each one on our electoral roll, to each one who will be or has been on the electoral roll. You give it to God to build his kingdom here.

In this morning's second reading from Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, which I know our Bible study group led by Christopher is studying, Paul writes to the church in Corinth which is riven with all sorts of faction and divisions, exhorting them to be perfect. Now I know we are not perfect as a church - we have our divisions, our disagreements, our feelings at this time of uncertainty and doubt, but Paul continues by saying be united, be at peace. When we try to do this the God of love and peace, the very being of the Blessed Trinity, will be with us.

There's an old Christian tradition that says God sends each person into this world with a special message to deliver, with a special song to sing to others, with a special act of love to bestow. No one else can speak my message, or sing my song, or offer my act of love for these are entrusted to me alone. So what is your message, what is your song, what is your act of love?

Bill Pattinson
09.06.2017