

Trinity Sunday 30 May 2021 – On-line

Psalm 29; Isaiah 6.1-8; Romans 8:12-17; John 3:1-17

The thunderstorm last Monday which dislodged a mullion on the spire of St Peters Church in Aldwincle reminded me of a camping holiday when Abbie and Jo were quite young, and we were under canvas in two tents on a hill overlooking the river Dart in Devon. One night we had a major thunderstorm that woke the girls up, had them both crying and Abbie calling for Dad to keep them safe.

Abbie knew that when she called out, I would be there, I would answer, and the answer would always be yes. When she called out, 'Dad!' something deep within her was bearing witness that she was my daughter, and I was her father. Something deep within her was bearing witness to a relationship of love, intimacy, trust, and faithfulness. Her crying out did not create that relationship, it revealed a relationship that already existed. It was testimony to something she and I both knew and experienced deep within ourselves.

St. Paul says the same thing is true about us and God. We have already received a spirit of adoption. Something deep within us, something beyond logic, explanation, and understanding, knows that God is our Father, and we are his sons and daughters. When we cry out 'Abba! Father!' we are like a young child calling, 'Dad!' Those are not just our words, however. They are also the words of God's Spirit bearing witness that we are the Father's children, joint heirs with Christ.

Whenever we cry out 'Abba! Father!' whether it be in times of fear, joy, confession, thanksgiving, praise, or simply the desire to be close, we are opening our lives to God and taking our place in the life of God. We are acknowledging what already is: God is present; God will respond; and God's first answer is always yes. That does not mean we always get what we want. God's yes means that God always opens his life to us. Ultimately, God himself is the answer to our deepest and most profound needs and requests. God is the one in whom we live, move, and have our being. That's what it means to be born from above.

To cry out 'Abba! Father!' is to claim and seek our birth from above. It means that we take our place in the life of the Holy Trinity. For in the mystery of Trinitarian life all that we are and all that we have become one shared life. We are forever opening

ourselves to receive the life of another and pouring ourselves out into the life of another. 'Abba! Father!' does not simply describe who God is, but also how God is.

In our Gospel this morning, Nicodemus asks Jesus, 'How can these things be?' It doesn't make sense that a person can be born again, from above, after having grown old. It makes no more sense than three persons who are one. It makes no more sense than a God who invites human beings to become divine, holy, and live like God.

Nicodemus doesn't understand. He is literally and figuratively in the dark when he comes to Jesus. He wants information. Jesus, however, gives Nicodemus no answers. Instead, he offers Nicodemus an experience. He offers him a vision of new life and the experience of God. That life and experience are found in the Holy Trinity.

Some things should not be excessively explained or predicated on rational understanding. They can only be experienced. To explain sometimes diminishes or even eliminates the experience. Imagine what it would have been like if when Abbie had called out to me in the storm I had responded, 'Can you first explain our relationship?' Parents do not do that to their children, neither does God.

The deepest and most profound truths of our lives are not provable facts. They are, rather, relational, personal, and intimate. They offer experiences and meaning not explanations and understanding. The Feast of the Holy Trinity is not about a doctrine, ideas, or concepts. It is a feast of life, a feast of being and existence, a feast of love, a feast of sharing and giving, a feast of mystery that invites human beings to participate in God's life.

The early church teachers spoke about the Trinity as perichoresis, the giving of ones' self and the receiving of another that happens in a dance. Perichoresis is the dance of love between the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit. They are distinct and yet one, the way dancers and the dance are distinct and yet one. Take away the dance and there are no dancers. Take away the dancers and there is no dance.

This choreography of love cannot be contained. It spills out and flows beyond the three persons. 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that

everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.' The choreography of love reaches out, connects, and enfolds. Trinitarian reaching out is expressed in the creation of all that is. Trinitarian connection is manifested in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Trinitarian enfolding is the invitation to dance.

In God's life no one is left out. There are no wallflowers. So, on this Trinity Sunday shall we dance?

The following lyrics were penned by the song writer Graham Kendrick and are especially worth pondering on the Trinity Sunday:

*Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.
Teach me to move in the power of your Spirit.
Teach me to walk in the light of your presence.
Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.
Teach me to love with your heart of compassion.
Teach me to trust in the word of your promise.
Teach me to hope in the day of your coming.
Teach me to dance to the beat of your heart.*

*You wrote the rhythm of life.
Created heaven and earth,
In You is joy without measure.
So, like a child in your sight,
I dance to see your delight,
For I was made for your pleasure,
Pleasure.*

*Let all my movements express,
A heart that loves to say 'yes,'
A will that leaps to obey you.
Let all my energy blaze,
To see the joy in your face,
Let my whole being praise you,
Praise you.*

You can listen to the song by following this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T1LaArPzHyk>