

Sunday Homily

TRINITY SUNDAY

12 JUNE 2022

YEAR C

“I still have many things to say to you.”

John 16:12

Illustration

Many of us love reading a good detective story, or watching one unfold on the television: the kind of story where the clues are carefully laid, one by one, until the mystery is eventually solved. We may have started with an Enid Blyton, such as *The Mystery of the Missing Necklace*. Later in life we are hooked by an Inspector Morse or a Brother Cadfael mystery, looking for the clues, piecing them together, until finally the whole picture emerges.

In many ways, the Bible is just such a mystery story, The mystery of the Almighty. Picture the blurb on the back of the book: “Who is this mysterious character they call God? What is he doing? And why?”

Gospel Teaching

Trinity Sunday is a good time to look at the Bible clues and see where they lead. In the Old Testament, the focus is mainly on God the Creator, so we only get the merest hints about the Son and the Spirit. The Wisdom of God appears as the firstborn of all creation: a glimpse of Jesus, like Isaiah’s suffering servant? And the Spirit of God was occasionally active in chosen people for special tasks. On the whole, though, the first person of the Trinity takes centre stage in the Old Testament.

In the New Testament, we discover that the God who made the world loves us so much that he sent his Son to be born as a human baby, to share in our human life. God the Creator is God the Father.

We learn that, in Jesus, God loves us so much that he was prepared to die for us: a death that was not an end but a beginning, a doorway into eternal life for all of us. God the Son is God the Redeemer.

And Pentecost, which we celebrated last week, reveals yet another aspect of God’s character – another dimension to his love. At Pentecost, God shared that love with us in a way that enables us to communicate with him and with one another, to make us holy, too. God the Holy Spirit is God the Sanctifier.

In the New Testament, the early Church engages with this mystery of one God who is also three. But the word “Trinity” never appears in the Bible. Later centuries of Christians invented it to describe the idea of the three-in-one God.

What does emerge, in the New Testament, is a simple acceptance that there is one God, yet there are three distinct characters who each seem to be God. No clever models of triangles or intersecting circles or the leaves of a shamrock: just a simple acceptance that these three Persons relate to one another, communicate with one another and with us, yet are one.

Today's Gospel hints at a complex relationship between the Persons of God... and us. Jesus promised that the Spirit of truth would come, to tell his disciples things that he wanted them to know, but for which they were not yet prepared. And the words of his, which the Spirit would declare, are actually the Father's. The reading tells us that we, disciples of Jesus prepared by Easter and Pentecost, are on the receiving end of something which is continually being given to us by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, all working together. The loving, dynamic relationship, which is the Trinity, includes all of us, individually and as a Christian community.

Application

If the Bible is a mystery story, "The Mystery of the Almighty", it turns out to be only the first volume. There are still many things God wants to tell us. The sequel involves us, as we seek the Spirit's guidance in our everyday lives, in a world so different from first-century Palestine. And there is to be a further episode, too, even more eagerly awaited than each successive Harry Potter. There will be a time when all the clues in The Trinity Trilogy make sense, when we see in full, though now we see only in part, through a glass, darkly.

But, for now, what's wrong with a bit of mystery? Why not simply accept that God's essential nature is a mystery? Each of us, at our baptism, became part of that mystery. And each of us, in our Holy Communion today, can share in that mystery which is the love of God. Simple acceptance of mystery: isn't that what faith is all about?