

Parishes of Greatham, Empshott, Hawkley with Priors Dean

Prayers at Home – Trinity Sunday 7th June 2020

Hymn

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before thee,
who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee,
though the eye of sinful man thy glory may not see,
only thou art holy; there is none beside thee
perfect in pow'r, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
All thy works shall praise thy name in earth and sky and sea.
Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty!
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Ronald Heber (1783-1826)

Today is Trinity and we are called to worship God the
Holy Trinity, God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Introduction

Today I'd like us to think a little about baptism and in particular those children whose baptisms have been delayed. Some of those babies appear on the video this week; Ciara who should have been baptised today, and Harry also this month and we remember also little Zachary from Greatham. The Church baptises as St Matthew records Jesus as saying: 'baptise in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' – and so we do, and will when we can.

Baptise in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Bible doesn't use the word Trinity just as Jesus never used the word Church. So what is the Trinity all about and why is it so important? We'll think about that in a moment but first the readings and psalm for Trinity Sunday.

Isaiah 40:12-31

¹² Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand
and marked off the heavens with a span,
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure,
and weighed the mountains in scales
and the hills in a balance?

¹³ Who has directed the spirit of the LORD,
or as his counselor has instructed him?



Reginald Heber was born in 1783 into a wealthy, educated family. He was a bright youth, translating a Latin classic into English verse by the time he was seven, entering Oxford at 17, and winning two awards for his poetry during his time there. After his graduation he became rector of his father's church in the village of Hodnet near Shrewsbury in the west of England where he remained for 16 years. He was appointed Bishop of Calcutta in 1823 and worked tirelessly for three years until the weather and travel took its toll on his health and he died of a stroke. Most of his 57 hymns, which include "Holy, Holy, Holy," are still in use today.

¹⁴ Whom did he consult for his enlightenment,
and who taught him the path of justice?
Who taught him knowledge,
and showed him the way of understanding?
¹⁵ Even the nations are like a drop from a bucket,
and are accounted as dust on the scales;
see, he takes up the isles like fine dust.
¹⁶ Lebanon would not provide fuel enough,
nor are its animals enough for a burnt offering.
¹⁷ All the nations are as nothing before him;
they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

²⁷ Why do you say, O Jacob,
and speak, O Israel,
“My way is hidden from the LORD,
and my right is disregarded by my God”?
²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard?
The LORD is the everlasting God,
the Creator of the ends of the earth.
He does not faint or grow weary;
his understanding is unsearchable.
²⁹ He gives power to the faint,
and strengthens the powerless.
³⁰ Even youths will faint and be weary,
and the young will fall exhausted;
³¹ but those who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength,
they shall mount up with wings like eagles,
they shall run and not be weary,
they shall walk and not faint.

Psalm 8

1 O Lord our governor,
how glorious is your name in all the world!
2 **Your majesty above the heavens is praised
out of the mouths of babes at the breast.**
3 You have founded a stronghold against your foes,
that you might still the enemy and the avenger.
4 **When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have ordained,**
5 What is man, that you should be mindful of him;
the son of man, that you should seek him out?
6 **You have made him little lower than the angels
and crown him with glory and honour.**
7 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands
and put all things under his feet,
8 **All sheep and oxen,
even the wild beasts of the field,**
9 The birds of the air, the fish of the sea
and whatsoever moves in the paths of the sea.
10 **O Lord our governor,
how glorious is your name in all the world!**

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Reflection

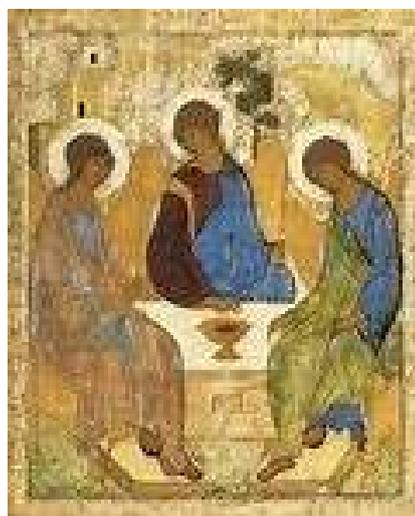
Jesus said go and baptise in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit but for the moment we can't, at least not in church and only in the case of emergency.

Trinity Sunday makes us think about God but sometimes thinking is hard. The 4th century theologian Evagrius said that 'God cannot be grasped by the mind. If God could be grasped, God would not be God.' And so we turn to words, ideas, metaphors and images to help us grapple with the things we find hard to comprehend and God is no different. The reason Jesus would never have used the word Trinity is because the word itself wasn't invented until the second century when an African theologian called Tertullian a convert from paganism gave us the word Trinity.

For many people images like this one,



a Celtic knot help us to interweave the complexities of God. But I prefer Anton Rublev's great icon of the Holy Trinity gives us a start to explore this great mystery.



The 15th century icon refers to the story from Genesis of Abraham and Sarah's hospitality to strangers who are thought to be angels. Apart from clothing, the three are identical and neither male nor female. Each head is submissively inclined to one of the others and not of the three appears more important than the others. The icon gives a sense rest in intimate communion; the joining of eyes; the circular sense of clockwise movement and also the shape of the triangle, the peak of which is the head of the central character.

Because of the perspective there is no vanishing point because for the painter, or writer as they are more properly called, the purpose is to show God as being here, there and everywhere. And in front of them is a chalice a reminder that Christians are brought into communion with the Trinity and how that happens.

When we baptise we're not just giving a baby a name; we are drawing them into that communion of love; that household of God.

So today as you remember those whose baptisms are being delayed; that's Harry and Ciara at Hawkley and Zachary at Greatham – then you might also think of your own Baptism. Perhaps go through your cupboards and see if you can find a certificate or a gift (perhaps something silver or a book) that, like the Rublev are the icons of our day and reminders of that which someone did for you as Matthew wrote of Jesus saying to his disciples: 'go and baptise people of all nations, in the name of the father the Son and the Holy Spirit.

So go and have a look. When were you baptised? Where were you baptised? If by chance you haven't been and would like to be give me a ring and when we can – let's make it happen!

The Prayers

O God the Father, we thank you that you are a creator God. We thank you that you created all things you were well pleased. That you have given to us all things richly to enjoy; for the beauty and the bounty of the earth. We thank you, O Father, who has made all things and all people. Forgive us if in pride and selfishness and in anger we have misused your gifts and the resources you have made.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

O Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, we thank you for your redeeming power. You love us and we see your love shown most clearly on the cross where you gave of your life for all and to heal the brokenness of the universe. We thank you, Son of God, for your never-ending love. Forgive us if we have treated your love lightly, if we have failed to follow and if we have shown little love in return

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

O Holy Spirit of God we thank you that you are with us at all times and in all places. For the guidance you give to us and for the knowledge entrusted to us. We thank you, Spirit of God, that you are around us and within us. Forgive us for when we have tried to live alone and have been reluctant to walk with you, or draw strength from you.

Lord in your mercy - **Hear our prayer**

God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit bring healing, justice and peace to your world. Help your people to make societies free of racism and discrimination of any kind. Break down the divisions between rich and poor; east and west, north and south and give the leaders of nations kinder and more compassionate hearts; honest, wise and humble minds; and courageous intentions to build a cleaner and fairer world.

Merciful Father – **Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

As Jesus taught us:

Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Collect for Trinity Sunday from the Book of Common Prayer

Almighty and everlasting God, who has given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity: We beseech thee, that would'st keep us steadfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities, who livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

Blessing

I hope this has got you thinking about your own baptism as well as the baptisms that are being delayed. The images below will remind you that in each of our churches, as in most churches, the font – the place of baptism, is near the door; the point of entry. Baptism is the point of entry into God's church; the drawing into the Trinitarian God of love. The chalice at communion signifies the development of that relationship where from the point of entry we move into communion and fellowship with God.

People are scratching their heads trying to work out just how communion will be able to happen in the future and with the Church News today there is a word picture created by Dom Gregory Dix of what a first century communion service might have looked like had it taken place in in 1940s London. Trust me, it'll make you think so do read it and the questions to think about after.

In the Church of England, we do something two or three times and it becomes a tradition. Read that piece and I hope you'll find it a good preparation for the day when we can once again gather with the angels around God's table.

May the blessing of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be with us now and always. Amen.



Greatham Font



Empshott Font



Hawkley Font



Priors Dean Font



Greatham Old Church Font