

OUR LADY, STAR OF THE SEA, WEYMOUTH
HOMILY FOR TRINITY SUNDAY
15th JUNE 2014

We have celebrated Easter, the Ascension, Pentecost, and now we celebrate the Holy Trinity.

Easter and Pentecost are easier to celebrate. They are the big and exciting events that stay in our memories like weddings.

Celebrating the Trinity is a different sort of celebration, more like a golden wedding anniversary when couples look back and appreciate all that has happened to them since they first fell in love.

Today the Church looks back over all that God has done for us as like a loving Father – sending us his Son, Jesus, at Christmas, raising him from death at Easter, taking him back to himself at Ascension and sending their Holy Spirit to keep us in touch with them.

And this is why the Church believes in God as Trinity.

Some people object to the idea of God as Trinity because it makes God sound like three gods, and the Church wrestled with this objection for the first three centuries after Christ, but decided that there really is no other way to explain the full extent of God's love for us, that God the creator and sustainer of the entire universe can love each one of us as an individual person.

The readings for today's Mass tell us how.

The first reading takes us back to the days of Moses when God was seen as distant and terrifying, a strict lawgiver and a stern judge, but in our reading Moses learns that God is in fact a "God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness."

In the Gospel St. John tells us how far God was prepared to go to show us this love and compassion when Jesus tells Nicodemus: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life."

This great act of love raises the question of the relationship of Jesus to God.

While Jesus was on earth God was not confined to his body.

God remained what he always has been and but Jesus was God, too

God referred to Jesus as his beloved Son at his baptism and transfiguration.

We read in the Gospels that Jesus prayed to God and addressed God as Father.

Jesus did not pray to himself.

So Scripture gives us the reason for calling God Father and Son.

When Jesus returned to heaven he remained who he was, Jesus, and did not merge into Father. He keeps his own identity so we must still call him “Son”.

The story of their love does not end there.

Last week we celebrated the fulfilment of Jesus’ promise not to leave us like orphans when he returned to his Father.

He promised us the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God the Father and the Son, the source of their love for each other, an essential part of their identity as God.

The same Spirit that filled Jesus is now here for us to fill our minds with the knowledge of God and our souls with the love and peace of God.

We receive the Spirit sacramentally in Baptism and Confirmation.

We live in the Spirit, but we receive Jesus in Holy Communion and pray “Our Father.”

We live in relationship with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, a three-dimensional relationship.

We need the Trinity to explain the fullness of extraordinary God’s love for us.

St. Paul says that the same Spirit that raised Him from the dead dwells in us.

The Spirit is eternal; to live in the Spirit means that we live eternally.

This fulfils Jesus’ promise that we who believe will have eternal life with the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit

Eternal life means that we ourselves become part of the Trinity when we are raised from the dead.

Rev Geoffrey Carey