

Trinity Sunday 2018 St Marylebone 8 am and 11 am

In the name of God. Amen.

Whenever Jesus enjoyed a sensational success, drawing large crowds by his preaching and miracles, he would withdraw by himself to a solitary place to pray.¹

Even when things were going spectacularly wrong and the crowds were trying to seize him to make him their king, Jesus would escape to the hills to pray.²

This praying was a constant source of puzzlement to Jesus' disciples and, eventually, they pluck up enough courage to ask him to teach them how to pray. Intriguingly, they don't ask him to teach them to pray as he prays, but to teach them to pray "as John the Baptist taught his disciples how to pray".³

The result of the disciples' request is that Jesus does teach them how to pray and the "Our Father" is now the prayer that is prayed most the world over: the pattern for all our praying.

Jesus' praying allowed him to be with his Father, to check his will against the Father's will, to assess whether or not through his words and actions the Kingdom of this world was being brought into closer alignment with the Kingdom of God.

Today, the Church celebrates the Holy Trinity, God's self-revelation as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that which, above all else, shapes Christianity and sets the Church apart from all other religions.

Over the Christian centuries a great deal of ink and much blood has been spent in trying to explain the Holy Trinity, but the Holy Trinity, is not so much a 'something' to be explained but, rather, a relationship that has to be lived.

¹ Gioia, L., Say it to God, In Search of Prayer, 2018, An ever-flowing river

² John

³ Luke 11.1ff

It is this living and dynamic relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit that Jesus, the incarnate Word, the co-eternal second person of the Trinity, seeks to live most profoundly through his praying. And it is prayer first and foremost that always has to be our starting point if we are to ‘live the Trinity’ rather than seek to ‘understand’ it.

Indeed, almost every attempt to explain the Trinity ends up committing heresy.⁴ And many theologians through the centuries have, wisely, resorted to saying what the doctrine of the Holy Trinity is not rather than what it is!

It is, in and through his praying, that Jesus *finds* his identity and discovers his mission; it is in and through his praying, that Jesus *learns* what it is to be “Son” and how to act as “Son”, even though he is “Son” eternally.

Prayer is the place where Jesus, through the eternal mutual dynamic indwelling of the Holy Spirit receives from Father and gives back to the Father. As the Benedictine theologian Dr Luigi Goia has written, “Jesus’ prayer is the human ‘translation’, so to speak, of his eternal relationship with the Father”.⁵

So, if prayer is how and where Jesus finds the means by which he is able to live the life of the Holy Trinity, who are we to seek a how or a where anywhere else?

Prayer was the way in which and through which and by which Jesus made sure that the needle of his compass kept pointing to the Father and how all that he did was in accordance with the Father’s will and to the Father’s glory.

So, when Jesus teaches his disciples how to pray - and that, of course, means how he teaches *us* how pray, Jesus reveals not only the precious relationship that is Father, Son and Holy Spirit but invites us to share it.

⁴ www.quora.com

⁵ Gioia, L., *ibid.*

The Holy Spirit is the love the Father eternally gives to the Son, and it is the Holy Spirit the Son gives to us. The glory the Son receives eternally from the Father is what he shares with us as we become, through the Holy Spirit, God's adopted and beloved sons and daughters, as we are changed from glory to glory⁶.

As God's beloved sons and daughters then, Jesus invites us through the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, to call God our "Father" as he called God his Father.

Through our praying he invites us to discern the Father's will for ourselves, to open our ears and hear God call us 'son' or 'daughter'.

In and through our praying may we find the work God calls us to do; do it in the power of the Holy Spirit and in so doing sanctify God's Holy Name, not only by confessing our faith in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit with our lips but by showing that love through our lives as we live and act like God's beloved children.

Amen.

⁶ II Cor 3.18