



St Marylebone
Parish Church

The Most Holy Trinity 2020, 11am Holy Eucharist

Readings:

The Prophecy of Isaiah 40.12-17,27-end
The Holy Gospel according to St Matthew 28.16-20

‘Go!’ To the ends of the world, says Jesus! (St Matthew 28.18)

Does He mean our front door?

Because that *is* the end of the world for many of us at the moment.

There’s a serious point here, too. We have seen love of neighbour flourish in recent weeks. It has been glorious. On the other hand, the world has also *shrunk* for many of us. Many of us have become our own little medieval village, and outside the front door, well, ‘That’s the other side of the hill, and we’ve never been there!’

Our sense of togetherness seems to be going through a violent and confusing time in lots of ways. I don’t have any clearer picture to give you, it is simply too early to say.

But, on this Feast of the Most Holy Trinity we have the perfect place to start.

God reveals Himself to be *a community of blessedness*. The perfect togetherness of *other* and *unity*. Do you see where I’m going?

The God we have been created to worship is our model and future.

Amidst all the horrible direct and knock-on effects of this virus crisis, and events in the USA, and in other places too, we have an opportunity to ask: what future will we build together?

The *community of blessedness*, the God revealed as Trinity, is the only sure footing in the universe. The only eternal. The only perfect. Truer than any ‘reality’ we cling to here. That is the only foundation worth having, and what do we find there?

We discover that true life is only gained when we give ourselves away: complete mutual self-gift. The Holy Spirit perfectly loves the Son and the Father. The Father perfectly loves the Son and the Holy Spirit. And so too for the Son.

Each gives self totally away in love of the other, and discovers true self given back in the gift; *that must be our way.*

That is what Jesus means when He says He who gives His life away will receive it, and He who clings to life will lose it. (St Matthew 10.39 & 6.25) *That* is what we find in the Eucharist: Christ gives Himself to us, that we may respond in kind. We glimpse it imperfectly in our human relationships, too.

And that's the point: *imperfectly*. **What if we're let down...**

'What if we give ourselves and are let down'... and there-in lies the whole sorry story. We build walls behind which we safely love people like us. We seek *independence* and *self-reliance* so as to be as safe; and we are *lost*. Unknowingly, by being too afraid to love we have opened the door to warfare, violence, prejudice, economic exploitation, ecological irresponsibility, selfish politics, capricious journalism and all the rest.

In God's love there are no walls of social or financial self-protection. The walls simply perpetuate the cycle that made them *seem* necessary in the first place. (As the old joke goes, there will be no walls in heaven – except the one that keeps the American Bible-belt fundamentalists separate from the rest of us, because they think they're the only ones here.)

No, but seriously, in love there is no room for fear (1 John 4.18) – if that love is given as God's is – with mutual self-emptying.

Is it too big a task, to build a human family on *this* foundation? Gullable dreaming? No, and No.

It's what Jesus did on the cross.

It's what heaven will be like so we'd better start getting used to it.

Jesus's words today 'Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit', laughably addressed to the ramshackle band of disciples. Even now, St Matthew tells us, 'some doubted' (St Matthew 28.17). And yet, here *we* are thanks to *them*.

Small beginnings and big ambitions go well together in the work of the Holy Spirit. So long as we *be* the change we want to see in the world. In our homes, workplaces, streets, churches and communities.

As we begin again in these days of crisis and what follows, we have to be brave enough to shape our lives and that of our society on the love revealed within the Godhead. Anything less is collusion with death.

And besides, Jesus told us to do this, to invite the whole world, and to know that He is with us as we begin.

I'll end with a prayer of St Teresa of Kolkata (I think).

I commend it to you for daily use: 'Father, grant that today, truly, I may begin.'

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