

## Worshipping Together –Apart for Trinity Sunday

Dear All,

Welcome once again to what I've come to think of as our 'kitchen table communion service'. It is a joy still to be able to share with you in this even though we remain parted, but there is light at the end of the tunnel. If you've seen the notices and perhaps heard the church bells ringing you will know that the first step has been Stilman, Bill and I being allowed back into the Church buildings to say Morning Prayer on behalf of you all. Thank you to those of you who have let us know of your particular prayer needs and I can assure you that it has been a privilege for us to pray with you, not just on a Sunday morning but whenever we've been worshipping.

Today is Trinity Sunday, the beginning of what, in the Church of England, we now call 'ordinary time' and the service begins with a highly appropriate 'Gathering Prayer' rejoicing in our God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So until next time, be it in a church building or on the pages of this website

Keep separate, keep safe

but remember you are never separated from the love of God or from the prayers of us all

Mary Tucker

**A 'Kitchen Table Communion' to say at home** (adapted from the worship of the Iona Community)

### **Gathering Prayer**

Creator of the cosmos,

Of eternity and time:

*Be with us in this time.*

Saviour of the world,

Healer of the nations:

*Be with us in this place.*

Breath of all that lives,

Of people near and far:

*Stir within our lives.*

Creator, Son, Spirit

God of here and now:

*Be present in our worship*

*That we may find new ways*

*Of being present in your world.*

**(Hymn/Song** - Sing something you enjoy!!)

### **Bible Reading**

**Isaiah 40:12-17, 27-31**

<sup>12</sup> 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?

<sup>13</sup> Who has directed the spirit of the LORD,  
or as his counsellor has instructed him?

<sup>14</sup> 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?  
<sup>15</sup> 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.  
<sup>16</sup> Lebanon would not provide fuel enough,  
nor are its animals enough for a burnt-offering.  
<sup>17</sup> All the nations are as nothing before him;  
they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness.

<sup>27</sup> 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'?  
<sup>28</sup> 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.  
<sup>29</sup> He gives power to the faint,  
and strengthens the powerless.  
<sup>30</sup> Even youths will faint and be weary,  
and the young will fall exhausted;  
<sup>31</sup> 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.

This is the Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

## **2 Corinthians 13:11-13**

11 Finally, brothers and sisters,\* farewell.\* Put things in order, listen to my appeal,\* agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. <sup>12</sup>Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you.

13 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of\* the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

This is the Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

## **Matthew 28:16-20**

<sup>16</sup>Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup>When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>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, <sup>20</sup>and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

This is the Word of the Lord. *Thanks be to God.*

### **Some Thoughts on the Readings**

I've got a big book in front of me, a big and rather beautiful book, an almost pristine book in fact, bought when I started college to become a priest and, I'm ashamed to say, hardly touched since then until recently when I fished it out and started to read.

It has rather a forbidding title, 'The Christian Theology Reader' which indicates that this is a book of extracts from the thoughts of great minds down the ages on 'God', that of course is what theology means - the study of God. I suppose the implication of that might be that here in these 700 odd pages is the definitive answer to what and who God is! You probably realise as you read those words how foolish that idea is. God certainly cannot be bounded (bound? sorry no pun unintended!) within the covers of a book, however large and however beautiful it may be - and of course, neither can God be bounded within our minds and imaginations however much we want to understand him and however hard we try. But that doesn't make this volume worthless, indeed not, neither does it make our efforts to know more about God foolish, we just need to be aware of our limitations and that, in this life, we will never have the whole truth.

Today is Trinity Sunday, and a fair old chunk of what I've read in this reader so far has been the attempts of theologians and mystics down the ages to get their heads round just what the word Trinity means when applied to God. I start with a quote from a chap with the wonderful name of Leonardo Boff who certainly approached the subject with a very realistic attitude. His feet firmly on the ground he said, "To say that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit is revelation; to say that God is 'one substance and three persons' is theology - a human endeavour to fit the revelation of God within the limits of reason"

I loved that! Basically I think it's saying - God has revealed to us, through various means, that we can think of him as Father, Son and Holy Spirit but that once investigations into that begin, and we start to try and explain it to ourselves and others, we need to be aware that we're trying to bring something/someone infinite and beyond our total understanding into a definition which makes sense to our small brains! It's a good thing to do but we need to be aware we'll never get it entirely 'right'.

So - finally to today's Bible readings.

Isaiah, describes in joy-filled wonder the incomprehensible vastness and creative power, the infinite love and care of God Almighty, one who, whilst functioning at a universal level throughout and beyond time, amazingly also takes loving thought for each one of us however small or insignificant, faint or weary we may feel. Our Father. A father figure - powerful, just, yet full of loving kindness.

In Matthew, in the very last words of that Gospel, Jesus is sending out his followers, and therefore us, into the world to 'make disciples of all nations'. We are to spread the word of the Kingdom of God to all, regardless of colour, country, creed or culture. And lest that task should seem too impossibly great he gives us his final promise,

"... remember, I am with you always."

This is not just a promise but, in one short and powerful phrase, a real revelation of Trinity.

As Christ uses the words 'I am with you', it brings to mind God's words to Moses when he asked,

“Who shall I say sent me?” the reply, “Say, ‘I am’, sent you.” And the words ‘with you’ powerfully echo the name Emmanuel – ‘God with us’, used for Christ so much during the Christmas season, for that is who Jesus truly is, God with us.

In the gospels we see the reality of ‘God with us’ in human form, of Jesus physically beside his friends and those he came to serve and love. It’s really helpful for our idea of what God is like to have this picture but, it was 2000 years ago, it was in a far country in time and place and if that was all we had it would help but would not be enough. Last week, Pentecost, completed the Trinity, completed God’s total revelation of himself to us across the barriers of time and space, for, by coming in Spirit, God transcended the limitations of the world. He had created it, he had shown himself in it, he had saved it but now in the Holy Spirit, he is ‘God with us’ too, beside each of us, available to all of us, in a new, personal and eternal way.

Paul ends his second letter to the Christians at Corinth in the way Evening Prayer and many other services and gatherings end every day throughout the church and the world – he says the prayer we’ve come to know as ‘the grace’. It is so familiar to us that it’s easy to take it for granted but it is the most beautiful little creed – a reminder of just what it is we believe about our God, Creator, Saviour and Sustainer.

So in grateful acceptance though not a total understanding of the threefold nature of our one God let us end this part of our service this morning by saying together (though apart) this prayer.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Love of God  
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit,  
be with us all, evermore,  
Amen

### **Prayers**

We continue our prayers now as we pray to the Lord for courage as we walk, together but apart, along the road of life.

In this difficult time, give your Church the courage to give up her preoccupation with herself and to give time to your mission in the world. **Lord, help us to recognise you in our lives, give us strength and hear our prayer.**

May the blood and water flowing from the side of Jesus bring forgiveness to your people and help us to face the cost of proclaiming salvation as we work together and apart in your damaged world. **Lord, help us to recognise you in our lives, give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give your world the courage to give up war, bitterness and hatred, and to seek peace and healing for each other. **Lord, help us to recognise you in our lives, give us strength and hear our prayer.**

May the shoulders of the risen Jesus, once scourged by soldiers, bear the burden of our times. **Lord, help us to recognise you in our lives, give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage to give up quarrels, strife and jealousy in our families, neighbourhoods and communities. **Lord, help us to recognise you in our lives, give us strength and hear our prayer.**

May the presence of the risen Jesus, his body once broken and now made whole, bring peace and direction as we live with one another. Give us the courage to give up our selfishness as we live for others, and to give time, care and comfort to the sick and those who care for them in ways that are safe for them and for us. **Lord, help us to recognise you in our lives, give us strength and hear our prayer.**

May the wounded hands of Jesus bring his healing touch to all who suffer, and the light of his presence fill their hearts and homes. **Lord, help us to recognise you in our lives, give us strength and hear our prayer.**

Give us the courage to give up our fear of death and to rejoice with those who have died in faith. May the feet of the risen Lord Jesus, once nailed to the cross, walk alongside the dying and bereaved in their agony, and walk with us and all your Church through death to the gate of glory. **Lord, help us to recognise you in our lives, give us strength and hear our prayer, here and in eternity. Amen.**

We pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us

Our Father, who art in heaven,

Hallowed be thy Name.

Thy Kingdom come.

Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive those who 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

### **A Home Communion**

(use some bread or a plain biscuit, some wine or juice)

What we do here in our own homes today, we do in imitation of what Christ first did. To his followers in every age, Jesus gave an example and command rooted in the experience he shared with his disciples in an upstairs room in Jerusalem.

So now we do as Jesus did.

We take this food and drink, the produce of the earth and fruit of human labour.

In these, Jesus has promised to be present, through these, Christ can make us whole.

### **Eucharistic Prayer**

The Lord is with us,

*And with all those with whom we worship, together but apart.*

We lift our hearts together.

*We lift them to the Lord.*

We give thanks together to the Lord our God.

*It is right to give our thanks and praise.*

It is indeed right, for you made us,  
and before us, you made the world we inhabit,  
and before the world, you made the eternal home  
in which, through Christ, we have a place.

And so we gladly join our voices to the song of the Church,  
to those from whom we are separated  
on earth and in heaven:

*Holy, holy, holy Lord,*

*God of power and might,*

*Heaven and earth are full of your glory.*

*Hosanna in the highest.*

*Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.*

*Hosanna in the highest.*

And now,

lest we believe that our praise alone fulfils your purpose,

we fall silent  
and remember him who came because words were not enough.

Setting our wisdom, our will, our words aside,  
emptying our hearts and bringing nothing in our hands,  
we yearn for the healing, the holding, the accepting, the forgiving  
which Christ alone can offer.

(we pause quietly for a moment)

Merciful God, send now, in your kindness  
your Holy Spirit on this food and drink  
and fill them with the fullness of Jesus.

And let that same Spirit rest on us,  
converting us from the patterns of this passing world,  
until we conform to the shape of him whose food we share.  
Amen.

### **Sharing God's Gifts**

Among friends, gathered round a table,  
Jesus took bread and broke it, and said,  
'This is my body, broken for you.'

Later he took a cup of wine and said,  
'This is the new relationship with God  
made possible because of my death.  
Take it, all of you, to remember me.'

He whom the universe could not contain is present to us in this food.  
He who redeemed us and called us by name now meets us in this cup.  
So we take this food and drink.  
In them God comes to us so that we may come to God.

(Eat, drink, share the food and drink you have prepared and prayed over)

### **The Peace**

(We bring to mind all those with whom we would usually share this moment,  
holding them on our hearts.)

Christ who has nourished us is our peace,  
strangers and friends, male and female, old and young, near and far away,  
Jesus has broken down the barriers to bind us to him and to each other.

The peace of the Lord be always with you.  
(*and also with you*)

### **Concluding prayer**

In gratitude, in deep gratitude for this moment, this meal, these people,  
we give ourselves to you.

Take us out to live as changed people  
because we have shared the living Bread and cannot remain the same.  
Ask much of us, expect much of us, enable much by us,  
encourage many through us.

So, Lord, may we live to your glory,  
both as inhabitants of earth and citizens of the commonwealth of heaven,  
knowing that we do so with your blessing  
Father, Son and Holy Spirit  
this day and for ever more.  
Amen.