

CHURCH@HOME: Trinity Sunday – 12th June 2022

A Reflection from Anne

Readings: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31

John 16:12-15

“Jane, darling, what are you doing?”

A mother glanced eagerly down to the floor where her 6-year-old daughter lay engrossed in some complicated work of art.

“Why, Mummy, I’m drawing God.”

“But, darling, no one knows what God looks like!”

“No, Mummy, they don’t know yet, but they will when they’ve seen my drawing!”

You may have heard that one before. However, young or old, we all have our own picture of God. I wonder what yours is.

In our Old Testament reading from Proverbs chapter 8, Wisdom claims to be the first creation of God. In this passage Wisdom is personified, a figure who is present with God before anything else is created, and we see her standing at the busiest and most noticeable points in the city shouting out that God’s wisdom is not a thing reserved for the few, the intellectual giants. It is available to all, to anyone who has ears to hear. The knowledge of how to live with joy as a child of God in the world He has made is what Wisdom offers. And I believe this wisdom is just what we have seen in action over the past seventy plus years from our Queen.

In her Lectionary reflections for Trinity Sunday in Year C, Jane Williams writes: From very early on in the life of the Church, Christians read the figure of ‘Wisdom’ in Proverbs as a reference to Jesus.

John Polkinghorne, a theoretical physicist who became a priest in the Church of England, writes of “unseen realities” in his book ‘Living with Hope’. He says, “No one has seen God directly, but Christian belief makes sense of great swathes of spiritual experience, both that recorded in the Bible and that testified to down the centuries by the witness of the Church.”

Today is Trinity Sunday. The theological dictionary definition of Trinity is: The Christian understanding of God as triune, the one divine nature, a unity of three: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In his book “Simply Christian”, Tom Wright reminds us that the church’s official ‘doctrine of the Trinity’ was not fully formulated until three or four centuries after the time of Paul. Yet when the later theologians eventually worked it all through, it turned out to consist, in effect, of detailed footnotes to Paul, John, Hebrews and other New Testament books, with explanations designed to help later generations grasp what was already there in principle in the earliest writings. But it would be a mistake to give the impression that the Christian doctrine of God as Trinity is a matter of clever intellectual word or mind-games. For Christians, it’s always a love-game.

It's been said that Christianity is not a religion – it's a relationship. Becoming fully human means relating to others – this is how we were created – in the image of God who is in relationship as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and longs for us to be in relationship with Him.

Today's modern way of life with computers, e-mail, internet, mobile phones, text messaging, social media – all these can actually hinder us from relating. Face to face conversations over a cup of tea actually enable us not only to hear the words but to see the body language, the facial expressions – the unspoken language of relationship.

Last Sunday we celebrated the arrival of the Holy Spirit to an unimpressive bunch of frightened Galileans. They discovered that with the Holy Spirit they went to places far outside their comfort zone, did things they'd never done before, even spoke languages they'd never learnt.

As he did with Jesus and those disciples, so God always calls us further on. Just when we think we've got life sussed, He'll redraw the map and encourage us to cross frontiers we never dreamt we'd cross. He may not always move us physically, but he does want to move us spiritually.

Our lives as Christians take place within this Trinitarian circle of love and in Rublev's icon of the Trinity there is a place for us to join that circle of love when we accept God's invitation to come, and live our lives daily with the encouraging, strengthening power of the Holy Spirit. When we say 'yes' to Jesus, when we step out in faith, the Holy Spirit draws us into that circle of love which is the very life, the centre, the core of the Trinity.

In my early twenties I was living and working in London. Every so often I would go 'home' to my parents, and I can still remember my father, waiting on the platform to meet me, who, when he saw me would stretch out his arms – and I would run up the platform and be gathered into an enormous bear hug, he was so delighted to have me at home with him for a while. For me, that is a physical picture of God's love.

One of the joys of knowing we are God's beloved is the realisation that every part of our everyday life matters to him. It is not some grand philosophical treatise. Jesus illustrated God's heart of love through his stories of everyday scenarios.

Do we believe that the way we live our lives, our everyday scenarios, can reflect God's love to others? We need to take on board every day just how much God loves us ... as much as He loves his Son ... and He wants us to share that love with others.

Has this helped? I hope so, but if I've confused you even more – and I'm truly sorry if I have – here's the summary:

We pray: to God, the Father ... through the Son ... in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen