

Living the Word

2 Corinthians 13: 11-13

When we consider our place as Catholics within the Church of England, it's very easy to become despondent. There are of course a number of reasons for optimism, but much of the time we might think of ourselves as being at odds with the direction that much of the rest of society and the church is taking. For us, in this particular part of the church, these tensions have certainly increased since the early 90's, but today's epistle should remind us that this is nothing new. Despite the fact that we are left one Church by Jesus Christ, our human frailty often causes us to be negative and look for reasons to go our own way. As St Paul reminds us, even though splits in the church are nothing new, there is only God's way. We must continue to pray for those with whom we disagree, as the church has always done, and for the unity of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church.

Elements of the Mass

The Trinity in the Liturgy

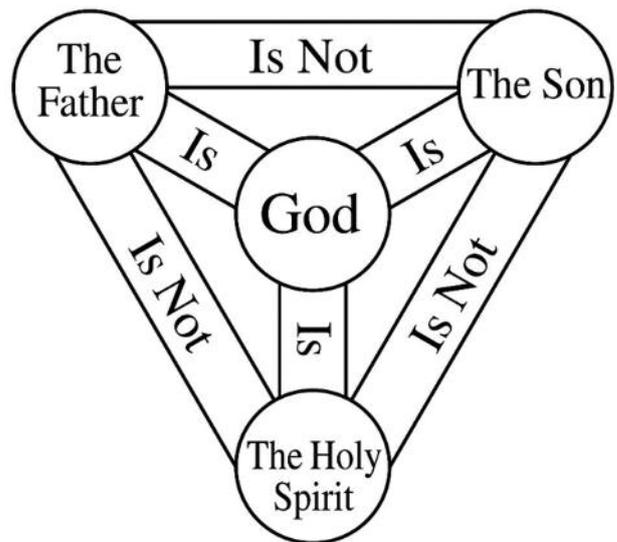
I am always surprised, when people talk to me about their prayer life, how often they feel they can relate to one Person of the Trinity, but not another: most often, people feel that they can pray to the Father or the Son, but not both, (the Spirit often comes further down the list). Trinity Sunday is an important reminder that the three Persons revealed to us as God: Father, Son and Spirit, are also one God. We can see them acting as one in all the major events of our salvation story: think for example of the Baptism of Jesus. They are one community, one communion, and when we pray, we are sharing in their common life and love for each other. So Christian prayer, however it is framed, is always offered to the Father, through the Son, in the power of the Spirit. We see this most clearly in the Mass, which always begins and ends with an invocation of the Trinity; and whose central, Eucharistic, prayer is always addressed to the Father, in remembrance of and sharing in the saving work of his Son ('anamnesis'), and invoking the presence and power of the Holy Spirit ('Epiclesis') over the gifts 'that they may become the body and blood of Christ' and over the people.

From the Fathers

Those holy angels come to the knowledge of God not by audible words, but by the presence to their souls of immutable truth, i.e., of the only-begotten Word of God; and they know this Word Himself, and the Father, and the Holy Spirit, and that this Trinity is indivisible, and that the three persons of it are one substance, and that there are not three Gods but one God; and this they so know that it is better understood by them than we are by ourselves.

From 'City of God', by Augustine of Hippo, (354-430, Bishop, theologian)

Consubstantial, Coeternal



There are three creeds or statements of Christian belief that are commonly used in the historic churches. One is the Nicene Creed as said or sung today, one is the Apostles Creed used at Morning and Evening Prayer and Baptisms, and the other is hardly ever used (although in the Book of Common Prayer provision is made for its use monthly). It is the Athanasian Creed which begins 'whosever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholick Faith' and it goes on to say 'that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity.' The believer is left in no doubt that belief in the Trinity is not an option, it is a necessity. It is necessary if the Christian is to live in the fullness of the love of God. The God of love has revealed himself as the Father – origin of all creation, the Son who has redeemed fallen creation by his Incarnation, death and resurrection, and the Spirit who enables the believer to partake in the life and light of the Father and the Son. The Athanasian Creed concludes: 'this is the Catholick Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.'

