

Father those thoughts and words which come from you, will you take them and bless, and those thoughts and words which come not from you but from our own vanity, will you forgive. Amen.

Trinity Sunday is always a good day to try and find a visitor to preach, for it's a tricky feast to speak about and there's probably a short book to be written on the different ways clergy will find to avoid preaching on the subject of the Holy and undivided Trinity. God who is three in one and one in three.

Now you might think that one way of avoiding preaching about the Trinity is to spend so long on your introduction that you never get round to the matter in hand, so without further ado let us have a look at what we're celebrating today on Trinity Sunday.

Most of the great festivals of the church - Christmas, Epiphany, the Presentation - or Candlemas, and Easter of course, commemorate and celebrate an event in the account of Christ's life or in last week's case, Pentecost, marks the sending of the Spirit.

Those festivals may also communicate some particular understanding as well but they are all attached to an event, to a happening. Trinity Sunday does not. It is not associated with some particular event in the life of Jesus of Nazareth. The Scriptures appointed for today are chosen because they echo the doctrine of the Trinity and teaching about one God who is at the same time three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

For the most part considered teaching on the Trinity, on how God is at the same time three and yet one, has been very academic, often revolving around delicate understandings of the Greek language in which it was defined.

It may seem odd to you but I think one of most useful ways in which we can engage with the understanding of the Trinity is through a modern hymn written by Sidney Carter in the 1960s or 70s. It was called 'Lord of the Dance'. In ancient Trinitarian-thinking the life of God is understood as a dance, with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, moving so intricately, and speedily, that they appear as one. We human beings are drawn into the life of God by participating in that dance.

How do we get drawn into the life of God? How do we begin to get an inkling of what He is like and how He relates to us? The God who was in the beginning, when the world was created, without whom nothing was made that was made, the Word of God became flesh. He became a human being in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He lived his life, or rather he danced his life, in front of us.

As the one present at the creation of the world we sing how he danced in the morning when the world was begun and danced in the moon, and the stars, and the Sun, before he came down from heaven and danced on the earth. Some of that is reflected in the Old Testament reading appointed for today. He danced for the scribe and the Pharisee, but they would not dance and they would not follow. The scribes rejected the Living God, whom they ought to have understood and recognized and followed and danced with. On the other hand, Jesus danced for the fishermen - for James and John - and they came with him when the dance went on. Jesus danced a life of love, forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation, in front of

humanity, and invites us to join him and to dance on, to become part of the dance of divine love.

He even dances through death, when they thought he'd gone, but he is the life and he still goes on inviting us to dance, then wherever you may be; "I am the lord of the dance" said he, "and I lead you all wherever you may be and I lead you all in the dance" said he.

But what sort of a dance is it? Well in a way it must be a bit like a conga where anyone and everyone is invited to join the dance. In a way it's one of those dances where someone does a bit of a routine in front of a waiting person, who responds by dancing back, before they go off together. Being caught up in the dance is to be drawn in by Christ and to share in this exuberant joyful action with him and with the Holy Spirit; the very power of God and with our father, whose son Jesus is. The lord of the dance shows us the very joy and exuberance of what it is to live in God, and invites us to join with him and so to become entirely alive, connected to our Creator, and to all the creation He inhabits and sustains with his dance of life. The doctrine of the Trinity recognizes that the unknowable God, our Father, is revealed to us in Jesus, his son, when he came to live a life we could apprehend in a fellow human being, and the spirit by which is present within all that he is created, including each one of us.

Formal teaching on the doctrine of the Trinity, using Greek words like Homoousios and perichoresis, or the Latin co-inherence, could all sound very dry and academic and remote, but the reality which it struggles to describe and understand, is life itself: the life of God, into which we are drawn by the God who danced an earthly life in the person of Jesus, in order to draw us into his eternal life.

And, so, in the words of the late lamented Sir Bruce Forsyth. Keep dancing!