

Trinity Sunday is the only week in the year when the focus of our worship is a doctrine. This year, though, the readings move the Trinitarian theme beyond the realm of purely intellectual fascination, into a very practical response to the radical transformation that comes from an encounter with this Triune God.

May the mystery of the Trinity challenge and change us as we worship this week.

INTRODUCTIONS

For use by lectors, in order of service, parish bulletins and magazines

Isaiah 6 : 1-8

Isaiah was called to his prophetic task by an overpowering vision of the magnificence and holiness of God, whose glory filled the Temple and the world.

The Psalm - Psalm 29

Romans 8 : 12-17

Jesus in today's Gospel will tell of the new life which the Holy Spirit brings. Paul too can rejoice that we have become adopted children of God the Father, by the gift of the Spirit, in union with Christ.

John 3 : 1-17

Nicodemus had to learn that a new kind of birth is necessary to carry us into a new kind of life. God's only son unites heaven and earth, and his Spirit, moving unseen like the wind, brings us into eternal life.

Click here to view the readings

http://bible.oremus.org/?show_adj=no&passages=Isaiah%206:%201-8%0Acw%20Psalm%2029%0ARomans%208:%2012-17%0AJohn%203:%201-17

COLLECTS OF THE DAY

Collect One

Almighty and everlasting God,
who hast given unto us thy servants grace
by the confession of a true faith
to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity,
and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity;
We beseech thee,
that thou wouldest keep us steadfast in this faith,
and evermore defend us from all adversities,
who livest and reignest, one God, world without end.

Collect Two

Almighty and everlasting God,
you have given us your servants grace,
by the confession of a true faith,
to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity
and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity:

Keep us steadfast in this faith,
that we may evermore be defended from all adversities;
for you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 1

Throughout our lives, we confront the mystery of God. We know and celebrate God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yet, the wisdom of faith does not complete our understanding. Time and space make us pilgrims and learners forever, who plead: "Enlighten our darkness," and respond with "Lead us, O God."

That the church universal in its great diversity may cease unholy competition and learn to love others in the faith as dear neighbours. Enlighten our darkness.

Lead us, O God.

That corporate business may not seek exorbitant profit over the well-being of our world's citizens, but rather seek the righteous way and continued renewal of its enterprises. Enlighten our darkness.

Lead us, O God.

That the newly baptized and those who have recently affirmed their baptismal covenant may know continued spiritual growth and true joy in believing. Enlighten our darkness.

Lead us, O God.

That holidays and travel may not separate us from your presence or your worship, but may afford true re-creation and renewal of our minds, bodies, and spirits. Enlighten our darkness.

Lead us, O God.

That the select vestry, committees, and working groups of our parish may work for a vigorous and united witness to the gospel of Christ. Enlighten our darkness.

Lead us, O God.

Forgive us when we too readily take flight from our responsibilities and find little pleasure in serving you; create in us a right spirit and a new heart. Enlighten our darkness.

Lead us, O God.

In faith we rise with Jesus the Christ to praise you God and Lord of all.

Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE 2

Presider or deacon

As children of God, led by the Spirit, let us pray for the needs, hopes, and concerns of the world.

Deacon or other leader

For peace from on high and for our salvation.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the unity of all.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For this holy gathering and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and fear of God.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For *N* our bishop and the presbyters, the deacons and all who minister in Christ, and for all the holy people of God.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For the world and its leaders, our nation and its people.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For all those in need, the suffering and the oppressed, travelers and prisoners, the dying and the dead.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

For ourselves, our families, and those we love.

Glory and praise to you, O living God.

Remembering St _____ and all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one another to the living God through Christ. **To you, O Lord.**

Presider

Blessed are you, O Lord our God, who so loved the world that you gave us your only Son. Hear the prayers we offer this day and lead us into your kingdom; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

POST COMMUNION

Almighty God,
may we who have received this holy communion,
worship you with lips and lives
proclaiming your majesty
and finally see you in your eternal glory:
Holy and Eternal Trinity,
one God, now and for ever.

PRAYERS

God of delight,
you Wisdom sings your Word
at the crossroads where humanity and divinity meet.
Invite us into your joyful being
where you know and are known
in each beginning,
in all sustenance,
in every redemption,
that we may manifest your unity
in the diverse ministries you entrust to us,
truly reflecting your triune majesty
in the faith that acts,
in the hope that does not disappoint,
and in the love that endures. Amen.

Holy, holy, holy God,
in calling forth creation from the void,
revealing yourself in human flesh,
and pouring forth your wisdom to guide us,
you manifest your concern for your whole universe.
You invite us, as your people,
to gather the world's needs into our hearts
and bring them before you...

Intercessions...

Holy, holy, holy God,
fill us with strength and courage,
with discernment and compassion,
that we may be your instruments of justice and love in this world, that it may be on earth as
it is in heaven. Amen.

Holy God,
the earth is full of the glory of your love.
May we your children, born of the Spirit,
so bear witness to your Son Jesus Christ, crucified and risen,
that all the world may believe and have eternal life
through the One who saves,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
now and for ever. Amen.

Lord God, we bind unto ourselves today your holy and living reality. We
invoke your presence in the way you have revealed yourself to us - Father,
Son and Holy Spirit - Three in One and One in Three. We invoke you by the
name you have given us - the strong name of the Trinity. We pray your power
to hold and lead us, your eye to watch, your might to stay, your ear to hear,
your wisdom to teach, your hand to guide, and your word to give us speech.
Help us celebrate your love and to proclaim your majesty, your glory, and
your awe - both now and evermore. Amen.

LECTIONARY NOTES 1

isaiah 6:1-8:

- Seraphs certainly are strange creatures!
- Note that even though Isaiah says he "sees the Lord", it is the other things that are described in detail, not what God is like in God's self.
- Isaiah expresses a deep sense of unworthiness, "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips." He doesn't feel worthy to be seeing God.
- The imagery of the seraph taking the hot coal to Isaiah's lips is very powerful. We read nothing of pain for Isaiah, but it make sense that this cleansing and purifying would have burned him, been painful. That resonates with how we experience being made pure. It takes work and pain. I think of the image of Eustace Scrubb in *The Voyage of the Dawntrader* in the Chronicles of Narnia, when he is turned into a dragon. His skin must be painfully torn off by Aslan before he is made clean.
- "Whom shall I send?" "Here am I; send me." Isaiah has felt unworthy, but he still has the courage (and good sense) to respond to God's call. Can we do the same? Even when we feel unworthy, can we trust that God knows better than we do??

Psalm 29:

- "The Voice of the Lord" - I guess I've never noticed this psalm before, which speaks primarily of God's voice.
- It is also visualizing God creating or in relation to a strong and powerful thunderstorm, which may be based on a psalm to the Caananite god, Baal (see Chris Haslam's [comments](#) on this) God over the waters, God's glory thundering, breaking the cedars, flashes forth flames of fire, "the voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness."
- What imagery would you use to describe/envision God's voice in your life? I like the process theology metaphor of God's *lure*, God slowly luring me with God's voice until slowly, step by step, I followed.
- This psalm also appears in the lectionary every year on Baptism of the Lord Sunday - would reading it in the context of that calendar day change your understanding?

Romans 8:12-17:

- "spirit of adoption" - I'm always torn by Paul's language of adoption. On the one hand, I'm hesitant to think that we're not born into God's family, God's children. I shudder to think that God only adopts some as children, and not others, which is an unfortunate and often drawn conclusion of such theology. But on the other hand, there is a special-ness about God going the 'extra mile', as it were, to make us God's own. Out of God's deep desire to have us as children. I guess I just want to make sure God has no limits or special qualifications for who is adopted!
- But, here, maybe I can read Paul's words in a new way. He's not talking adoption vs. natural children. He's talking adoption vs. slavery. Our relationship to God is as children instead of slaves. In this light, his adoption language is more meaningful to me. We're brought right into the family, not kept in God's home for service but out of God's heart as slaves.

John 3:1-17

- This passage includes perhaps the most famous and most memorized Bible verse in all the world. When I was little, I had one of those little New Testament Bibles that had John 3:16 in the front in about 20 different languages. Many consider "for God so loved the world" the verse to know if you're going to know any.
- However, I find the rest of this passage much more meaningful. We throw around the phrase "born again" a lot in the Christian community, sometimes as a state to be desired, sometimes with a roll of the eyes for the implication the word has come to have. But what is Jesus *really saying* here when he says we must be born again, born of water and the Spirit? Actually, I think we are all constantly being born-again. We're always renewing and remaking ourselves as we grow. The question is not *whether* we are born-again, but *how* we are born-again. Are we born again through water and Spirit, as Jesus says we must be, or something else?
- If you didn't do a renewal of baptismal vows on Baptism of the Lord Sunday, this is another good day to do this as a congregation. I've always found it very meaningful.
- :17 "Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him." This is an important verse, and I think it helps us ground verse :16, instead of using verse :16 as an exclusive litmus test type verse.
- I admire Nicodemus, even if he didn't get exactly what Jesus was talking about. He was willing to ask questions that would set him at odds, no doubt, with some of the other religious leaders. He had to take risks, and taking risks means having some faith. How are you or can you be like Nicodemus?

by Beth Quick.

LECTIONARY NOTES 2

REFLECTIONS ON THEME:

The obvious focus of the readings this week is the celebration of the Trinity. The uniquely doctrinal nature of this theme can make it a tough week to prepare for, but the specific focus of the readings for Year B offers some helpful practical possibilities. Isaiah's vision, with the triple "holy" of the seraphs, reveals how powerfully transforming a true encounter with the triune God can be. The psalm supports this with its celebration of God as king over all, including the heavenly beings. In the letter to the Romans, Paul reveals how the triune God works in our hearts and lives to make us, both in identity and action, true Spirit-led children of God. Finally, in John's Gospel, Jesus makes the same point in his call for seekers of God to be born again – transformed, by God's Spirit, into believers in, and practitioners, of the values and purposes of God's Reign, that was revealed, taught and demonstrated by Jesus. God is revealed, then, as the King and Creator, who seeks an intimate relationship, as of parent and child, with human beings, and all of creation. Then, God is also revealed in Christ as the one who shows the true nature of God's kingship, and who invites us to be participants in God's work in the world, by giving us an example, and by opening doors to God's life through his death and resurrection. Finally, the empowerment we need to enter this relationship with God, and live as kingdom people, is God's Spirit who is given to us and through whom we are born from above. The key for this week, then, is how God encounters us, in God's Triune nature, and transforms us into Christ-like, kingdom living, children of God. The Trinitarian celebration is not just a fascinating theological exercise, but a moment of opening ourselves, in worship, to this transforming encounter with our majestic and mysterious God.

CONNECTING WITH LIFE:

GLOBAL APPLICATION: It can be tough to connect our very Christian belief in the Trinity with the very real struggle for justice in our world, but, if we manage to do this successfully, it can be a wonderful opportunity to reveal the power of the foundational beliefs of our faith. This year the readings are biased toward action. On the one hand, the emphasis is on God's action in us. What the Trinitarian focus reveals is how God works in us, and in our world, in so many different ways – as transcendent Monarch over creation, as friend and co-worker for justice in human affairs, and as personal and corporate empowerer and transformer. God is at work throughout the universe, and in the smallest details of our lives. God is at work in us as individuals and as communities. God is at work in us to transform everything, from how we live to the systems within which we live. On the other hand, there is the challenge for us to encounter this Triune God and be moved into action as a result. We are called to be personally changed – convicted, confessing and cleansed, like Isaiah, so that we are born from above – and to become those who bring the transforming influence of God's Reign into the world, not just living ourselves for justice, peace and love, but, like Isaiah, being sent to bring those qualities into the world. The challenge, then, of this week's celebration is to recognise that changing our world requires a recognition of God's activity at every level of our world, but also a commitment to being changed both personally and socially. As such, whatever work we may do to change our world for the better – be it poverty alleviation, creation care, advocacy for the marginalised, seeking an end to human trafficking – we need to begin by allowing the Triune God to work in us, and we need to value the small, individual contribution that we can make. Then, to this we can add prayer for God's work in the structures and systems of our world, and organised initiatives to bring about the change that God's Reign calls us to. The vision of God as Trinity opens our hearts and minds to all of these creative possibilities and more.

LOCAL APPLICATION: On a local level the challenge of this week's theme is much the same as on the global level, but the specific implications are more personal and immediate. Again, the recognition of God's activity in every aspect of our lives, personally and communally, is the basis from which we can hope to change, and make any kind of contribution to our neighbourhoods, communities and even countries. And the challenge for us to recognise God's call for us to change while also contributing to bringing God's Reign into visibility also remains. What it means, though, is that we need to learn to see God's Spirit at work in our relationships, our homes and places of work, our churches and schools. The God who is king of creation, incarnate embodiment of love and indwelling Spirit moves within us and through us, and is active in every moment, every interaction and every place. When we can begin to recognise God's Presence and activity, everything changes for us. Then, as we embrace God's call and power to be changed, we automatically become more like Christ and find ourselves bringing Christ's love and grace into every part of our world which can only have an impact for the good. It is impossible, therefore, to believe in God as Trinity, without also believing in God's constant, gracious, saving presence in our world and in our lives. It is also impossible to believe in the Trinity without seeking to be changed into more loving and gracious people who bring life and love into our families, our churches and our neighbourhoods in practical ways. This may mean learning to forgive a family member, or serving at a soup kitchen. It may mean volunteering in our churches, or taking care of a sick child. Whatever the details, the more we learn to see and open to the Triune God, the more we will reflect that God's presence and power in our own lives. May this week be more than an interesting doctrinal exercise, but be a truly transforming encounter with God.

John 3.1-17 a man of the Pharisees..

We focus on an unusual encounter which took place *by night* – away from the crowds – to avoid being seen?

1. The Seeker – Nicodemus – highly respected – *a leader of the Jews* – 71 member Sanhedrin – Jewish High Court

a) his Quest – to learn more about Jesus and his teaching..

i) recognised his Person – he who had heard many so many highly educated and learned intellectuals of his time – and here was the special one - *a teacher come from God*

ii) realised his Power – seen in the distinctive miracles of Jesus - *no man can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God* – recognised that God was at work..

b) his Questions – as Jesus affirms: *no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above* – Nicodemus took Jesus literally rather than spiritually.. ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a 2nd time into the mother’s womb and be born?’

2. The Spirit – *no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit* – ref to the importance of the work of Holy Spirit in the life of the individual...⁸*The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.*’

3. The Saviour – points to his saving death – ref Old Testament:- ¹⁴*And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up,* ¹⁵*that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.* – reference to the plague in the wilderness recorded in Exodus – those who looked to the bronze serpent were saved from certain death... So may we in faith and trust look to Jesus!

ONLINE SERMON SOURCES

"The Threefold Nature of God," the Rev. Dr. Fred R. Anderson, Day 1.
http://day1.org/1258-the_threefold_nature_of_god

"Who Is God?" Dianne Bergant, CSA, America:
http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=3026.

"Most Holy Trinity," John R. Donahue, SJ, America
http://www.americamagazine.org/content/article.cfm?article_id=2382

"Homo-ousios, Homoi-ousios, Who Cares?" John Jewell
http://www.lectionarysermons.com/june_18_00.htm

CHILDREN

[Worshiping with Children](#), Trinity Sunday, Including children in the congregation's worship, using the Revised Common Lectionary, Carolyn C. Brown.
<http://worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.co.uk/2012/04/year-b-trinity-sunday-june-3-2012.html>

"Sermon of the Week," Sermons 4 Kids, Charles Kirkpatrick, Object Lessons & Children's Sermons, Colouring Pages, Puzzles. Sermons4Kids.com.
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/>
www.churchnewsireland.org

"Measuring God's Love," "The Butterfly,"
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/measuring.html>

"The Butterfly,"
<http://www.sermons4kids.com/butterfly.html>

"The Mystery of God," Children's Time, in Sermons and Liturgies. Richard J. Fairchild.
(Scroll down in liturgies to find Children's Time.)
<http://www.rockies.net/~spirit/sermons/b-trinsmsu.php>

Holy, Holy, Holy
Father, We Praise Thee
Holy God, We Praise Thy Name
Immortal Invisible
Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow
Father, Spirit, Jesus (YouTube video)
Praise The Father, Praise The Son (YouTube video)
Glorify Your Name (YouTube video)
Father, I Adore You (YouTube video)