

Trinity Sunday

Principal Service readings

Proverbs 8.1-4,22-31	Wisdom as creator
Psalms 8	The power of God's name
Romans 5.1-5	God's love poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit
John 16.12-15	The Spirit of truth glorifies the Son

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus Christ,
speak to our hearts in the stillness,
keep us steadfast in the foundation that cannot be shaken,
lift up our eyes to behold the vision of your glory;
and perfect our faith, now and always. Amen.

Society of Saint Francis

Gospel Reading

The message of Father, Son and Spirit

Jesus said to his disciples:

- ¹² 'I still have many things to say to you,
but you cannot bear them now.
- ¹³ When the Spirit of truth comes,
he will guide you into all the truth;
for he will not speak on his own,
but will speak whatever he hears,
and he will declare to you the things that are to come.
- ¹⁴ He will glorify me,
because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.
- ¹⁵ All that the Father has is mine.
For this reason I said
that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.'

John 16.12-15 NRSV¹

¹ *New Revised Standard Version Bible* is copyright © 1989 Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America.

Comments and Questions

The great liturgical scholar Adolf Adam has called feasts like today's feasts of ideas and feasts of devotion. As feasts of devotion they are expressions of piety responding to an internal or external trial. As feasts of ideas each one extends our understanding of the mystery of our faith. In celebrating this feast then, the church is hoping to increase and deepen both our worship and our understanding of God as Trinity.

Although the Trinity is nowhere mentioned explicitly in the Bible there are hints of it, as in this passage, where Jesus refers to both the Spirit and the Father, and speaks of the fullness of their sharing, of their identity.

In the Old Testament a certain complexity to the nature of God is shown where God is personified as Word (*dabar*), Spirit (*ruah*), Wisdom (*hokmah*), and presence (*shekinah*).

What difference does it make to understand God as Trinity? Why might this doctrine have come to be defined?

Quotations

1

If you are a theologian you will pray truly; and if you pray truly you are a theologian.

Evagrius of Pontus. *On Prayer*, 61

2

the trinitarian confession is ... the Christian form of speaking about God.

The God of Jesus Christ / Walter Kasper. (London: SCM, 1984), p.233.

3

Real theology, which means the knowledge of God, finds expression in thanks, praise and adoration. And it is what finds expression in doxology that is real theology.

The Trinity and the Kingdom / Jürgen Moltmann. p.152

4

when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
³⁰ then was I beside him, like a master worker;
and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always,
³¹ rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

Proverbs 8.29b-31 NRSV

Related topics

For further study:

The Holy Trinity ; Doctrine of God ; the Creed

Closing Prayer

O God,
your name is veiled in mystery,
yet we dare to call you Father;
your Son was begotten before all ages,
yet is born among us in time;
your Holy Spirit fills the whole creation,
yet is poured forth now into our hearts.

Because you have made us and loved us
and called us by your name,
draw us more deeply into your divine life,
that we may glorify you rightly,
through your Son
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
God for ever and ever.

Collect for Trinity Sunday, Year C²

² *Opening Prayers : Scripture-related Collects for Years A, B and C, from The Sacramentary* / International Commission on English in the Liturgy. – Norwich : Canterbury Press, 1999. – (The ICEL Collects, 1997)