



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 4th June 2023 - The Most Holy Trinity

1 Relax & Remember

Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. **Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present.** Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



2 Read

Taken from the Gospel for Sunday 4th June 2023 - God so Loved the World (John 3:16-18)

Jesus said to Nicodemus, 'God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son.'

3 Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

At first sight this part of the dialogue with Nicodemus seems to mention only the Father and the Son and not involve the Holy Spirit. A chief concern of the Gospel of John is to show the relationship of loving obedience between Father and Son. The love and equality in a perfect relationship between a human parent and a child is the nearest reflection of such divine love which we can envisage. In complete trust and confidence the parent gives to the child everything that is theirs. The parent's only interest is the advancement of the child. The child's only care is to please the parent and to be as close to the parent as they can be, in word, in action and in relationships. Each has a vibrant and continuous bond of love for the other. Such a relationship may be rare in human family life, but it can model for us a pale reflection of the loving relationship between the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son, love in person, the living bond which unites them. We must, however, appreciate that any such language limps and belittles the divine relationship, which is of a different order of perfection and intensity. Human language can never fully explain the mystery of God which is beyond our total understanding.

We are familiar with St Patrick's clover-leaf image of the Trinity. Are there any other images of the Trinity which you find helpful? How are Father, Son and Spirit presented in this Gospel passage? How does the Holy Spirit bring us close to the Father? How can we respond to God's love for us?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

4 Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. **Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.**



WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 4th June 2023



First Reading: *The Definition of God's Name*

Exodus 34:4-6.8-9

With the two tablets of stone in his hands, Moses went up the mountain of Sinai in the early morning as the Lord had commanded him. And the Lord descended in the form of a cloud, and Moses stood with him there. He called on the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'Lord, Lord, a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness.' And Moses bowed down to the ground at once and worshipped. 'If I have indeed won your favour, Lord,' he said, 'let my Lord come with us, I beg. True, they are a headstrong people, but forgive us our faults and our sins, and adopt us as your heritage.'

This is one of the really very central passages of the Bible. In Judaism the special name of God is never spoken. For two reasons. It is too sacred and awesome to be pronounced, for the name somehow makes the personality present. It is also too intimate: we do not bandy around in public the special family name by which we are affectionately known by our nearest and dearest. So where the name occurs in the Bible, a conventional 'the Lord' is used. The name itself was revealed to Moses at the Burning Bush, but not its meaning. Here for the first time the meaning is given, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God of tenderness and compassion.' Only when God has to forgive Israel for its first, heinous but rapid, rebellion, is the meaning of the name revealed. And this meaning is echoed again and again down the scriptures, in Deuteronomy, in Psalms, in Jeremiah. Even Jonah has to admit it when, to his fury, Nineveh is forgiven! This is the way Israel loves to picture its God, as a God of forgiveness. The Prologue of St John and the Parable of the Prodigal Son which witness to God as the one who forgives are no new inventions.

Is 'God of forgiveness' the most important way in which we can think about God?

Second Reading: *A Trinitarian Blessing*

2 Corinthians 13:11-13

Brothers, we wish you happiness; try to grow perfect; help one another. Be united; live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with the holy kiss. All the saints send you greetings. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

This reading, concluding with the Trinitarian blessing, is the finale of this Letter to the Corinthians. The interrelationship of the Three Persons of the Trinity is a theological elaboration which was reached only gradually in Christian meditation. Paul, however, already often mentions the three Persons in parallel, making some distinction between them or at any rate between their functions in the story of salvation. When he mentions one he seems at the same time to be conscious of the influence also of the other Persons of the Trinity. The constant triple mention of each of the Persons in itself suggests equality, each playing a special part, as 'It is God who gives you a sure place in Christ, giving us as pledge the Spirit in our hearts' (2 Corinthians 1:21), or 'You have been justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and through the Spirit of our God' (1 Corinthians 6:11). Rather than prying, so to speak, into the personal interrelationships of the three, the scripture limits itself to mentioning the part played by each in our creation, salvation and sanctification. God, whom we also address as Abba, Father, is the initiator. It is through the work of Christ that we are justified, saved, redeemed, reconciled. The Spirit is at work in transforming us in holiness.

Which three qualities does St Paul wish for the Corinthians in his Trinitarian blessing at the end of this reading? How do you experience the love of the Trinity?

“...the part played by each Person of the Trinity in our creation, salvation and sanctification.”

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w: www.wednesdayword.org e: info@wednesdayword.org