

Sunday 'Spiritual Communion' After Ascension Trinity Sunday

*You may wish to find a space for prayer in front of a cross, a candle, or a special place. The words in **bold** you are encouraged to say out loud as worship and prayer.*

Opening Prayer

The Church of which we are members is not defined by the walls of a building but by the Body of Christ of which we are members.

We are joining with Christians everywhere to be nourished by the one who tells us, 'I am the Bread of Life'.

Opening Sentences in the Season of Ordinary Time

My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, I will wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word do I hope. We make our prayers this season...



**In the name of the Maker, who lit the world and breathed the breath of life for us
In the name of the Son, who saved the world and stretched out his hand to us
In the name of the Spirit, who encompasses the world and blesses our souls with yearning**

This is the Trinity of Love; God above us, God beside us, God beneath us.

Prayers of Preparation and Confession

Almighty God to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen

Dear Lord, help me to be open to you for this time as I put aside the cares of this world. Fill my mind with your peace, Your Love. I ask myself ..

If God were trying to tell me something, would I know?

If God were reassuring me or challenging me, would I notice?

We ask for the grace to be free of my own preoccupations and open to what God may be saying to us..

You may wish to pray:

Lord, have mercy.

Christ, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.



A reading from the Gospel

Read John 3 v 16-18 (A reflection attached to the end of the service sheet)

Intercessions

Let us pray for the needs of the world, for our local community, and for those close to you.

End with the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father...

Let us give thanks for the gift of Jesus coming to us from the Father by the power of the His Eternal and Holy Spirit.

O God, the source of all good desires, all right judgements, and all just works: give to your servants that peace which the world cannot give; that our hearts may be set to live in relationship with You as our Father, our Saviour and our Wisdom. Amen.

**O most merciful redeemer, friend and brother,
may I know you more clearly,
love you more dearly,
and follow you more nearly, day by day. Amen.**

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your disciples, 'I am with you always'.
Be with me and those whom I love and pray for as I offer myself to you.
Hear my prayers for others and for myself, and keep me in your care..

Blessing and Peace

May the Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil,
and keep us in eternal life. **Amen.**



The Peace of the Lord be always with you



Reflection on John 3 v 16-18

This morning we reflect on the idea of the Trinity. A God who is One in Three. A Divine relationship which through its different parts reveals a unity of Love. But this already identifies a great challenge does it not! A challenge to engage with Trinity Sunday not as a dry abstract theological idea but instead as an invitation to experience God. A belief that Christian faith is about participating in the loving communion that has been revealed to us in the persons of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. So let us put aside trying to *understand* the Trinity and focus instead on relationships! Let us consider what it means that as John tells us God the Father gave us His Son in the Wisdom of the Spirit.

There is a story of a Vicar who told his congregation on Trinity Sunday “we have recently discovered new texts of the bible and of the Fathers of the Church that reveal God is, in reality, *two* people and not *three*”. He wanted to speculate as to whether this revelation would affect the church congregation very much and suggested that if the idea of the Trinity is an abstract bit of theology you might not be very upset by this revelation. However if the Trinity is not simply a concept for us to understand but refers to our living relationship with God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, then in responding to the question, we would be determined to defend the three People that we know and love!

The Trinity then is only valuable to us in as far as it reveals what a loving relationship can look like. In the two partial images which frame the second page of our service sheet we are invited to think about the possibility that *we* as individuals are not in fact at the centre of everything. Relationships are not just about us but are about us and another, or indeed many others in our lifetime! In the Trinity we are reminded us that we never truly live in isolation (despite the current health crisis) because we are made in God’s image and that image is relational. Let us reflect further on how the images help us understand this (you may in your own time wish to find the full images on the internet).

The first image at the top of the page is one of the most famous religious icons of all time, Andrei Rublev’s *Troitsa* (Russian for Triune or Trinity). The second is a modern reinterpretation of this icon by Kelly Latimore. In these icons the Trinity is revealed in relational terms. Rublev’s icon is based around the story of Gen 18:1-16, the episode in which “three men” visit Abraham and Sarah and promise them a son. Kelly Latimore takes the same story and wonders what it might look like in a more gender equal and cross-cultural context. What is important, however, is that both are pictures which invite us to look into a Triune encounter of which we are not the centre. Imagine that ... we are not the most important thing as we look into this relational moment. We are encouraged not to want the story, the relationship to conform to our own criteria. To meet our own standards. To submit to our relational needs. The images of the Trinity attempt to illustrate that our sense of God does not come from the outside but rather from experiencing that the Divine Persons have their own source of light within themselves.

In a time of selfies and Zoom images we have a tendency to concentrate on ourselves and forget the other. We can find ourselves in some of the most beautiful places in the world and still lose sight of the big picture as we focus in on ourselves. On Trinity Sunday we are invited to remove ourselves from the picture for a moment. To experience God in a true loving relationship between a Father, Son (or for Latimer Mother, Daughter) and Spirit. And to embark on a journey into that Divine relationship through an invitation extended to join this union of perfect Love through faith in Christ.