

## Trinity Sunday Year c 'Doing' Church

Last week we thought about how the church came into being and what it means for us to be church. We talked about how the Spirit en'courages' us to take risks and follow the promptings of God.

This week I want us to continue the theme and think about what we mean when we talk about 'doing' church and to think a bit about the trinity as we go along.

The phrase 'doing' church is not that common, however, the phrase "I don't do religion" is one I encounter quite a lot. It is often followed up by a sentence implying a deep and varied spiritual life, that involves daily prayer or a generous and open hearted life style helping the poor or bringing justice clearly linked to a belief in God.

Those of us here can definitely be said to 'do' church. We are doing it right now. What I want us to think about today, how we do church and why. These are massive questions many of which are wrapped up in the study of **ecclesiology** and you can find lots and lots of books on the subject. So what we are doing here today is a very light touch.

I want to start with the words of Jesus in our gospel

I still have many things to say to you but you cannot bear them now."

Jesus is making it clear that we are called to be a community with a 'learning mindset'.

Revelation is not static but on-going and continuous. We do not learn everything about ourselves and how we do church in one go it is a continuous learning curve, we have to keep being prepared to change.

This continuous need to move forward, to change to grow is for me rooted and explained in the Trinity.

The thing that the TRINITY can never be is fixed, because the trinity is about relationships and relationships never stay static. If you are in a relationship it is something that is always adjusting, changing moving. You adjust to the mood of the other person, to how their day has been to what is going on in their life. You don't assume that someone you haven't seen for a long time is actually the same.

All the images and pictures we have of the Trinity are inherently flawed, we can't explain the inexplicable but there is a clear sense of relationship.

We can feel this in our passage from Proverbs. Wisdom uses terms of relationship- delighting, rejoicing.

We delight in our children- not necessarily when they dye their hair blue but definitely when they work hard or try their best.

We rejoice when a friend has a successful operation or recovers from an illness.

In church we delight in our children when they tell us what they have learnt from God.

We rejoice that Becky is off to theological college.

We delight when we see a friend in church who has been away for a while, and we rejoice to see our church family happily worshipping together.

As the Trinity exists in and for relationship so it is that it is in relationship that we 'do' church.

There is of course one key difference between the relationship of the trinity and the relationships we have in church. One is perfect and the other isn't!

The relationship in which we do church is a strange one. We don't always have a personal relationship with each person that comes into our building or even with those who worship regularly. We all have our friends, those whom we know well or even are related too and this is perfectly fine and completely normal.

We don't have a personal relationship with everyone in the church but we are still in relationship with them. As we worship together in this place, at this time, with these people, we are creating an intentional relationship as a community. We are coming together as the body of Christ in this place.

Together we seek God's will not just for our own lives, but for the life of us as a community. Constantly seeking out our part in the 'work' that we are called to do here together.

This is the point to turn to the passage from Romans. Possibly bizarrely but this is one of my favourite passages because I recognise the truth in those words. The fact that we 'do' religion or 'do' church does not shelter us from the reality of life as a human. We will encounter suffering, this can build endurance which will create character and those build hope.

IN the context of community this becomes even more powerful. As a community we encounter suffering, when one of loved ones dies, or when we are struggling to find the money we

need, or when we find it difficult because something is different or changes.

As a community in relationship we need this suffering to turn into endurance to build character and give us hope. This doesn't happen automatically. This happens when we allow the relationship of the trinity to impact into the relationships that we have.

It happens when we are intentional about love. It is love that allows our sufferings to be endured and it is love that grows character and it is love that is the foundation of hope. It is the same love that flows within that perfect relationship of the Trinity.

As we have entered Trinity season, we have again at the altar the famous icon by Rublev named the three angels but often referred to as the Trinity. There are many words that have been written and spoken about this and I will put a link to some with the on line version of this sermon.

This morning as you come to the communion rail, I want you to look for the relationship of love between the three figures. To commit yourself once again to an intentional relationship of love with those of us who are called worship here and now at Holy Cross, and those who we pray might come and find us and join us.

We are called to an intentional relationship driven by love, where we know that some of the things we were not ready to learn from Jesus can be found in each other.

Our relationship with the Holy Trinity is worked out primarily in our relationships within Holy Cross. We do church best when we intentionally seek to grow in relationship with each other and with God.