TRINITY sermon – Rev Paul Mundy 15 June 2014

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
And lighten with celestial fire.
Thou the anointing Spirit art,
Who dost thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessed unction from above
Are comfort, life, and fire of love?
Enable with perpetual light
The dullness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of thy grace.
Keep far from foes, give peace at home:
Where thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And thee, have both, to be but One,
That through the ages all along,
This may be our endless song:

Praise to thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen

Trinity Sunday can be a bit like marmite! !
Either you Love it or you hate it!
And that is because for many of us
When people talk about the Trinity
Either you get it or you don’t!

One of the first questions that I was asked on my Bishops Advisory Panel
Was to express my understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity

What popped into my head was the analogy I had heard of the trinity
Being like a Jaffa cake three separate entities in the one thing.
Now the problem with using analogies to explain the Trinity is that you always end up confessing some ancient heresy
And I had just committed the heresy of modalism or was it Arianism
Either way if you would like to find out more I commend the Diocesan course on early church history to you.

Of Course what I should have said was that;

The Trinity is a mystery that cannot be comprehended by human reason
But it is understood only through Faith as confessed in the words of the Athanasian Creed
Which says that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity
Neither confusing the persons, nor dividing the substance.
That we are compelled by the Christian truth to confess that each distinct person is God and Lord
And that the deity of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is one
Equal in Glory co-equal in Majesty Amen!

Some people might be thinking, “Why do we even need a Trinity Sunday?”
It does not hold a candle to Christmas or Easter; it doesn’t get as much press as Pentecost.
Is it because it’s so confusing that we just don’t know how to talk about it?

Even The Great Augustine had to reduce it to a very simple illustration.
Augustine used an example of a Tree
The Root is wood:
The Trunk is wood:
The branches are wood:
One wood one substance but three different entities
Well it does make for a short sermon . . . I know some of you would like that?

Let’s come at this another way
What if there was no Trinity? Scrap it! Wipe it from your mind!
I know Jesus tells us to go and baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit

But What if we baptized people only in the name of the Father?
Well today is Father’s day so that would make life a lot easier, give me a good theme, lots of material there . . . . But wait a minute besides sounding awkward, it would deny the very work and person of Christ who commissioned the disciples to and baptize all peoples of all nations, let alone the ongoing activity of the Holy Spirit that we talked about last week at Pentecost.
Our relationship would change we would become absorbed in an all powerful, mysterious yet detached God.
And this could lead us towards mysticism

What if we baptized in the name of Jesus?
That could work?
We all know that the answer to any difficult question is always “Jesus”
“I baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ Amen” . . . . . . . . . . . . . There we go all sorted.
So what do we do with the person of ‘God the Father Almighty, the maker of Heaven and Earth”?
What do we do with the part of God that is larger than what we can see or understand?
That part which is beyond our Logic and reason
As well as missing out the Holy Spirit, that ongoing presence of God with us today.

What if we said I baptize you in the name of the Holy Spirit?
We all love the Holy Spirit that breath of God breathed into each and every one of us who submits to its mighty power.
What could be missing there?
Missing would be the awesomeness and creativity of God the Father
Missing would be the redemptive work of Jesus Christ who is God in human flesh.
Missing would be the part of God who suffered was crucified, died and was buried
Who rose again just to overcome our Sinfulness?
We probably shouldn’t leave that out
Christian witness and fellowship are bound up with the worship of the one God in three persons
If, as I believe, we are, each one of us, made in the image of God, as beings in communion with one another in the name of that Holy and Undivided Trinity whose very being exists in communion,
Then when we come to faith
We are brought into communion with a God who encounters us a loving Father, as the redeeming Son and as the passionate empowering Spirit – not three gods, but one God, present to us in three persons.
You see Jesus did not just send the church out to perform the ritual of baptism.
The world will not be fixed by merely getting everyone wet!
Saying the words “Father, Son and Holy Spirit” is not magic

The really tricky bit is that of making disciples.

Discipleship continues as it starts, in the service of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Disciples in the first century were baptized, but then they spent time with their Rabbi, their teacher, journeying together, sitting, talking, eating, listening, questioning and aiming to become more like the Rabbi.

This Thursday I will ordained a priest in the service of the Father, called to follow by example in the footsteps of the Son, by the power of the Spirit.

My discipleship learning is far from finished, it began 45 years ago when Mum and Dad decided to have me baptized, and when the time comes, I am fully expecting to find a classroom within my Father’s house, among the other many rooms.

Disciples are students
Discipleship is like serving an internship
We watch, we practice under supervision
We are constantly asking questions, making mistakes and God willing learning from them.
Jesus said very clearly
“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations”
Go make students for Christ
Making students of Christ and immersion into the fullness of God go hand in hand

As the Arch Bishop said last week
We cannot make ourselves or anyone else a student of Christ without the work of the Holy Spirit
The work of the Holy Spirit is dependent upon what and who Jesus was and is
Christ keeps pointing to the Father.

So therein lies the power.
It is the Trinity, the fullness of God to which we are eternally connected as disciples of Jesus Christ

I believe we should make more of Trinity Sunday
It sits there on our Church calendar
Offering us the entire being of God
In a relationship that we do not deserve
But can celebrate having.

I believe that is when we will know that God is God,
That somehow God knows who we are,
That God knows where we are,
What we are doing, and
God knows what we really need.

Knowing God the Trinity
Puts things in order, its what binds us together
Offers us the opportunity to live in peace
Greeting one another with the passion of a Holy Kiss
Knowing the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
And the communion of the Holy Spirit
Is with us all
Now and ever more
Amen