

Sunday 26th May 2024 Trinity Sunday. Patronal BCP
Benefice Holy Communion, Stonegrave Minster

Some words said in today's Gospel by Nicodemus, "How can these things be?"

That is a question that we should continually ask as we walk our journey and today as once again, we contemplate the Holy Trinity, that question is always appropriate. The Trinity seems a difficult concept to understand let alone preach about, and part of the reason is because the Trinity is not specifically mentioned anywhere in the Scriptures, even though the concept of the Trinity is implied and described throughout the Bible.

In essence, the Trinity is the belief that God is one in essence, but distinct in person. In other words, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are somehow distinct from one another, yet at the same time they are completely united. God is a relationship in which all three members of the Trinity relate to each other, give to each other, and love each other in perfect harmony.

The early church therefore introduced the concept of the Trinity to explain how God works in our lives and is the firm basis for our faith in relationship with him. This is the concept encapsulated in the Nicene Creed and the Apostle's Creed, what we must affirm every week in our worship. These words are vital because it was the intention of the creeds to affirm three core beliefs: the essential unity of God, the complete humanity and divinity of Jesus, the divinity of the Holy Spirit. In these words, Christians affirm the unity of all three members of the Godhead. We worship and glorify the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. So, fundamentally, the Trinity is the perfect relationship, based completely on mutual love and grace.

It is therefore that relationship that seeks us out, as it sought out Nicodemus. We can learn from his example because like Nicodemus, Jesus is always there for us, night, or day. In His perfect timing, He will answer our most confounding questions. Regardless of our status, nothing is more important than the love of the Trinity toward us, within us and working through us.

To understand this, for Nicodemus and for us, change is sometimes necessary. We need to be shaken up if we want to walk the life of Christ and be 'born again' by accepting the Trinity into our lives. Then the Trinity heals our sinful nature when we acknowledge the Holy Spirit is in us. It also heals the conflict that results from our change to our new life, heals our relationship with God, and with all our relationships because loving relationships are the foundation of our lives.

Today then, in this wonderful ancient minster, we are reminded again that God is Father, Son and Spirit, are co-equals united in mutual love and divine essence. When we remember this, we can understand what Jesus meant when he said that He and the Father and the Spirit are one. We can't have one without the other. Jesus reveals God and reconciles us to God. He is the one through whom we can enter God's kingdom, and the Spirit takes us there. The Holy Trinity is God coming to us in whatever way we can receive Him. As a result, we become new people who express God's love in everything we do, say, or think.

This is the God we worship and the answer to that question posed by Nicodemus which is really quite simple. God is the Trinitarian God who is Love - who reveals love, who shows us love, who invites us to receive and share his love. It's not difficult, the Trinity gives love, loves, and loves again, that stretches from before the foundation of the cosmos into eternity, out of which the

world is born. Love taking human form and reaching out to us on the cross, love bearing all pain, enduring even unto death, and on into resurrection. Love poured out at Pentecost to transform hearts and lives, to energise and expand, to release and to heal. Love we are called to receive and to share as individuals and as a church community each day in the blessed name of the Trinity.

Thanks be to God. Amen.