

The passage from Isaiah, our first reading today, is particularly memorable for me. It is the first reading I ever read publicly as a youngster in a church service. This is Isaiah's call to be a prophet in the year 740BC (the year that king Uzziah of Judah died). It was an unexpected visionary experience of the presence of God in the temple. The passage is probably being read on Trinity Sunday because of the familiar threefold angelic praise of God: 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Sabaoth (Lord of hosts). And the voice of the Lord, saying 'Whom shall I send, who will go for us?' God speaking in the singular and plural in the same sentence. Anyway, back to the time that I first read it aloud in church, I think I was as nervous as Isaiah must have been, but the only daunting vision that I had was the full congregation in front of me. I was in my home church, which just happens to be dedicated to the Holy Trinity.

I have also had three Holy Trinity churches as a parish priest, two of which I ministered to concurrently. I am not sure that this has made me any more enlightened in my understanding of God, the Source of all being, the Eternal Word, and Life Giver, or, as traditionally we say: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Holy Trinity, one God who has revealed the divine nature in a plurality of ways. Of course, we celebrate this every Sunday as people with a Trinitarian faith and form of worship, but today, Trinity Sunday, we pause to consider and celebrate the wonder and mystery of it all!

Mystery, as the eminent Franciscan Richard Rohr explains, 'is not something you cannot understand; rather, it is something that you can endlessly understand! There is no point at which you can say, "I've got it." Always and forever, mystery gets you!'

Like Isaiah, we must always maintain humility before the Great Mystery we call God, otherwise, we have a religion that worships itself and its formularies, rituals, and symbols instead of God. And our faith, or at least our churchgoing, can easily become confused with or conditional on such things as the church building or location, or issues about the form of the service or the music. Occasionally, I get enquiries from people asking questions about such things, giving the impression that our church has got to be fit for them to worship in, otherwise they won't come! Fortunately, most enquiries from visitors are simply to check the times and locations of our services.

As Christians, we have been called to be part of a community, a worldwide movement that meets in many different places in many different traditions and languages, but always a community that is especially called to meet on the first day of the week, every week. However imperfect that community is at present, whether at its highest levels or locally, it is useful to remember that we are imperfect too!

Our worship together is the most important way God comes to us, providing us with our way to God and to each other. It is the fruit of experience that the Church has placed the breaking of the bread at the centre of its life. The Eucharist is the summit of the Christian life of prayer, and it focuses all that the Christian life is about. In this act of worship, we demonstrate the life by which we are fed, or as St Augustine expressed it, we gradually become what we eat! We become 'bread' broken for the life of the world; we become Christ to others. We actively and intentionally participate in the being of God, drawn by the Holy Spirit into God's life and love. And because God is self-giving Love, to be drawn into God's life is necessarily to find ourselves being sent out in love for the world.

In today's Gospel we read that God loved the world so much that he gave his Son, so that through him we may have eternal life. That means real and abundant life here and now, as well as the complete life to come. Jesus was God's supreme revelation to human beings in human form, showing as one of us what God is like, how God loves all life, his beloved creation, and how God longs for human beings to know him and reveal his nature and values in this life.

After his resurrection, Jesus enters the realm of God, the realm of the Spirit, the Spirit who is then poured upon the followers of Jesus as a third manifestation of God's being. The Spirit, whose coming we celebrated last Sunday, Pentecost, is the final revelation of God to human beings, preparing us for the age to come. The Spirit is the pledge that our life is a journey whose destiny is full union with God.

Confessing our Trinitarian faith, such as we do in baptism, confirmation, in the creeds, and in a practical way in Holy Communion, is incomplete and ineffective unless it comes from the heart and becomes a way of life. As the theologian

Catherine LaCugna expressed so well: *'Living faith in the God of Jesus Christ means being formed and transformed by God's grace.....: becoming persons fully in communion with all; becoming Christ to one another, becoming by the power of the Holy Spirit what God is: love unbounded, glory uncontained.'*