

Going with the flow... in your dancing shoes



Well, people have probably stood in this church for decades trying to explain the Trinity, and I'm not going to join them.

In the Christian faith, we believe that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all God. Equal, distinct, and undivided.

I think with Mysteries like the Trinity we spend so long trying to explain **how** three can be one – which we can't explain and can't really understand – that we invariably just tie ourselves in terrible knots.

And then we miss the sheer heart-stopping beauty of what only our hearts can truly sense. After all, if God were something we could completely understand and explain, it would reduce him to being something within our grasp, something no bigger or better than us.... a god of our own making.

We need a God of mystery, who is beyond us, and who can therefore encompass so much more than we can,

hold so much more than we can,

and... in his love, invite us to grow into so much more that we can imagine.

Mysteries, so they say, are not problems to be solved, but realities to be contemplated – relationships to be explored and delighted within.

One could be in a relationship with someone for years, live, learn, delight and grow in knowing them, but never completely understand them. Relationships are Holy Mysteries. They grow and deepen over years, but are never completely known, never exhausted. Because there is holy mystery wherever there is love. Because the Trinity is Love.

The One Love that flows between the persons of the Trinity, in a never-ceasing outpouring that makes itself whole.... But that constantly also flows to us, enfolding us... and inviting us in – to go with the flow, to follow our hearts. To be drawn in through experience ever deeper into the mysterious depths of God's love.

The Trinity is not explicitly in the bible... it is something that was discovered and proclaimed by the early Christians, through the experience of living and praying in the love that was being poured out around them. They started to speak about God as Trinity, as they explored how their relationship with God transformed their lives.

They knew God as the maker of all that is. The maker of you, of me, of everyone and all things, who holds all things.

Then, when people got to know Jesus, they felt like they were in God's presence. They were! Being with Jesus is being-with-God-here-with-us, walking alongside us.

And then, after Pentecost, they got to know God as the Spirit given within us, God within and through us; breath in our lungs, fire in our hearts.

One God... who made us and holds us, who lives alongside us, and breathes and blazes within and through us.

The one in whom we find our being,

with whom we find our meaning,

and through whom we find expression of it.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

One Love, giving, receiving, sharing... shared with us.

As Christians, we go a step further than many religions who say that *God is loving... and loves...*

we say that **God IS Love**. Love itself, flowing unceasingly. S. Teresa of Lisieux called the Christian life *standing under the torrent of God's love*. Letting it flow around and within and through, drawing us into an unending beauty of mystery; love given, love received, love shared. Refusing to accept isolation and aloneness, fraction and brokenness, letting the truth of the Three-in-One draw us back into the whole, into communion, and healing; into harmony.

But this is awfully dry, all this explaining. And life in the Trinity is anything but dry – it's something to be drawn into. A music that sets the foot tapping, a heart beat that sets your own beating in resonance, a pattern that draws you into it – it's like the most irresistible Conga of a bridal party – or maybe the long soft slow-dance of the courtship - so long it wraps itself round and round in a celtic knot, so intimate that it's hard to see where one body begins and the other ends. Somehow, it's got echoes of the stole that the priest wraps around a newly wed couple's hands and says "those whom God has joined together let no one set asunder" And like all good weddings, and love-declarations, on, on to the party, to the disco, to the dance.

The Christians came up with a term for Trinitarian Love. They called it *perichoresis*. It's Greek and it means *to dance about*. At the heart of our faith is the Lord of the Dance, a living, dynamic joy and love that draws us all in, with no need to learn the steps, or know what to do, but just with hands extended, and a rhythm of a heart beat of love, drawing us into the whole... and a calling us in turn to extend our hands to others to draw them in, too.

And if *perichoresis* doesn't slip off the tongue, then just remember Teresa and her torrent – love flowing unceasingly. And just simply *go with the flow...*

To start to know ourselves within this mystery and to live it out. Learning to trust love, trust communion, trust mutuality, and to seek to build and open channels of love in the world. To delight in mystery – seeing each other not as problems to be solved, or things to be categorised, but as glorious mystery that needs to be explored, embraced, and wondered at.

To be willing to live in the space of the things we cannot understand and cannot heal, and to be caught up in the love that holds all we cannot hold, and touches all with the joy of divine life and possibility. To be firm in the space that wraps us round with protective love, and not to be afraid then of encountering difference and challenge.

In the Trinity we take the radical step of **familial**, not club community and relationship. 'Sisters and brothers' in Greek means 'those who share the same womb'. The womb of the Church is the font.

When we say 'sisters and brothers' – like Paul did in our reading today - we mean it.

What does that mean for us? What mean for boundaries of 'in' and 'out', of possible or impossible? To how we live in the world? TO how we live supported in a love greater than our own

Let's face it, whether or not we understand or are interested in the Trinity, we have to accept the Trinity is interested in us... as Jesus says in our gospel today - we are baptised in the Name of the Trinity who claims us for Love.

That moment when the water pours down over us, and the name of the Trinity is spoken over us, and the commissioning that follows, are the simple truths of our lives... we are plunged into mystery and delight, and - again as Jesus commissions us in our Gospel – commissioned to reach out and share it.....

... joining this place and all places into the Holy Mystery of the Love of God, filling the world with the resounding rhythm of the dance-floor of

God, the ever-widening circles of the ripples of the heart-beat of the
Triune God.

In the words of the great Fr Malcolm Guite, poet and priest...

He calls us out of darkness, chaos, chance,
To improvise a music of our own,
..... To sing the End in whom we all begin;
Our God beyond, beside us and within.

*So dance then – wherever you may be – be our lives in Good Friday, or
Easter Day – for I am the Lord of the Dance, said he, and I will lead you all
in the dance, says he.*