

## Trinity Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> May 2026 (SB)

### Isaiah 40: 12-17, 27-31 and Matthew 28: 16-20

Three weeks ago I spent a lovely day with 8 women. They were all the same age as me. I knew them all quite well, but apart from a couple of them I hadn't seen the rest for 50 years (which makes me feel very old!) What connected us was that we were all at school together. It was a wonderful day. Apart from hair colour, no-one had really changed a bit and we recognized in each other the same mannerisms and way of speaking that we remembered from all those years ago. As well as sharing what we had done since leaving school, we looked at some old photos, including this one – a photo of the entire school, and tried to remember the names of as many girls as we could.

Then last week I had a long conversation with a former work colleague, catching up with all the news about our workplace since I'd retired, as well as, news about his family and his involvement in his church. That started me thinking about all

the people I had ever worked with and then those I have met because we shared a particular interest and then there is my family, church family and close friends. If it were possible to calculate all the people who have touched our lives, even in the smallest of ways during a lifetime, it would be a very large number indeed. They have all had an impact on our lives for better or for worse. Some relationships can be difficult or even harmful but good relationships are such a blessing.

Perhaps one of the greatest fears we all have is that of being alone. Even those of us who are natural introverts, know instinctively that **we need other people**. If I ever pop into the hall on a Thursday morning when Babies and Toddlers are in full swing it's clear that this is a place of connection, both for the children themselves as they have fun together and learn how to relate to other small people from a very early age, and also for the adults with them – it really is a time of joyful connection.

**We are made for connection and relationship.** Those who wrote the opening chapters of Genesis knew this. We read God makes humans (not just one because that wouldn't be good for any one of them to live alone, but many) and places them within his creation so they have a relationship with one another, with all the other creatures, and crucially with God himself. God doesn't just go away and leave us on our own. He wants to be involved in our lives. We also read that we are made in God's image and **he is a God of relationship.**

Our understanding of God will always be limited, but today Trinity Sunday, the church thinks about and celebrates God as Father, Son, and Spirit: 3 persons, 1 God.

How can we relate to this God? The picture we had from Isaiah was that of the spectacular creator. We're in the realms of poetry here as Isaiah tries to describe the mystery and magnificence of the one who is in control of the whole universe. His wisdom is beyond the understanding of any of his creatures. The things we think of as significant are to him as small as a drop in a bucket. Like looking down the

wrong end of a telescope, people look as small as grasshoppers. We may have explored Space a little tiny bit, because we are curious about our Galaxy and beyond but God sees and knows the whole universe. If his vision is so vast, Isaiah says, do you think God can't see you, and know you?

Yes, God is the giver of life and the maker of all things, and yet he cares about the small things, the small creatures, the small people, even us as individuals. His care is shown in the way he gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. We heard these words: "Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint".

Throughout the Bible we see God in a relationship with his world. Very near the beginning after the catastrophic flood he made a covenant with humans and with all his creatures that he would never again destroy the world, and then at

various points he renews that covenant with his people **and is faithful to it.**

But a covenant is like a contract that both parties agree to and when humans repeatedly broke their side and were unfaithful. God with all his power stooped down to us, and at just the right time he came to us in human form, in Jesus. Because we **needed a Redeemer** – someone to heal the *breakdown* of the relationship between us and God and with each other.

Jesus called God his Father and encouraged his followers to do the same. But what sort of father is he? We've had a picture of God the Creator, but there's more to discover. It's been said that Jesus is the perfect picture of what God the Father is really like. To know the love and compassion and forgiveness that Jesus offers us, is to know and receive the love and forgiveness of God. Jesus enlarges our vision of God, and if that were not enough, he graciously gives us the Spirit to be his presence with us. I am the vine and you are the branches, Jesus says. He wants us to stay firmly

connected to him. The Spirit helps us to stay connected to both Jesus and the Father. Paul says 'The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you'. The name given to Jesus in the prophecy of his birth was Immanuel – God with us – and that became true in an even fuller and more dynamic way in the giving of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

You could say that God is in a relationship with himself in the 3 persons of the Trinity. Father, Son and Spirit are united in a relationship of love. Each one is equal and shares the same characteristics: all that is God is in Jesus, all that is Jesus is in the Spirit. Love longs to share itself with others. Amazingly, God longs to draw **us** into that relationship. And so as we heard in Matthew's Gospel, just before the Ascension Jesus meets with his eleven disciples and they worship him, but some doubted. It was still a strange concept for them that this man they had spent time with and who they called Teacher was really God. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" says Jesus. Who else has that kind of authority, except God?

He tells them to go out and spread the word so that more and more people will come to know him, people of all nations everywhere. Baptise them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

I find it helpful to think of this as not just “in the name of” but *into* the name of the Father, Son and Spirit because this is God **drawing us into the middle of the love which flows between the 3 persons of the Trinity**. They encircle us, they surround us, they embrace us. Our Collect for today gives a flavour of this when it prays “draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love”. Like a good teacher who repeats the point not just twice but three times, so God gives us 3 ways of understanding something of who he is, **but he will always remain a mystery**.

Even if at times we only dimly recognise it in ourselves, **we are made in God’s image and bear God’s presence** as

we go out to connect with others (connect is a word we often use at St Paul’s) in order that they too may be drawn with us into the loving embrace of God who is Father, Son and Spirit - the Creator, the Redeemer and the one who is continually transforming us by his Spirit into the people he wants us to be, to his praise and glory. Amen.