

## Trinity Sunday.

A message of reflection considering our understanding of the Trinity and moving towards an acceptance that we do not always have to understand everything around us in order to have faith and believe in the wonder of life and God's love for us.

30/5/21

I speak in the name of Jesus the Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father.

Amen.

Let us pray:

“Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the Divine Majesty, to worship the Unity: We beseech thee, that thou wouldest keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities. Who livest and reignest, one God, world without end.”

Amen.

The Lord be with you.

An extract from today's Gospel reading:

***“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”***

(John 3: 16)

Today is Trinity Sunday.

As a young teenager I developed a strong interest in the concepts of space and time travel. Perhaps this interest was augmented by the launching of the first Star Wars film back in the late 1970s. When Carl Sagan, a world reknown American astronomer developed his TV series, Cosmos, I was smitten. Here was a brilliant mind whose mission it was to take complicated astronomical concepts and explain them to lay people. Perhaps you may recognize the

famous saying of Carl Sagan that is all too often quoted when people celebrate his life and teachings.

“But down deep, at the molecular heart of life, the trees and we are essentially identical. A galaxy is composed of gas and dust and stars – billions and billions of stars. Every star may be a sun to someone...”

I eventually developed a rudimentary understanding of the Theory of Relativity, time travel and the complexities of space. I have been able to incorporate these ideas into some of my teaching at school, hoping to inspire the next Carl Sagan. Many of the concepts are beyond my intellect, yet I know that the concepts have truth validity. Just because I do not fully understand how space and time works, does not mean it is not true. I can still have faith and believe...

Let me give you an example...

I recently watched a film called Interstellar. It is a science fiction film released a few years ago that has won many awards. The background to the story is an Earth that is dying and humankind is hard pressed to send a few astronauts into space in order to find new planets that could be a new earth for humankind.

The film deals with the complexities of time travel and the possible consequences of doing this. For example, the astronauts land on one planet where one hour is equal to seven years on earth. Difficult to imagine and to believe, but the science is possible. I then watched a You Tube clip that explained the complicated science behind time travel. Carl Sagan uses the example of flat land where the person living in flat land can only operate in two dimensions. The third dimension is inaccessible. So too is the dimension of time inaccessible for us. We can only operate in the present, we cannot go back into the past and we cannot jump ahead into the future. One scientist explained that if we were able to access time, then we could witness our own birth and death... in a sense we are always being born and we are always dying... wow! There is a powerful sermon in this concept for us as a Christian! Perhaps a topic worth exploring for another day.

The idea I want to leave with you is that we do not always have to understand the truth in order to have faith and believe.

And so it is with the Trinity too...

The Trinity is a complicated theological construct that many clergy prefer to avoid discussion about. The history of the Trinity in the development of the early church is varied and complicated and it is not my intention to cover all aspects of the Trinity now but there are some core ideas that we should be aware of in the development of our understanding of the Trinity.

It was Tertullian, who converted to Christianity just before AD 200 who first used the Latin words, *Trinitas, persona and substantia* (Trinity, person and substance or essence) to express the biblical teaching that Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one in divine essence but distinguished in relationships as persons within the inner life of God himself.

Later on, the Council of Nicaea in AD 325, in an attempt to respond to heretical teachings, stated that the Son was one substance (homoousios) with the Father. The Logos, who was incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, is God himself. He is not like God, but fully and eternally God.

Later on, the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451), focused on the relationship of Christ's humanity to his divinity. Out of this came the idea that Jesus is one person with two natures and therefore simultaneously both fully God and fully human.

Over time, various councils agreed that:

- God is one being and has one essence
- One identical divine substance is shared completely by the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- There is a mutual dependence of the three persons
- There is a clear order of the relations between the three persons

In summary, it could be said that God is one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Each of the three shares fully the one divine essence. God is not simply unity, but eternally exists in rich, loving fellowship as the one and only God.

What I do know is that all life is a miracle. As a science teacher I dabble with the concept of space and time travel. I enjoy it. It challenges me. I know it to be true EVEN though I do not fully understand it all.

Similarly, my friends do not be overwhelmed by difficult or complicated theological constructs like the Trinity. There are many well trained priests who still struggle with the idea of the Trinity. What we do know is that God loves us all. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He alone understands the beauty and complexity of His creation. It is our privilege to stare in wonder at the miracle of life and the universe around us, as well as to enjoy and bask in His everlasting grace and love.

Indeed, it was Albert Einstein who said:

“The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion which stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead, and his eyes are dimmed.”

Indeed, it was Jesus who said:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

Never lose the wonder.

Never lose the love.

I wish you and your loved ones a peaceful and blessed Sunday.

Amen.

Much love,

Fr Darron.

