

Sermon – Trinity Sunday and baptism

John 3: 1-5

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, 'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.' Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit.

Today is Trinity Sunday - the Trinity names the very heart of the Christian faith.

In our reading today we hear the Trinity named – we have God (who we would term Creator or Father or Mother – God out there if you like) – we have Jesus – God lived among us – God with us – and the Spirit – God everywhere. God is 3 and God is 1...

Our God is a community or family of love, and we are invited, through Christ, to share in that love. Our God is love - actively and completely and we are called to join the party. This is the vision which I believe is at the heart of our Christian identity and should be at the heart of St Swithuns.

Our reading has Nicodemus coming to Jesus at night – in secret we would imagine – and asking what is going on – how can these things be happening without the presence of God – Jesus tells Nicodemus that we are all to be born again - new birth in water in Spirit... Nicodemus doesn't really understand this idea and takes it literally with a fairly funny image of how can we re-enter a mother's womb – probably best not to overthink that one....

Jesus tells us that to we need to be living in God's world – baptised in water and Spirit – to see God's Kingdom...

And wonderfully on Trinity Sunday – with this reading chosen for the day – we have Ali's baptism – we will be baptising Ali with water in the name of the Trinity – with water and Spirit – Ali will be formally placed into God's presence – reborn in the church. And God of the trinity – is a relationship – God out there – with us and everywhere – our God embraces us all with love.

Today as we baptise Ali – we rejoice that we share in God's presence in God's love - which is a relationship and this living in God is a celebration – a party a deep and profound joy.

What does sharing in God's love mean to you?

Often when we think of how we love – we want to do all the giving – to shower others with love – but it is important that we also learn to receive the love of others – to receive through grace, to receive from each other - to work together.

This is essential for us as a church - if we feel loved and we love one another we will thrive - we are thriving.

This is hugely attractive - a loving community is one that others will want to join - getting our relationships right is not just being Godly as the Trinity is the community of loving relationships we participate in - it is wonderful and enjoyable.

I am so proud of this church – the way we love so deeply – the way we share in God’s love.

When relationships are strained - we must work towards a Godly resolution - putting love at the heart of our motivations and our encounters with each other.

Reaching outwards is important – to take this love and share it beyond these walls - we are to take this incredible and life changing faith we have - out there - out into our community.

I have many things I get excited about - I’m sure you do too.

Many of them are probably more embarrassing for me to admit than for you to admit – my family generally laugh at my enthusiasms with good reason - not that it stops me... this week I bought a book called The Cultured Club - fabulously funky fermentation recipes – its all kimchi and fermented salsas and I’m obsessed – (feel sorry for Richard)...

My enthusiasms are also quite obvious - as you know I get very excited about fitness and I’m beginning to feel particularly keen about developing a health ministry – working on total health in my work as a vicar in Hither Green - making health accessible – linking our faith to our whole lives and remembering that when we talk about healing – we are talking about becoming healthier – I am hoping with your support to begin to work in these new ways... if you want to talk to me about this and to work with me in finding healthy practice in body mind and soul – let me know... Also – I will be beginning some small group fitness classes

– I was very excited to watch Schitt’s Creek – an amazing and funny and moving series ... anyone else share my love of Alexis?

I could honestly go on for hours – telling you about everything I find amazing – there are so many things.... – bet you’re glad I don’t have hours haha!...

I feel like I have absolutely no problem sharing my delight in these things with nearly everyone, including all of you, my bootcamp friends, my friends, my family.... but sometimes – if I’m brutally honest - I find it challenging to share my love for God and how God’s love gives me hope and joy and comfort with all of my friends and family... but the deepest and most wonderful thing I love should not be something I am worried to share - right? But I guess I’m not alone in that? I don’t mean to bash anyone over the head with a Bible and tell them they are wrong if they are not like me – just simply to share the wonders of God’s love – to say that my faith brings me so much joy, and hope...

Do you find it easy to share your delight in your faith?

Today as we baptize Ali – we pray that we can share with him this joy in believing – this delight in loving in relationship with God and with each other. Today as Ali is baptized we not only welcome him into our loving Christian family – but we are telling Ali that faith in God the Trinity is so precious – and it is something worth sharing.

It can feel difficult to share faith sometimes - but to simply say that feels a bit embarrassing so I’ll keep quiet isn’t good enough - because what I have, what we have, who we are - a church full of grace, love and togetherness is amazing and wonderful and to not share and to hold it to ourselves is I believe selfish. Because this is wonderful - a community of love - participating in God’s communion of love - God Father and Mother, Jesus - Redeemer, and Holy spirit - God as Trinity is a God of love in relationship with God-self and in relationship with us - and fabulously we are invited to join in with Ali today on his special day - to be part of this Trinity dance and move to the tune of God’s love.

Amen