

## The Holy Trinity / Confirmation June 4, 2023

### Acts 2:38

**“And Peter said to them, ‘Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sin and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is for you and your children...everyone God calls to Himself.’”**

Today we celebrate the Sunday of the Holy Trinity in which we remember the singular nature of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; One God in three persons. God created human beings in His image and ever since humans have been trying to recreate God in our image. We imagine God as an exalted human being, a grandfather with a long beard and no hair. God does express Himself in human terms, but He does so because of the constraints of our understanding, not because He is an elderly gentleman. God is the eternal Spirit who was before all things, who created all things, who fills all things and surrounds all things.

This is impossible for our minds to grasp and so God expresses Himself in ways we can understand. Humans create gods we can understand. We imagine god's who are like us in terms of their nature, being and behaviour. The gods of the ancient world were human beings with godlike powers along with all the spiritual weaknesses of human beings. They were easy to understand, because they were created in our image. They were easy to comprehend intellectually, because like humans, they were distinct as persons and alike in their nature.

God who created the heavens, the earth and all that is in them, is impossible for us to conceive with our minds and beyond the full grasp of our reason. He reveals Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one God in three persons, not so we would understand His being. He does this so we sense something of the majesty of His being and realize He is above our understanding and beyond our control. Because, when we understand something we try to control it and use it for our benefit. God controls all things and uses His power for the blessing and benefit of His creation.

The most important thing God reveals about Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is His nature as love. The Apostle John wrote, “God is love.” Love is foundational to the story of creation, for our understanding of God's nature as Creator and for how we are to live as the pinnacle of His creation. God created all things, not out of necessity, but out of love. God created human beings in His image to express His care for His creation. The image of God is not a physical resemblance for God is Spirit. It is an imprint of His nature on the human spirit. God expresses His in image in love by providing for the needs of all living things. He created humans to share in and express His image in love.

God created human beings to express His image in love for one another and care for His creation. The essence of human creation stories is the survival of the strong. But, the survival of the fittest and personal self-interest will not ensure the survival of our species and the continuance of life on our planet. God guarantees our continuance by blessing us with the ability to express His nature in love, caring for the creation as His garden and caring for each other as the crown of His creation; strengthening the weak, defending, vulnerable, caring for the injured, infirm and dying.

This is what God created us to be, but of course this is not what we have become. Instead of treasuring the earth as His garden, we fill it with trash. We even have garbage on Mars! Instead of strengthening the weak, protecting the vulnerable, caring for the injured, infirm and giving dignity to the dying, we consider them a liability, expense and burden. The Apostle John asked, “How can one love God whom he has not seen and hate his brother whom he has seen?” It's a rhetorical question. That's our nature since the sin of the first people shattered the image of God in us. The most amazing, incomprehensible thing about God is that despite our sin, He still loves us. He expresses His love for us daily in countless ways through the creation and most amazingly in the person of Christ Jesus, in whom He became one with us.

On the Sunday of the Holy Trinity, we remember God's incomprehensible nature as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; One God in three persons. We reflect on something just as incomprehensible, His nature as love. We know God is love most certainly in that He gave His eternally begotten Son to share in our humanity through the working of the Holy Spirit within the body of the most blessed virgin Mary. We know God is love, because in Jesus He shared our experience of life in a world broken by sin, in bondage to evil and under the shadow of the condemnation of death. We know God loves us, because in Jesus He experienced the suffering of death and bore the eternal pain of our sin through His death on the cross. He did this so we would receive forgiveness and the healing of our spirits through Him. God loves us. He continuously forgives our sins and bears with our faults and failings for the sake of Jesus. We don't always love our fellow human beings whom we can see, but God always

loves us and always calls us to Himself in our baptism that He may bless us with forgiveness and the Holy Spirit to empower us to faith and faithfulness.

In our text Peter speaks to the people of Jerusalem who had rejected Jesus as the Christ and condemned Him to death as the King of the Jews. In rejecting and condemning Jesus, they invoked a curse upon themselves and their children, saying "Let His blood be upon our heads and upon our children's heads." Jesus' blood was shed because of sin, but His blood would not be a curse upon anyone's head. He shed His blood to lift the curse of sin. The curse of sin is lifted from the heads of all who believe and receive baptism in the divine Name; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. God calls us to receive His love in Christ today.

In condemning Jesus to death, they intended evil. But God intended it for good, so that through Jesus and the blood He shed, those who believe would be forgiven and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit calls us to believe! Peter did not condemn the people of Jerusalem who had rejected Jesus. He called them to come to Him in repentance for the forgiveness of sin, they and their children. God does not condemn us either. He calls us today that we too would receive the forgiveness of the cross through faith in Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit to live each day as children of God.

On the Sunday of the Holy Trinity, we contemplate the majesty of God's being; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One God in three persons. We rejoice in God's nature. His love for all people as our Creator and Redeemer in Christ Jesus. We give thanks for the salvation He has prepared for all people in Christ Jesus. He desires that we all receive His love in forgiveness and eternal salvation through faith in Jesus and baptism in the divine Name; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We rejoice that this promise is for us and for our children, everyone whom the Lord calls to Himself. We rejoice that God has called Jillian to Himself through the gospel. We give thanks for the testimony she will give of her faith. God calls all people to Himself in Christ Jesus. He calls us today. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved in time and for eternity. He is the Creator of all people. He is the Redeemer of all people. He is the Saviour of all who believe. The Holy Spirit open our hearts to believe, today and forever. In Jesus' Name. Amen