

**TRINITY SUNDAY – 2016**  
**Evensong at Holy Trinity Cathedral, Wangaratta**

*In the name of God, Life-giver, Pain-bearer, Love-bringer. Amen.*

What a joy and an honour it is this evening to be here at the Mother Church of the Diocese – Holy Trinity Cathedral – on Trinity Sunday!

And what a wonderful, inclusive name was chosen by the church founders with which to bless this beacon of diocesan life and Anglican presence in the Wangaratta community.

Trinity Sunday comes after the celebration of Pentecost and leads into the long season of so-called ‘ordinary Sundays. It is like a portal or ‘stargate’.

On one side are the events of Jesus’ birth, earthly life, death and resurrection. His ascension and then, the fulfilling of the promise of the Advocate or Holy Spirit, poured out. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit breathed life into the group of gathered disciples and the body of Christ, the Christian Church, was formed.

On the other side is the enlivened Church, active in the world, with disciples then and in every generation since, ever more, - learning from, growing in and bringing to fulfillment, the ministry and teaching of Jesus the Christ.

Whether justified or not, Trinity Sunday has the reputation of being a ‘tough gig’ for Christian preachers. How to come to terms with such a complex understanding of God as Trinity? And then explain it to others? I have actually known one member of the clergy who always ensured that he was on leave for Trinity Sunday, so that he avoided the tricky topic all together!

And yet, the Trinity is at the heart of our Christian understanding of God. It is the best reflection that we have, revealed in scripture, of the nature of the incomprehensible mystery of God. We must at least try to hold this great mystery of

Trinity, Triune God, in our hearts and minds and before our eyes, and if so, we catch glimpses of the truth and beauty and power and love and life which is God for us, and for all that is – seen and unseen.

This is perhaps what Paul means when he prays, expressing the fullness of God in Father, Christ and Spirit, that the Ephesian church may have the power to comprehend.....

*Recently, I heard the story of an Australian theologian who was travelling to a conference in the USA. He was at an American airport, lined up with everyone else, filling in his customs declaration and the girl on the counter noticed that he had put 'theologian' as his profession. "Oh", she said, with some awe and delight – "you're a theologian! What can you tell me?"*

*Well, as I hear, our Australian academic and bishop was a bit thrown.....in a queue, with the usual low level anxiety of being in a busy foreign airport with a plane to catch, his mind on the secular aspects of travel....."What can you tell me?"*

*Off the top of his head he said "It's big. It's VERY big. REALLY big" - and then he moved away. and the moment of contact was over.*

*In his telling of his story, the theologian beat himself up about his lost opportunity – nothing about redemption or forgiveness or Jesus as God's Son or even God's love. What could he have responded with? Should have responded with? How lame, he thought was "It's big"*

Hearing this story from the man himself, I hoped that the girl had taken him seriously, and pondered the majestic, awesome, eternal, truth of God as 'Really big'. I hope too, that this insight enabled her to stretch her own limits of thinking and imagining, to enable growth in her own understanding of God, herself and the world.

And, perhaps one day, someone will take her even further into truth by pointing her to the Trinity where she can explore the personal, communal, healing, loving aspects of Father, Son and Holy Spirit – Life-giver, Pain-bearer, Love-bringer – this REALLY big God.

The Creed is an affirmation of faith that unites all Christian denominations. We state our belief in one God, the Father Almighty, one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life. We believe in one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Blessed Trinity. The Triune God.

We humans tend to think of God in the ‘accessible chunks’ of our present moment experience. Sometimes we instinctively think of the Father, Creator. When we’re delighting in aspects of creation – the natural world, or being awed by the vastness of the universe.

Our thoughts, as Christians, are drawn to Jesus when we’re caught up in every day human issues of suffering or morality. Forgiveness. Community. Life and death.

And then, in quiet times of intentional waiting, or, unexpectedly and sometimes dramatically, we experience or recognize the work of the Holy Spirit, in our own hearts, or in the lives of others.

It is very difficult for us to get our head around three in one, or the Triune God of equal and distinctive aspects. Nonetheless this IS the fullness of God and to believe otherwise is heresy for Christians.

There is, I believe, great comfort in realizing that, truly, the fullness of God is beyond our comprehension. Everything that is, seen or unseen. All that is, known or as yet for us, unknown. That God is ‘BIG, really big’ and time and space – past, present, future – everywhere –every time –is within the realm of God’s being. We **need** God to be so much more than we ourselves can aspire to. We are creatures of the Creator.

There is comfort too, in knowing that we are God's children and, as such, are enabled to understand and to know as much of God as we need, or can cope with. We can understand, because Jesus teaches us, much, about how we are to live and be as the body of Christ, God's Son. Even though as human creatures, we are mortal and powerless and inconsequential outside of God's love for us, we know that every little aspect of our daily living, is known, understood and shared by God.

From the birth and death of stars and the inconceivable forces and energies of far outer space, to the anxious prayers of a young girl beginning at a new school or a preacher who is faced with the topic 'Trinity', in everything, God's love guards, sustains and enables.

From the vast to the minute. From the rise and fall of nations to the death of a sparrow. From the beginning to the glorious eternal kingdom - all is held in the community of God.

When we, as the worshiping Church, seeking God's will and way and following and remembering into our present, as best we can, the life of Jesus the Christ, when we reflect prayerfully on the Trinity, we find ourselves drawn into God's love.

And in that shared experience of abiding community, we find hope and joy and faith and deep peace and the realization that all this is available, abundantly, to be shared, for everyone. This is, I believe, what Paul was saying to the Ephesian church when he prayed for them to comprehend the **extent** of the love of Christ and the fullness of God.

The Trinity is not a 'closed off and inaccessible' community. It is open wide with the power of love pouring forth - inviting, enabling, blessing, healing, giving life..... It is spectacularly BIG – and it is our heart's home.

May this cathedral church bear witness, in every way, to all generations, to the glory of God and the truth of Holy Trinity, and be a glimpse of the heart's true home for those who worship here.

I conclude with a familiar blessing:

*The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all ever more. Amen.*