

Dorset South and West Circuit Written Service

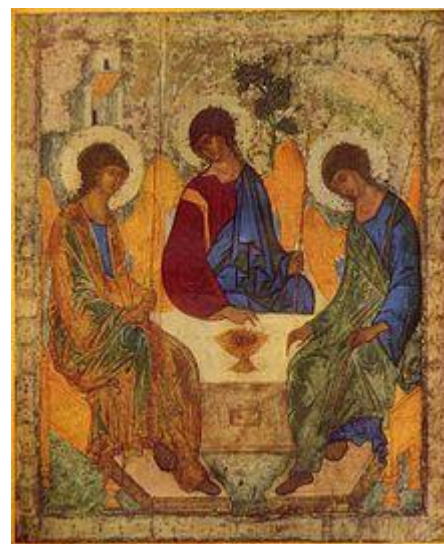
Trinity Sunday 31st May 2026

Call to Worship

O God our mystery,
you bring us to life,
call us to freedom,
and move between us with love.
May we so participate
in the dance of your trinity,
that our lives may resonate with you,
now and for ever. Amen.

Introduction

Trinity Sunday celebrates the Christian teaching of the Trinity. The Trinity is understood as one God in three “persons”: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



The image above is of Rublev’s famous Holy Trinity icon created during the 15th century. Using the theme of the Hospitality of Abraham, the image depicts three angels to symbolise the “persons” of the Trinity. If you look closely at the front of the table there appears to be a little rectangular hole. Art historians claim that this is where at one time a mirror may have been glued so that those who first looked at this icon would see themselves being invited to join with those already gathered around the table. An invitation to us all still today, to join in, to join in the dance of the trinity, a dance of transforming love.

StF 11: Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty!

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to thee
see,
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee
though the sinful human eye thy glory may not
see,
only thou are holy; there is none beside thee,
Perfect in power, in love, and purity.

Holy, holy, holy! All the saints adore thee,
casting down their golden crowns around
and
the glassy sea;
cherubim and seraphim falling down before
thee
who wert, and art, and evermore shalt be.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!
All thy work shall praise thy name in earth
and sea;
holy, holy, holy, merciful and mighty,
God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!

Reginald Heber (1783-1826)

Opening Prayer

Great and loving God, we greet you this day with praise and wonder.
We greet you as the creator of the ends of the earth, sovereign over space and time,
greater than we can ever imagine.

Gracious and living Christ, we greet you this day with joy and thanksgiving.
We greet you as our Lord, our friend, our Saviour.

Mysterious and mighty Spirit, we greet you this day with awe and worship.
We greet you as our guide and inspiration, our source of strength and comfort,
a living inner reality.

Almighty God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we greet you this day, and we praise you that you are here, to greet us and everyone, today and every day, here and everywhere.

Help us to meet with you, and grow closer to you, through this time of worship.

Help us to glimpse your glory, and make it known, through all we say and do, to the glory of your name. Amen.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 28. 16 – 20

¹⁶ Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. ¹⁷ When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸ Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Epistle: Ephesians 3:14-21

¹⁴ For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. ¹⁶ I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, ¹⁷ and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love. ¹⁸ I pray that you may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, what is the breadth and length and height and depth, ¹⁹ and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

Reflection

Last Sunday we celebrated the birthday of the Church as the Holy Spirit came upon the first disciples and filled them with power to preach. The subject of the Holy Trinity of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is something which is not easy to understand. People often ask how can something be one and at the same time three?

Over the years, I have heard a number of illustrations to help understand the Godhead as being a trinity of three persons. St Patrick famously used the three petals of the shamrock leaf to explain it to the people of Ireland.

Some people will use the illustration of a cup of tea, where the water, milk and tealeaves all come together to make one thing – inseparable, but three components. When I am trying to explain to children how God is three in one, I sometimes show three birthday cards I have received, one with "sister" on the front, another with "daughter" and third with "niece" and explain that the cards are all for me, I am one person, but I am also these three different things and that we can think of God as one being, to whom we can relate in different ways. But when it comes down to it, all these illustrations are imperfect and perhaps even heretical.

The Trinity is a mystery. It is something we have to accept and, perhaps more importantly, we have to give equal weight to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Many of us would have few problems relating to God as Father, or God in Christ – but how well do we relate to the Holy Spirit? We are called to "image" God and it is the Trinitarian identity of God which we are to image. We cannot do this as individuals: we do it as church – as a Christian community.

We derive our identity from the Father, as it says in Ephesians 3:14-15 "For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name."

God made us “in his image” so that we could reflect the one who is both one (God) and also three (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) – not three gods, but the one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

So how do we prove our identity as children of God? Many young people invest a lot of time in inventing identities. They maybe dye their hair black, don black clothing and paint their nails deep purple and call themselves a “Goth.” Others will try to emulate their footballing heroes, by wearing the same brand of trainers or their pop idol by going out and buying copy designer clothing from Primark. Young people grow out of it, but do they really? How many of us still in different situations put on masks and pretend to be people we are not? How often do we try to cover up our less attractive traits?

Are you willing to let the “real you” be seen?

The thing is, no matter how hard we try to project an image of ourselves on to others, we can't fool God. And we don't need to fool God, because he loves us exactly as we are – warts and all! We don't have to strive to be someone: we already are someone. You are someone special and unique, as rich in character and potential as a human-being as the Trinity is rich in character and potential as the supreme God. Will you surrender to God the Father, and allow the Holy Spirit's power to work in you to enable you to share the love shown in Jesus?

StF 673: Will you come and follow me

Will you come and follow me
if I but call your name?
Will you go where you don't know
and never be the same?
Will you let my love be shown?
Will you let my name be known?
Will you let my life be grown in you
And you in me?

Will you love the "you" you hide
if I but call your name?
Will you quell that fear inside
and never be the same?
Will you use the faith you've found
To reshape the world around
 Through my sight and touch and sound
in you and you in me?

Will you leave yourself
behind if I but call your name?
Will you care for cruel and kind
and never be the same?
Will you risk the hostile stare
Should your life attract or scare?
Will you let me answer prayer in you
And you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true
when you but call my name.
Let me turn and follow you
and never be the same
In your company I'll go
Where your love and footsteps show
Thus I'll move and live and grow in you
And you in me.

John L Bell (b. 1949) &

Graham Moule (b. 1958)
Will you let the blinded see
if I but call your name?
Will you set the prisoner free
and never be the same?
Will you kiss the leper clean
And do such as this unseen?
And admit to what I mean in you
And you in me?

Prayers of intercession

Living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we thank you that you are a 'can do' God of positivity and power, and entrust to you our fragmented world so vulnerable and so drained by negativity.

We pray for the people of Ukraine and of Russia; of Israel and Palestine; of Iran and other Middle East nations; for the continent of Africa; for the people of our own nation and for all places in the world that are on our hearts where there is division, hardship, climatic challenges and suffering. Empower the peace makers, resource the aid workers, and unite us all with the courage to believe that together we can make a difference.

We pray for young people sitting exams, and making career choices, that they might feel positive about their abilities and about themselves, and share their aspirations and creativity and beauty with their little corner of the world. Empower their teachers and mentors, resource their schools and places of learning, and unite us all with the courage to believe that together we can make a difference.

We pray for one another, our families, our friends, our church, our community, as we live out the adventure you have called each of us on, with the challenges, the opportunities, the privileges and the responsibilities. We remember especially those who are ill, those who are grieving, those who have lost their homes, those who are struggling to fit in. Empower those who are in positions of influence, resource those who are carers, encouragers and providers, and unite us all with the courage to believe that together we can make a difference. Amen.

The Lords Prayer *Our Father...*

StF 16: We give immortal praise

We give immortal praise
to God the Father's love
for all our comforts here,
and better hopes above.
He sent his own eternal Son
to die for sins that all have done.

To God the Spirit's name
immortal worship give,
whose new-creating power
makes the dead sinner live:
his work completes the great design,
and fills the soul with joy divine.

To God the Son belongs
immortal glory too,
who bought us with his blood
from everlasting woe;
and now he lives, and now he reigns,
and sees the fruit of all his pains.

Almighty God, to thee
be endless honours done,
the undivided Three,
and the mysterious One:
where reason fails with all her powers,
there faith prevails, and love adores.

Isaac Watts (1674-1748)

Blessing

Jesus, thank you for trusting us to go out with your message. Thank you that as we go we are filled with your Holy Spirit and can know you with us, strengthening and helping us. Lead us to those who are open to becoming learners of you and give us the words to share and may your blessing be upon us.

Amen.