

Texts: Psalm 29, John 3: 1-17

It struck me that today's gospel reading was entirely appropriate for Trinity Sunday as it describes Nicodemus' bafflement at the very idea that one could be born from above for surely bafflement is something we also experience in trying to make sense of the concept of a Trinitarian God. I may of course be wrong, and you may have this extraordinarily perplexing theological concept all carefully worked out in your mind but for me it is one that is a part of the unfathomable mystery and wonder that is one God and yet simultaneously God who is three in one.

Nicodemus was totally bewildered at the very idea that in some way it was possible to be born again, born from above for surely birth was a once in a lifetime experience. An experience which interestingly none of us can have any memory of as we slid from the darkness of the womb into the light of the world. And we can now recognize, as I hope Nicodemus came to understand, that being born from above, born of the Spirit takes us from the darkness of a marred and sinful world into the glorious light of the divine presence that was revealed by the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

The divine presence of Father, Son and Holy Spirit that today we celebrate on Trinity Sunday. There are a multitude of theological tomes written on this subject but there are two writers whose words on the subject have really struck a chord with me, namely Sam Wells and Richard Rohr. Sam Wells writes: 'God is three persons in one substance. God isn't a thing.... God is a **relationship**. God is a relationship of three persons, so wonderfully shaped towards one another, so wondrously *with* one another, that they are one, but so exquisitely diverse and distinct within that unity that they are three. **With** is the key to the identity of the God who is.' These last words of Wells of course echo the meaning of Emmanuel which quite simply translates as 'God with us.'

What Wells and Richard Rohr in his book The Divine Dance are both suggesting is that we are invited to be part of that divine friendship, that divine dance and in so doing will know something of the wonder of being born from above and in a sense be made free of the restraints imposed by a material and self- possessed world. The Trinitarian God reaches out to all of us to be with Him in that friendship, that love, that interplay of diversity which makes up the whole. Rohr points us too to look at the Rublev icon of The Trinity where the three persons are shown as 'eating and drinking in infinite hospitality and utter enjoyment between themselves.' But he goes on to say that the more you study the icon the more you come to realise that there is room at the table for a fourth person and that each of us is invited to be 'a participant at this banquet and as a partner in God's eternal dance of love and communion.' Isn't that the most wonderful joy giving idea that we are invited to share in the eternal dance of love and communion?

And it is here that I think we need to return to the story of Nicodemus and the necessity of being born from above. I am sure that almost all if not all of you here has been baptised and again probably have absolutely no memory of that occasion although there may be photos or a Baptism Card to verify that it did actually happen. But I think we need in a way to allow ourselves to be renewed and blessed within the Spirit of the Trinitarian God not on just one day of which we have no recall but on every day. The words of the hymn remind us that ‘New ev’ry morning is the love; our wak’ning and uprising prove; through sleep and darkness safely brought, restored to life and pow’r and thought.’ Do we recognize that each and every morning we are re-awakened, restored and re-energised within God’s love to live out another day **with** Him and **for** Him? Can we ensure that ‘the trivial round, the common task, **will** furnish all we need to ask’ and will indeed bring us daily nearer God? Do we allow ourselves time to be conscious of the fact that, however mundane or humble our lives, in living out those lives **with** God we are part of the divine dance Rohr speaks about; that we are truly part of the relationship that exists between God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit? Such an understanding of this relationship with the divine is absolutely mind boggling and awe inspiring but it was Jesus Himself who taught us to speak of God as Father and of His love for us His children.

The divine dance Rohr writes about is undoubtedly a dance of love and that is the dance we are asked to join in however clumsy, left-footed or ungainly we may be. And here I am reminded of my disabled Granddaughter who just loves to be included in any dancing which may occur albeit she is bodily confined to a wheelchair. God **wants** us, whoever we are to share with Him who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit in that dance of love. A love perfectly encapsulated in these words of St Patrick: ‘The Father created us out of His love and for His love. The Son redeemed us by His love and for His love. The Spirit sustains us with His love and for His love. The Holy Three seek us in love and for love.’?

Nicodemus was mystified and left puzzled by the words of Jesus but we know that he must somehow have grasped some of their intent and what they meant for him personally in that he had the courage to go openly with Joseph of Arimathea to lay Jesus’s body in the tomb in marked contrast to that first meeting when he came covertly by night. We will undoubtedly continue to be mystified and puzzled by not just the theology of the Trinity but by the wonder and awe that the very idea God inspires in us and of which today’s psalm speaks with such passion.

But leaving aside the mystery and all the unanswered questions, the doubts too, can we hold fast to those words of St Patrick and respond in love and take joyous delight in joining in the divine dance. The divine dance of God’s creation in which we too can use our creative talents for the good and prosperity of God’s world. The divine dance of Christ’s Love in which we can discover

new dance steps to show the love of care and compassion to all God's children. The divine dance of the Holy Spirit in which we engage in new routines to engage others in the Good News that God **is** with us now, tomorrow and for all eternity? Can we recognize that every single moment of our lives is a God given opportunity to participate with the Holy Trinity in the divine dance of love and communion?