

Call to Worship

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!
He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Welcome to this reflection for the Fifth Sunday of the Easter season. In today's Gospel Jesus says; "I am the True Vine". We reflect on the image of The Vine, its fruit and what the Gospel tells us today.

Let us pray:

Opening Prayer

Risen Christ,
you are the vine and we are the branches.
As the vine draws goodness from the earth;
may your Word nourish us.
As the leaves absorb sunlight
to strengthen growth;
may your Holy Spirit energise us.
As the gardener cuts away what is fruitless;
show us what we need to be pruned from our lives,
to leave room for new, abundant fruits.
Amen.

Mike Claridge

In the TV comedy series *Porridge*, Ronnie Barker plays a character called Norman Stanley Fletcher, serving a prison sentence at Her Majesty's Prison Slade. Although filmed on Dartmoor, Slade is a fictional prison supposedly situated in the Lake District. Another comedy great, David Jason, perhaps best known as Del Boy in *Only Fools and Horses*, also makes appearances in *Porridge*. He plays an old man - Blanco - nearing the end of his sentence. In one scene, set while they are working in the prison garden, Blanco tells Fletch how, even there in the north of England, he'd once managed to grow a grapevine - until the prison authorities stopped him. Fletch asks, "why did they do that?". "Grapes make wine don't they" says Blanco with a wink. Chateau Slade, it seems, wasn't the finest of vintages, but in the context

If you travel, among other places, through southern Europe you'll see mile after mile of cultivated grapevines. There are some in the UK. One's down the road in Wroxeter, Shropshire. It's called Wroxeter Roman Vineyard. Wroxeter was a large city in the days of the Roman Empire and they did grow grapes there - even as far north as Hadrian's Wall! Like Chateau Slade though there's no evidence as to what the resulting wine was like.

Today we're going to listen to a meditation on the theme of 'The Vine'. It'll be followed by our Gospel reading.

The Vine (by Jan Sutch Pritchard)

Close your eyes and imagine that you are a plant.
Not any plant, a particular kind:
a climbing, clinging plant grown against a wall,
the sunny wall of a house in a hot country;
but it is a country where you are at home,
and you grow well.
You have been planted here
by the owner of the house
because you will grow well
and because you will give welcome shade.
So a trellis has been built -
a framework of weathered wood -
and you have sent out your tendrils onto the trellis,
taken hold and are growing there, too,
your luxuriant leaves shading the terrace underneath,
and the benches where people can sit
in the heat of the day.

You have been here a long time.
Your main stem is old and gnarled,
rough to the touch but beautiful in its own way.
Your roots are deep.
Feeling them going down into the earth,
unseen, but still as much part of you
as the leaves that dance in the breeze.
Feel your roots seeking water deep down,
drawing nourishment into your whole being.
Feel your leaves draw energy from the sun
and turn it, in their cells, into strength
for the whole of you.
Feel your tendrils alive,
sensitively seeking new directions
in which you can grow,
and holding on to rough stone and warm wood
so that the wind does not damage you.
Feel your fruits forming, filling out,
becoming juicy, delicious, nourishing.
Feel how each part of you is connected
and draws strength from the other parts.
Feel joy in being the healthy fruitful plant
that God made you to be.

People are coming down the track,
a group of people talking.
They come to the house, stop on the terrace.
Someone from the house brings them cool drinks.
They sit in your shade, talking.
Mostly they are listening to one man,

who seems to be explaining something to them.
They look puzzled.
Suddenly he reaches out, touches your stem,
gestures to your leaves and fruit, and says,
“I am the vine”

*from ‘Dandelions and Thistles’ - Biblical meditations from the Iona Community’
Edited by Jan Sutch Pritchard*

John 15 .1 - 8 (NRSV)

*A video presentation of today’s Gospel from the Revd Phil Summers
(‘Perfect Little Gentleman’ on YouTube): https://youtu.be/Spv_43GjDbc*

1 ‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. 2 He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. 3 You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you.
4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7 If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

As we’ve seen before, vines and vineyards are often used in scripture to depict God’s people. The words of Jesus “I am the vine” is part of that theme. He is part of the long, long story of God’s people. Like an ancient vine drawing from the fertile ground of faith, scripture and tradition.

The lives of God’s people are only fruitful if they remain part of the vine. Even then sometimes they have to be pruned - to leave behind dated traditions maybe - to leave room for new growth. Pruned properly a grapevine will increase its yield.

What has lock down caused us to cut back and prune? Where can we see the new shoots of branches? What fruits will that new growth bring? Will they yield an even finer wine than we’ve already tasted?

One other thing to ponder. The fruits of real vines don’t remain on the vine or even in the vineyard. They are transformed into wine that brings life and vitality to others.

Let us pray:

Closing Prayer

Heard and valued
Freed and forgiven.

**We go into the world
to bear much fruit.**

Fed and nourished
Loved and cherished.

**We go into the world
to bear much fruit.**

Today and tomorrow
Rooted in Jesus

**We go into the world
to bear much fruit.**

Thank you for being part of this reflection today. There's a written version on the website which you can pass onto those without internet access.

Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, stay safe, take care and remember that the best of all is that God is with us!

Call to Worship

Alleluia! Christ is Risen!
He is Risen indeed! Alleluia!

Welcome to this reflection for the Sixth Sunday of the Easter season. Today is also the start of Christian Aid Week and we start with an appropriate prayer.

Let us pray:

Opening Prayer

Great God,
who makes the sun to rise and opens the heavens.
Hear the cry of the people,
people who sow in hope for rain
but reap only despair.
Hear the cry of the people,
people seeking shelter from the storm,
their homes and hopes submerged.
Hear the cry of the people,
when creation is hitting back,
with rage and resistance,
give us hope, grant us salvation,
give us a new relationship with creation
with reverence to tend this gift from you
and say once again of the earth and all you created,
“It is good”. Amen.

Christian Aid

For over 75 years Christian Aid has been active for those in need. Started as the Second World War ended, Christian Aid worked to provide supplies to war ravaged communities in mainland Europe. From the outset Christian Aid has worked with local churches and other groups on the ground in the countries that need the help, thus ensuring the aid reaches those need efficiently.

In the interim Christian Aid has grown into an organisation not only providing aid, but asking why that aid is needed, and challenging the injustices that communities face. Part of this has meant educating us here at home about the root causes of global poverty.

Climate Change and its effects on all people, and especially the world's poorest, is a relatively new focus for Christian Aid's campaigning. We all share this small planet. When we harm it we harm each other. The effects of climate change know no borders of politics, race or faith. What we do here in western Europe affects our brothers and sisters in Africa, Asia and South America.

Rose's Story - Drought in Kenya

https://youtu.be/rzrY8N_qYWI

Today's Gospel reading follows immediately on from last weeks when Jesus said that he was the true vine and we are the branches. He reminded his hearers that as branches we can only produce fruit if we are part of the vine that feeds and nurtures us.

Today's Gospel reading is the very next passage and fits well with the theme of climate change. In today's Gospel Jesus takes the imagery of the vine a stage further. We are not only in a relationship with him, like a vine and its branches, but we are called to be in relationship with each other. He says;

“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” (*John 15 .12*)

John 15 .9 - 17 (NRSV)

A video presentation of today's Gospel from the Revd Phil Summers (Perfect Little Gentleman' on YouTube): <https://youtu.be/5LmdDRN7d7s>

9 As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10 If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11 I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. 12 'This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. 13 No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command you. 15 I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. 16 You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. 17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another.

These passages from John's Gospel are part of what's known as the Farewell Discourse. Jesus is saying farewell to his disciples as the inevitability of arrest, torture, crucifixion and death draw closer. Yet he speaks of joy. This is the joy that can endure Good Friday because it knows that Sunday is coming. It is a joy that does not deny sorrow or suffering but co-exists with them. Sacrificial love will get the community through the hard times, strengthened by love, friendship and joy.

This is our call on a local level and on a global level. We are called to listen to each other, including the stories of those far away. It will lead us towards the realities of suffering and struggle. But there amidst pains and challenges are the possibilities for transformation.

Later in this farewell discourse (John 16 .20-22) Jesus goes on to explain to the disciples that even pain will turn to a joy that no one can remove. Christian Aid is part of that transformation in communities spread across the world.

One of the most vital tasks is providing water for irrigation schemes and clean drinking water supplies. We also need to address Climate Change that is causing deserts to expand and water courses to dry up. Together we can work towards the vision of the prophets:

The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad,
the desert shall rejoice and blossom;
like the crocus it shall blossom abundantly,
and rejoice with joy and singing.

Isaiah 35 .1,2

Let us pray.

Because we are God's people,
we will care for each other.
Because we are part of God's creation,
we will care for the Earth.
Because we are loved by God,
we will share God's love with everyone.

Transforming God,
help us to love one another
as you have loved us.
Amen.

Christian Aid

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Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, stay safe, take care and remember that the best of all is that God is with us!

Call to Worship

Jesus said to his disciples,
“And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised
Wait here in the city until you have been clothed
with power from on high”.

Luke 24 .49

Welcome to this reflection for the Seventh Sunday of the Easter season. Today is also known as The Sunday after the Ascension. Ascension Day was last Thursday. Let us start with an appropriate prayer. Let us pray:

Opening Prayer

Risen Christ,
you have raised our human nature to the throne of heaven:
help us to seek and serve you,
that we may join you at the Father’s side,
where you reign with the Spirit in glory,
now and for ever. Amen.

Additional Collects, Common Worship, Church of England.

The events of The Ascension retold in different ways by Matthew, Mark and Luke. Indeed Luke has two versions, one at the end of his Gospel and the other at the start of his second book, Acts of the Apostles. All of the accounts though have one thing in common. At the Ascension, Jesus’ physical presence leaves the disciples for the final time. In the following words Ruth Burgess is imagining what it must have felt like as a cloud descended and Jesus was seen no more:

In a Cloud

In a cloud.
A cloud?
A bit dramatic wasn’t it Jesus?
A bit over the top.

Hands raised.
Floating heavenwards

And I’ll lay odds that
future artists
will dress you in shining white,
and paint the sky deep blue -
to ‘match’ your eyes.

OK - so there were some precedents:
Elijah and his chariots
and that fiery pillar thing that moved around the wilderness;
but those were the old ways -
you aren’t like that.

Is this really what you want us to remember about you, Jesus?
That you disappeared in a cloud
and that you now live somewhere above the skies,
way beyond our reach?

What about your stories, your friendship;
your tears, your pain, your laughter?

What about the way you believed in us,
trusted us,
sent us out to trust and heal?

I'm not sure that you being alive somewhere
where we cannot see you, talk with you,
laugh and cry with you,
is going to be much help to us, Jesus.

Please, can't you find a way of living with us,
close enough somehow for us to know that you're near?

You said something once about a Spirit,
a holy Spirit from God,
who would come to us.
Does that mean you're coming back to us?

And if you are -
no dramatics this time, please Jesus.
Just come back to us quietly ...
No more clouds!

The Gospels tell us that the events of The Ascension occurred forty days after the events of that first Easter. Before his arrest, and after the Last Supper, Jesus had prayed for his disciples. He knew that he was going to leave them in the world. They would need to continue his work. Our Gospel today is part of that prayer, and comes from John's Gospel.

John 17 .6 - 19 (NRSV)

*A video presentation of today's Gospel from the Revd Phil Summers
(Perfect Little Gentleman' on YouTube): <https://youtu.be/ugfufAPuUpc>*

6 'I have made your name known to those whom you gave me from the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything you have given me is from you; 8 for the words that you gave to me I have given to them, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you sent me. 9 I am asking on their behalf; I am not asking on behalf of the world, but on behalf of those whom you gave me, because they are yours. 10 All mine are yours, and yours are mine; and I have been glorified in them. 11 And now I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them in your name

that you have given me, so that they may be one, as we are one. 12 While I was with them, I protected them in your name that you have given me. I guarded them, and not one of them was lost except the one destined to be lost, so that the scripture might be fulfilled. 13 But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. 14 I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 17 Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. 18 As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

In today's Call to Worship we heard words of Jesus immediately prior to The Ascension.

Wait here in the city until you have been clothed
with power from on high".

Luke 24 .49

The Gospels tell us that the disciples waited ten days for the gift of the Holy Spirit. It occurred at Pentecost which we celebrate next Sunday. In recent years the churches have used these ten days to encourage a wave of prayer called 'Thy Kingdom Come'. There are a whole range of prayers and other resources on the Thy Kingdom Come website and to make it easy to find I've put a link on my resource site. The hope and prayer of Thy Kingdom Come is to bring more people into a relationship with Jesus Christ that, through us, he may restore and transform society.

Jesus had promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit would come and empower them to continue his work in the world. They are to wait in the city, to be patient. They will be clothed for their task. The work of Jesus Christ will now be theirs to carry out - and ours.

Let us pray.

Jesus
risen to be with us always,
you are alive in our hearts,
awakening hope, inspiring faith,
empowering us with your Spirit.
Give us the courage to live for you.
Transform us
with your words and your ways,
that the world might glimpse your glory
and know the wholeness of your love. Amen (Louise Gough)

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Call to Worship

Come, Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful people,
and kindle in us the fire of your love

Welcome to this reflection for The Day of Pentecost. Today we give thanks for the gift of the Holy Spirit; enabler, guide comforter and disturber. Our opening prayer by Louise Gough picks up on the rich imagery of who the Holy Spirit is.

Let us pray:

In the verbal imagery of scripture, and subsequent artistic imagery, the Holy Spirit has been depicted in various ways.

At Jesus' baptism the Gospel writers refer to the Spirit of God descending 'like a dove' (Matthew 3.16, Mark 1.10, Luke 3.22, John 1.32).

In today's reading from Acts of the Apostles we'll hear of the Holy Spirit appearing like fire and wind.

In the Jewish Scriptures, our Old Testament, the Spirit is depicted as 'ruach', the breath of God. It's an idea picked up in John's very different account of the giving of the Holy Spirit where Jesus breathes on the disciples saying, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20.22) in an account that takes place on the evening of Easter Day itself.

A well known hymn picks up on this:

Breathe on me breath of God;
fill me with life anew,
that i may love what thou dost love,
and do what thou wouldst do.

Edwin Hatch

But it's Luke's account, from his Acts of the Apostles, that usually shapes our thinking about the giving of the Holy Spirit. Luke tells us it took place at Pentecost, a Jewish Harvest Festival, fifty days after Passover - hence its name. Let's listen to that reading:

Acts 2 .1-21 (NRSV)

A video presentation of today's reading from the Revd Phil Summers (Perfect Little Gentleman' on YouTube):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYJ3EljugX4>

1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were

filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

5 Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem.

6 And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each. 7 Amazed and astonished, they asked, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?

9 Parthians, Medes, Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, 11 Cretans and Arabs—in our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power.' 12 All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?' 13 But others sneered and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'

14 But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them: 'Men of Judea and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. 15 Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. 16 No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel:

17 "In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

18 Even upon my slaves, both men and women,
in those days I will pour out my Spirit;
and they shall prophesy.

19 And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

20 The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of the Lord's great and glorious day.

21 Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

As we've seen, elsewhere in scripture we have images of the Holy Spirit as a graceful, peaceful dove, or the gentle and life giving breath of God. But here in Acts the coming of the Holy Spirit is dramatic and frightening. People are scared out of their wits, taken beyond their comfort zones, and witness extraordinary things.

The Celtic tradition is an ancient Christian spirituality here in the British Isles that can trace it's roots back to the fifth and sixth centuries. In Celtic tradition the Holy Spirit is represented, not by a dove, but by the wild goose. I like to think in those terms when considering the reading from Acts. The Holy Spirit of Pentecost is well represented by the honking and flapping of a wild goose, causing a fair amount of chaos and disarray. I think it also fits with the opening of Genesis too, where the author depicts the "Spirit of God brooding over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1.2).

Pentecost (B)

23rd May 2021 (Number 063)

Anyone who's walked canal towpaths knows about geese. They are noisy birds that get our attention and maybe challenge us. They might block our path, change our direction or even give us an added impetus as they chase us down the tow path!

The Holy Spirit is a bit like that. We might think we know where we're going and at our own speed but God may have other ideas! But wherever we find ourselves, God's Spirit is with us!

Let us pray.

Closing Prayer

Great Spirit,
Wild Goose of the Almighty
Be my eye in the dark places;
Be my flight in the trapped places;
Be my host in the wild places;
Be my brood in the barren places;
Be my formation in the lost places.
Amen

Ray Simpson www.raysimpson.org

A Holy Island Prayer Book: Prayers and Readings from Lindesfarne

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Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, stay safe, take care and remember that the best of all is that God is with us!

Call to Worship

O Trinity of love and power,
our Brethren shield in dangers hour;
from rock and tempest, fire and foe,
protect them whereto'er they go:
thus evermore shall rise to thee
glad hymns of praise from land and sea

from 'Eternal Father, strong to save'. A hymn by William Whiting.

Those original words of a well known hymn introduce this reflection for Trinity Sunday. This is the day on which we particularly focus on the nature of God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Before we try and explore that mystery:

Let us pray:

Come, Creator God:
renew the face of the earth.
Come, eternal Word of the Father:
remake us in your likeness.
Come, Holy Spirit:
transform our gifts and our lives
that here on earth we may sing the songs
of the new creation
and in heaven see your glory,
one God, for ever and ever.
Amen

Adapted from a Eucharistic Prayer by Colin Thompson
United Reformed Church Worship Book

Trinity is the word by which Christians try to understand God in three ways; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But you won't find the word 'Trinity' in the pages of scripture. It's a later development of the Church. But the idea is there. At the end of Matthew's Gospel you'll find the instruction to the disciples to 'go and baptise in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit' (Matthew 28.19). In his letters, written before the Gospels, Paul closely relates the terms in the words of what we now call The Grace that forms the sign off of some of his letters. We can even see the idea developing, compare the endings of his two letters to the Corinthians. (1 Corinthians 16.23,24 with 2 Corinthians 13.13)

Our Gospel reading today also contains all of the elements Trinity. Jesus is debating with another Jewish teacher, Nicodemus, who is trying to understand how Jesus and God relate to each other. See if you can spot the different elements.

John 3 1 - 17 (NRSV)

1 Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. 2 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.' 3 Jesus answered him, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.' 4 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?' 5 Jesus answered, 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. 6 What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. 7 Do not be astonished that I said to you, "You must be born from above." 8 The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.' 9 Nicodemus said to him, 'How can these things be?' 10 Jesus answered him, 'Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

11 'Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. 12 If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. 14 And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, 15 that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

16 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

17 'Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Prayer

Holy God,
faithful and unchanging:
enlarge our minds with the knowledge of your truth,
and draw us more deeply into the mystery of your love,
that we may truly worship you,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.
Amen.

Additional Collects, Common Worship, Church of England

Ever since the Church came into being at Pentecost, it has tried to define its belief in The Father, The Son and The Holy Spirit being one God. The result has been a series of historic creeds, or statements of belief. The Nicene Creed of the year 325 is still part of our worship today, as is the slightly later Apostles Creed. In complex theological terms they define not only the relationship of the three, but also how Jesus is both fully God and fully human - we'll leave that one for another time.

But how would you explain your belief if you were challenged with the question, “Do Christians believe in three Gods?” It’s not an unreasonable question and one which intrigues, for example, some people of other faiths. Is there a simple way of explaining it?

Not really! But we can have a go.

Water is essential to life. It’s part of the very building blocks of life. Where there is no water, there can be no life. It can also help us to understand the Trinity - or at least a little way towards doing so.

Water exists in three natures and we are all familiar with each of them. It exists as a solid - which we call ice. It exists as a vapour - which we encounter as steam although it’s usually invisible, and of course it occurs as liquid water too. They are very different in nature but they are all the same thing - H₂O - water.

Of course one problem with this analogy when trying to explain The Trinity, is that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit all at the same time, whereas a particular quantity of water has to be one or the other.

I do like the analogy though. Just like our relationship with God water can refresh and revive, and in steam and vapour there is great energy to be found, a bit like the Holy Spirit. Ice is a form of preservation and protection too. Of course water sometimes cannot be controlled, it’s energy is sometimes beyond our understanding. But so too is God. Above all else the Trinity is about relationship - and our relationship with God, as father, Son and Holy Spirit, is part of that.

Poem/Hymn (Tune: ‘Ar hyd y nos’/’All through the night’)

Time and space are both a mystery,
 God is beyond.
 Limitless yet with a history,
 God is beyond.
 When we think of human millions,
 study galaxies in billions,
 when we ponder stars in trillions,
 God is beyond.

When we use our wealth for sharing,
 God is within.
 When we live our lives in caring,
 God is within.
 In our coming and our going,
 as we struggle in our growing,
 in our learning and our knowing,
 God is within.

When we learn to live together,
God is between.
Harmonising with each other,
God is between.
When corruption is deemed loathsome,
when our differences are welcome,
when community is wholesome,
God is between.

George Stuart
in 'Summer', Wild Goose Publications

No analogy for the Trinity is adequate to explain the relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit to each other or how we relate to God in our lives. Like any other relationship it is a journey. Enjoy exploring your journey with the Trinity in your lives.

Let us pray.

A Blessing for Trinity Sunday

May the eyes of the seeing Father
watch over us
and keep us and ours
ever in his gaze.

May the arms of the loving Saviour
hold us close
and surround each moment
of our lives with his care.

May the wings of the living Spirit
shelter each of us
and enfold all our days and our nights
with God's peace.
Amen

Simon Taylor
in 'Summer', Wild Goose Publications

Thank you for being part of this reflection today. There's a written version on the website which you can pass onto those without internet access.

Wherever you are, whatever you're doing, stay safe, take care and remember that the best of all is that God is with us!