## A reading from the book of Proverbs Chapter 8 beginning at the first verse. (Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31)

Does not wisdom call, and does not understanding raise her voice?
On the heights, beside the way, at the crossroads she takes her stand;
Beside the gates in front of the town, at the entrance of the portals she cries out: ‘To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live.

The Lord created me at the beginning\* of his work,\*
   the first of his acts of long ago.
23 Ages ago I was set up,
   at the first, before the beginning of the earth.
24 When there were no depths I was brought forth,
   when there were no springs abounding with water.
25 Before the mountains had been shaped,
   before the hills, I was brought forth—
26 when he had not yet made earth and fields,\*
   or the world’s first bits of soil.
27 When he established the heavens, I was there,
   when he drew a circle on the face of the deep,
28 when he made firm the skies above,
   when he established the fountains of the deep,
29 when he assigned to the sea its limit,
   so that the waters might not transgress his command,
when he marked out the foundations of the earth,
30   then I was beside him, like a master worker;\*
and I was daily his\* delight,
   rejoicing before him always,
31 rejoicing in his inhabited world
   and delighting in the human race.

Hear the Word of the Lord. **ALL: Thanks be to God**

## A reading from the letterof Paul to the Romans chapter 5 beginning at the first verse

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we\* have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2through whom we have obtained access\* to this grace in which we stand; and we\* boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. 3And not only that, but we\* also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Hear the Word of the Lord. **ALL: Thanks be to God**

**The Lord be with you:**

**A reading from the holy gospel according to John Chapter 16 beginning at verse 12. Glory to You, Lord Jesus Christ**

 ‘I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. 13When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth; for he will not speak on his own, but will speak whatever he hears, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. 14He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you. 15All that the Father has is mine. For this reason I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

**For the Gospel of the Lord: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ**

In the name of the One God, Source of Love, Word of Love and Spirit of Love.

Last Sunday we celebrated Pentecost: and the presence of the Spirit amongst us. So as I suggested last week, Pentecost actually foreshadows the revelation of the Triune God and so here today we celebrate Trinity Sunday. **(SLIDE 1)** This might seem like a strange thing to say but at one level, I am never quite sure why the church has instituted a “Trinity Sunday”. The doctrine of the Trinity speaks about the very nature of the one God, so really every Sunday, every day, ought to be an acknowledgement of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is a particularly Christian way of speaking about God and one of the key things that it reveals to us is that God is relational. (**Slide 2)** That is God the Father and or Mother, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit; these three diverse persons are mutually indwelling in one another and always have done so. At the very heart of God is community.

But more than this, what the doctrine of the Trinity teaches us is that God is intimately related to our lives. Our God is a self-communicating God who through the power of the risen Christ and the Holy Spirit comes to us today in loving relationship. **Slide 3** God is radically related to human life and indeed to the whole of creation. God is not a solitary, isolated God but a communion of Love that overflows into all of creation. **Slide 4** God is by nature, essentially relational, three persons united in radical communion which means that God can do nothing other than love creation and deeply enter our lives.

One of the great scholars of the Trinity, Catherine La Cugna, makes the point that we cannot speak of God without speaking of all creation. **Slide 5** The mutual love that inheres in the midst of God is not contained within God but rather overflows: God is truly a God for us. It is the very nature of God to invite the beloved people of God into participation in God’s life. **Slide 6** God is not an isolated supreme being but rather a trinity of communion who calls forth loving relationship in the world. This is the mystery that we call God.

I invite you to gaze upon the classic icon of the Trinity created by the Russian painter, Andrei Rublev. The Trinity has been variously interpreted in art over the centuries but this one is particularly powerful I think. This image of the three divine persons reveals the Trinity as the embodiment of mutual love. Christian teaching is nevertheless very clear that God is One. And so we are looking at an image of the nature of the one God. Icons are often thought of as a window into the divine. They are more than paintings if you like- icons are created to reveal a divine truth. This icon is from the 15th century- early 1400s.

These three figures, 3 angels, are arranged such that they form a full circle. You can also see in the hand position of the middle figure, representing Christ a gesture of blessing with two fingers raised.

The left figure represents the Father who is also blessing the cup but in a sense passing it to Jesus who seems to be accepting the cup (with a slight bow of the head) but perhaps saying "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will". ([Mt 26:39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mt+26%3A39&version=NRSV))

The Holy Spirit sits on the right- see that the wings of the Spirit do not overlap with the Son- you will see the wings of the Father and the Son do overlap.

This image also presents the three divine persons of equal essence, we see:

– All three angels are the same in form and size

– All three carry the same thin staves in their hands

– All three sit on the same type of throne

– Each figure is clothed in the same types of garments – *but* which are neverhteless individually distinct. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are One but also distinct from one another.

Look behind the figure of the Father and we see a house, rising immediately behind him, recalling the scripture “in my Father’s house are many rooms” (Jn 14:2). The house of course is also a **symbol of hospitality**.

Behind the figure of the Son is a tree a symbol of both the Tree of Life (from Genesis) and the Wood of the Cross. On the Cross the son transforms this tree of death into a tree of life .

I mentioned before that the figures form a circle, but note that the circle is not closed in on itself. It is a circle of communion which opens in the foreground and offers space for another. While their gaze is aimed towards one another, the faces are in some fashion facing the observer as well. As such, the spectator (that’s you and me), are invited and welcomed into this circle to participate in this holy Mystery. We are invited not merely to observe but to participate in the very life of God. It is quite an amazing icon is it not?

For us as Christians, the doctrine of the Trinity describes as much as is humanly possible, the very nature of God. Another way of describing God is to say simply God is Love. God is the Source of all Love, God is the Word made flesh who showed us the way of Love and the of course the Spirit of Love binds us together now and always. In our human life all we have are words and images as we try to grasp and make sense of the presence of Love amongst us. There I think will always be a sense as St Paul writes of “seeing in a mirror dimly” or of knowing only in part, but in the fullness of time we will see face to face.

Let us Pray, 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.