

Holy Trinity – Sunday Reflection

Last week our family laid to rest my brother in law, Richard Lionnet. He had been blessed with a good life and was just shy of his 90th year. For 88 of those years he had enjoyed remarkably good health, he even had no need for medications up until the last year of his life. But frailty caught up with him in the 89th year of his life, but as was his wish he remained at home, looked after by carers, and passed away peaceful with loving people by his side. Having received *Viaticum*, Holy Communion, the final sacrament of the church, he turned his eyes towards eternity. One of his carers told me she thought the end was close, as over the previous few hours he had unusually looked intently upwards, his eyes fixed on something that she could not see. This reminded me that in 2020 and as beings of this natural world there is much we can struggle to see or comprehend, particularly as it relates to our final supernatural destination.

Our Catholic teaching tells us that God, by definition, is ineffable, beyond conceptualization, beyond imagination, beyond even our present language. The Feast of the Holy Trinity follows on immediately from the great Feast of Pentecost because we are taught that it is only by the presence and inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the mystery of the Trinity can even begin to be grasped. We need God's help to stand any chance of comprehending just the idea of an inner reality of God.

As people of faith we give thanks that the God in whom we hope and trust is such a unfathomed mystery that even the idea that God existing as one, but within, and in, three persons, is always going to beyond our current comprehension. I trust however that this will not always be so.

The virtue of Hope within our theological understanding is not only the desire of something but together with the well-founded expectation of obtaining it; and so, as Catholic Christians, we hope and trust that Richard Lionnet now experiences God in a way that we can only just now begin to imagine.

The Christian belief that God is a Trinity helps underscore how rich the mystery of God is and how our experience of God is always going to be richer than our ideas and concepts of how we can speak about God.

One of the challenges of being a Christian in these times is that today the lived experience of many lives has no place for the fullness of God and the living with that great mystery that we celebrate today. Secular culture has changed, so that multiple viewpoints and world views are now conceivable to the majority people in western culture. But I take heart, and from a position of desire for respectful dialogue, I trust that the Holy Spirit is leading us to a place that is new, perhaps somewhat more challenging, but still holding true to the revealed Word of God, our rich Church

Today the church celebrate the Richness of the Mystery of God

tradition, and the mysterious reality of what is the "other side"...that way of being which is beyond this earthy existence.

Hopefully our scripture today can help us reflect deeply on these aspects of our faith as we see that the struggle for understanding the inner workings of God is by no means unique to these times.

I think one way to understand today's Gospel passage comes from comprehending its broader context. In John chapter three Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, a Pharisee, who is one of the members of the Jewish ruling council. Jesus tells Nicodemus that we must be born again and Nicodemus is mightily puzzled and asks Jesus how can a person be born again when he or she is already old and obviously cannot be born of a woman again,... a clearly earthbound and limited but for him reasonable view of existence. From this point on further clarity is given towards today's scripture passage as Jesus proclaims the "how" of being born again, and that is that he, that is Jesus, must be "lifted up" and that everyone who believes in Him will have eternal life. This culminates in the powerful message of "why" and the why of all this is that God loves us so much that He gave Jesus... and that, through Christ, people can have eternal life. Importantly for all our relationships with our neighbours believing and unbelieving, Jesus proceeds in later verses to state that He came into the world to save others, not to condemn them! I remember a Bishop once saying we are here to "mind our own business" and "not our neighbours business", our business is witnessing to the living presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives, by what we believe, say and do, and this is how we care for our neighbour.

My dear friends we are searching hearts always looking for a place to rest, only in heaven shall we properly understand what it means to be in union with Christ, to share as sons and daughters in the very life of God, the Holy Trinity, but we can through the grace of God begin to get a taste of what is to come right now.

Do we hope and trust that this is so? I hope so!