



Trinity Sunday 2005

Exodus 34:4-9 2 Corinthians 13: 11-13 John 3: 16-18

How do we come to know God? Can God be known?
These questions have been part of the human journey from the beginning.

Today I will look at some of the concepts that underpin the readings of the day as part of our struggle to come to know God. We recognise at the same time that whatever we gain in knowledge of God is far from the reality of who God is.

Trinity is a name for God. This name challenges us to pause before the mystery of God. It also helps us recognise that we cannot fully appreciate the nature of God. There are no images of God that are adequate, so the people of Israel sought to use a number of word/images that, over time, would help them with their exploration.

Such a cluster of names appears at the beginning of Exodus reading.
“You O Lord, are a God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.”
These descriptions sum up for Israel’s the most important things they could say about God.

When these words are put together they provide a picture of a *God of Commitment*. The people felt it was not enough to say that God is great, or that God can’t be compared to anything else; what made God great was God’s utter reliability.

To say that God is powerful is not enough. We have all experienced the misuse of power in small and in frightening ways. Power is neutral in itself. It is how power is used that gives it its character. When power is used with solidarity and reliability, it is a gift.

The people of Israel knew what it was to be powerless, so they recognised that power by itself is not a measure of Godness. They proclaimed that power in the service of the poor and needy, power used with compassion was a mark of real Godness.

When we, as Christians, say that God is Trinity, we are giving testimony to our understanding of the nature of God. We name God as Creator, who in mercy and graciousness forms us in the divine image.

We use the words *father* or *mother* of God because it is from good parents, or from the dream of perfect parents, that we begin to sense the transcendent. From the nurturing steadfast love of Joseph, Jesus learned to call God, Abba.

God is a God of solidarity. This is revealed in the gift of the Incarnation, God-with-us, a God who saves, delivers, who calls us to save and deliver in his name. To be Son-

of-God is to value humanity beyond glory, as Paul tells us. Though he was equal to God he did not exploit this gift but became the Obedient One.

God is steadfast love and faithfulness. "I will be with you always...You will not be orphans..." God is faithful. When we see fidelity in our world we are moved to celebrate. Fidelity is the constant pursuit of the vision of God.

By calling God Tri-unity we remember that our striving for the kingdom to be realised on earth is a com-unity project.

The God of holiness teaches us that we journey with others, and on the way we learn mercy, graciousness, non-violence and steadfast love.

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