

Preached by The Rev. Deacon Pat Henderson

Trinity Sunday June 7 2009

Isaiah 6:1-8 Psalm 29 – Romans 8:12-17 and John 3:1-17

I speak to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit....Amen

When Father David e-mailed me the clergy schedule a while back, I quickly checked it to see **if** and when I was preaching. - "Oh no," Trinity Sunday... I thought... how am I going to explain the inexplicable...and what messages will God want me to leave you with today.....and then it came to me...tell them about Mary's son.

But first, I want to start off by telling you a little story....

A farmer and his friend travelled to a large city. They were walking along one of the bustling city streets when the farmer suddenly stopped and said that he could hear a cricket. His friend was amazed, but the farmer said that it was simply because his ears were **attuned**. He **listened** even more intently and *following* the sound strode forward and picked up the tiny cricket from a window sill. His friend couldn't get over it. But the farmer showed no surprise, and **to** prove his point he took a couple of pennies out of his pocket and dropped them on the pavement. Hearing the jingle of coins all the passers-by stopped dead in their tracks and looked on the ground for the coins. He had proved his point, people only hear what they are **attuned** to and miss all the rest.

With that in mind, I want you to **listen** and to hear one thing...

KKK (knocking on the pulpit)

That is **God** knocking at the door of your heart ...he wants to tell you something....that he loves you and wants to be in relationship with you and he wants you to tell others about his love.....and God chooses many forms ...God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, to enable us to be attuned to his presence in our lives.

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For a moment, I want you to close your eyes please and to think **about God**.wait 10 seconds....

What did you see? Which part of the Trinity did you visualize?

Did you think about the image of God described in Isaiah, seated on a throne surrounded by Angels? The same one portrayed in Stainer's Anthem...I saw the Lord...which will be sung by the choir today (at the 11:00 service)....during communion.

or

Did you imagine the God of the Old Testament who walked with Adam in the cool of the evening in a garden? Did you see God the Father - as the angry God who sent the flood, destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah?

Or Did you think of Jesus?

And how did you see Him?

As a baby, as the child in the Temple? As the young preacher of fire and zeal, as the gentle healer? As the friend, as our crucified Lord?

Did you think of the Holy Spirit, as flame... as wind..... as bubbles? (talk to Graham about that one)

Or did you think of the Holy Spirit as a dove descending upon Jesus as he rises up from the Jordan or on Terry as he was consecrated as our **newest** Suffragan Bishop yesterday.

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I have a friend who sits on a postulancy board and one of his favourite interview questions is "Which member of the Holy Trinity do you most relate to? Father, Son or Holy Spirit.

I asked fearfully, "What is the right answer?"

"Ah", he replied smugly, "there isn't a right answer, but you get some interesting replies."

So I am asking you - which part of the Trinity most appeals to you Pat? When you *pray*, do you envisage a wise Father God, perhaps bearded and kindly?

When you *pray* do you speak to Jesus, *and in which form*, as **the earthly** friend of fisherman, full of love and compassion or the Heavenly Jesus enthroned in majesty and splendor?

Do you think of the Holy Spirit, mysterious and intangible but powerful?

My friend said to meDon't worry Pat...I believe there isn't a right answer, at least not one which will make you a better or a worse Christian or a better or worse preacher.

He went on to say....I will let you into a trade secret Pat... lots of clergy find preaching on the subject of the Trinity really daunting. That's why they give the task to the Deacon.

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Armed with the charge, I suppose then I should have launched into a long historical description of how the concept of the Trinity evolved from just the briefest hints in the Bible. I should have gone on at length and because you are so polite and nice to me, you would listen while I described to you the various Councils of the early church and theologians which honed the idea into the concepts **we say** we believe in... in the words of the Creed. But, you will be relieved to

hear, I am not going to do that, if you really want that perspective, you can stop the Archdeacon(s) or Father David afterwards and **they** will fill in these background matters.

Again, for me, when we talk of the Trinity we are talking about how God wants to be in relationship with us and how God reveals himself to us... and I believe that we cannot be in relationship with God until we **listen** to him through prayer and reflection and are *attuned* to his presence in our lives.

We are after all only God's acolytes, responding to the initiative he first made to us. For it is indeed true that each one of us **as** God's children, has had a religious experience; each one of us has experienced God's intervention in our life in some shape or form. If we did not we would not be here.

He has taken the initiative; of course this may be mediated through all sorts of other agencies, through the example of our parents, through illness, through accidents, through sudden flashes of insight. Whichever way this has come, it has made us realise that God loves us and wants us to be with him. He draws **us** to himself. He draws us into the mystery of himself; into the mystery of the Trinity.

KKK

You may or may not be aware that this summer we are going to host an Art Show out on the lawnentitled "Cloister Artists" and along with it ..we *will be providing* Tours of our Cathedral after the Sunday services. Several members of the parish have accepted the invitation to be host for 12 Sundays starting June 21st. You are all welcome to attend and bring along a friend. Come for the service – enjoy the art show – and take in a tour.

To assist in the venture I have been preparing a new Tour Guide with the help of Bette Ferguson, Maise Allen, and many, many others – During the undertaking I must tell you that I was very impressed with the photographs taken by Paul Herbert (thank you Paul) particularly the one entitled "The Light of the World" on the south wall – right over there...(point)

Louis Tiffany's stained glass masterpiece has captured William Holman Hunt's most famous work. It is a depiction of Jesus knocking on a time worn, long unopened, door. A door that is overgrown and covered with vines.

The scriptural basis for this painting is, "Behold I stand at the door and knock. **KKK** If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come into him **and will feast with him and he** with me."

Hunt said of his artwork, "I painted the picture with what I thought, *unworthy though I may be, to be a divine command*, and **not** simply as a good subject."

Think about itit was if he was attuned and heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" who will capture the essence of my invitation of love for youAnd **Listening** to God's invitation as we heard in our first reading today...Hunt said, "Here am I; send me!"

KKK

For me, as Jesus knocks he reminds us to open up the doors of his church to welcome all of God's people.... to share the good news of the Trinity.

For me as Jesus knocks he reminds us to **listen** and be **attuned** to what God has placed on your heart and to *share with others* your vision for the future of the Anglican church by participating in the exercise Vision 2019 as found in your bulletin.

And for me.... as Jesus knocks he ALSO reminds us that God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. We only need to believe and to open the door and receive the gifts that only he as Father, Son and Holy Spirit can give.

KKK

Can you hear him knocking on the door of your heart? Wanting to come in and fill your hearts with a deep, unshakable sense of comfort, love, hope and peace. So that you might have real life – that abundant life he promises.

I said in the beginning that I would tell you about Mary's son... in closing, I want to share her story now.

Last year, I was visiting at University Hospital and overheard that there was a terrible vehicle accident on the 401 involving several teenagers and when one of the nurses, named Mary, who was sitting next to me heard the news ...she said "please God not my son" he is travelling today, But, if my son, please may he live"

But it was not to be; Mary's son was one of the teenagers who died. He lived for a couple of days...and during that time **she** stayed faithfully at his bedside **praying**...

KKK

Just moments before he died ...he opened up his eyes and murmured...I have been **listening** to you mum... "Don't worry" I will be ok. I am ready to meet our God and Jesus... the one who loves us the most....and I have been praying that the Holy Spirit will come to you mum and comfort you....Mum it is ok for you to grieve for a while – but then you must go on... until we see each other again. – I love you Mum...I love you....

Can you imagine...the power of the Trinity coming forth in that moment to reveal what was in her son's heart. What a gift.

But the gift goes on...Mere moments after he died Mary's colleagues asked her the painful but necessary questions about harvesting and using her son's organs in love she agreed....saying it was in her son's heart to give the gift of life as modeled by our Lord.

Months later, I heard the follow-up story in the Transplant unit from another nurse. She told me that somehow Mary had learned the identity of the person who had received her son's heart. Unbelievably, it turned out to be a boy in her son's church whose life was saved by the heart transplant. Mary contacted him, and they visited and talked and wept together and prayed and

talked and wept some more. As she rose to leave, Mary made an unusual but understandable request. Could she please put **her** ear to **his** chest and hear **her** son's heart beating. Hear her son's heart beating and giving life."

Poignant isn't it?

Now let me ask you – 'What's in your heart... if God were to put His ear to your chest and listen, would He hear **his child's**, his **son's** heart beating in you?

Beating out the message that God loves **you** and that God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that **e v e r y o n e** who believes in him may have eternal life.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

KKK

Amen.