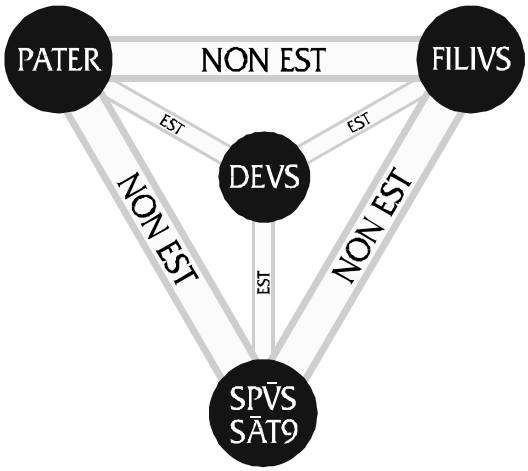
Trinity Sunday - 6th June



Trinity Sunday is the last major feast of the Christian year. It celebrates the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, in which God is understood to be revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Liturgically, the remainder of the year is reckoned in terms as 'Sundays after Trinity' until the cycle resumes again on Advent Sunday.

No one has ever pretended that the doctrine of the Trinity is easy to understand. In fact, it is unquestionably one of the most perplexing aspects of Christian theology. The casual reader of the Scriptures will find only two verses in the entire Bible that seem, at first glance, to be capable of a full Trinitarian interpretation: Matthew 28.19 and 2 Corinthians 13.14.

'Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit...'

'May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all...'

But of course the doctrine is not based on just these two verses! Instead, its foundations are built on the pattern of divine activity found throughout the Bible, especially the New Testament. Time after time, New Testament verses link together the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. What emerges is that the Father is revealed in Christ through the Spirit. It seems as if God's saving presence and power can only be expressed by involving all three elements. (For example, see 1 Corinthians 12: 4 – 6; 2 Corinthians 1: 21; Galatians 4: 6; Ephesians 2: 20 –2; 2 Thessalonians 2: 13 – 14; Titus 3: 4 – 6 and 1 Peter 1: 2.)

The one who is arguably responsible for the development of distinctive Trinitarian terminology is Tertullian, born about 160 AD, and the first theologian to write in Latin. He invented the word trinity – or trinitas. And such was his influence on Christian theology, that his term became normative within the western church.

Some Christians down the centuries have explained the doctrine of the Trinity by using the simple model of the sun (Father) in the heavens, which has both light coming from it (Jesus) and heat (the Holy Spirit). All one, all one source, but still three.

Some theologians prefer to speak of 'Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer' rather than the traditional 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit'.

Every age is an age for evangelism.
God has no grandchildren.
E Smith