

## Sunday Message from Fr William for the Seventeenth Sunday of the Year 2023

*The 'Other World' continued*

What will life be like in the other world? We can only really begin to grasp this once we've glimpsed something of *their* life – I mean the life of these three persons who are the 'be all' of the other world – The Father, The Son, and The Spirit; because our life in the 'other world' will be a participation in theirs.

Before we plunge into the depths of what *their* life together is like, you might be wondering if I've finished answering the question we started with: 'Who will be there?' in the 'other world'. No I haven't. What about angels? We'll come to them. What about human beings? We'll come to them too.

But you might also be wondering how we've managed to get so far in this foray into the 'other world' and no mention yet of God. In Old Testament times the divinity was known by different names. Abraham knew the divinity as '*El Shaddai*'. (*Genesis 17:1*). It's a divine name Abraham might already have been familiar with from his native Mesopotamia and the fertility religions of that region. Fast forward a few centuries and Moses knew the divinity as '*Yahweh*'. (*Exodus 3:14*). It's a name that may be more familiar to us, and reveals important insights into the nature of the divinity. But it's still a pre-Christian name. The Greek *Theos* and the Latin *Deus* which we translate as '*God*' are also borrowed from their respective religions. The English name '*God*' is itself a generic term that could refer to deities of any religion.

Progression in our knowledge of the divinity is a progression that spans the pre-Christian centuries. But with the coming of Jesus Christ the divinity is now fully revealed: The Father, The Son, and The Spirit. It's true that the Greek New Testament records Jesus speaking of *Theos*, which we translate as '*God*'. But increasingly, and especially as recorded in John's Gospel, he speaks instead of The Father, and of The Son (ie himself), and of the Spirit whom he himself will 'send from the Father'. (*John 15:26*). Is Jesus Christ leading us from the pre-Christian understanding of God to the full Christian understanding of The Father, The Son, and the Spirit?

With the coming into this world of Jesus Christ, what we now call the Trinity resolves into sharp focus, after the pre-Christian centuries, during which it was the oneness of the deity that was emphasized over against the 'gods' of competing religions; just like a binary star system seems one and single from a distance, but resolves into two stars, or even multiple stars with a powerful enough telescope, or if you were able to travel out to it. Let's stick with this clarity, to be clear when we are talking about The Father, or about The Son, or about The Spirit.

It is *their* life together – The Father and the Son and the Spirit – that we're going to try and glimpse next, by opening up the hidden treasures of the Bible, because as we'll see it is in their dynamic life together that we're going to be participating in the 'other world'.

*to be continued...*



Seventeenth Sunday of  
the Year, 30 July 2023