

Sunday Message from Fr William for the Eighteenth Sunday of the Year 2023

The 'Other World' continued

The life of the Trinity – Father, Son and Spirit – is sometimes portrayed as static. See for example the 14th century depiction in an Initial B by the Master of the Codex Rossiano. Try googling it. Or *Holy Trinity* by contemporary Ukrainian artist Anna Kolisnyk. These depictions capture the peace and serenity of their life together. But the life of the Trinity is also dynamic, in fact infinitely dynamic.

The reason we can glimpse something of their life, the life of the Trinity – Father, Son and Spirit – is because they are at work, together, in our world. And the way they work in the world is an expression of who they are in themselves. We can see this connection between 'what they do' and 'who they are' in human beings. Often the work someone does is an expression of who they are in themselves. A person goes into the care sector, the hospitality sector, the police force, the armed services, the aerospace industry. In each case the work they have chosen to undertake may reveal something about what they are like as a person. This is supremely true of the Trinity.

Jesus Christ, who speaks of himself as the Son, speaks also of himself as the one 'sent by the Father'. 'I who am sent by the living Father.' (John 6:57). Forty times he speaks of himself as the one 'sent by the Father' as recorded in John's gospel. This is the Son telling us not just about his mission in this world, but also something essential about who he is in himself. Yes he has been sent by the Father, for the work he will do in this world. But prior to this is who the Son is in himself. He is the one 'sent by the Father'. 'Sent by the Father' is fundamental to who he is, not just in this world but first and foremost in the 'other world'. This gives us a first glimpse into their life together in the 'other world', Father and Son. And it is dynamic, infinitely dynamic.

Conversely he speaks of himself as the one 'going to the Father'. It would be neat if I could tell you that he said this forty times as well, but it's only four times (John 14:12, 14:28, 16:5, 16:10). Nevertheless, he is the one 'going to the Father', just as he is at the same time the one 'sent by the Father'. We see it in his life in this world as recorded in the gospels: he comes from the Father and he returns to the Father. And we see it in a focussed way in the Prologue of the Gospel of John (John chapter one). The Prologue is the Gospel in a nutshell. And in this nutshell it is this two-way dynamic that John focusses in on – the Son coming from the Father and the Son returning to the Father. This gives us a second glimpse into their life together, Father and Son, in the 'other world'. The Son is 'going to the Father'. And it is dynamic, infinitely dynamic.

The Son's mission in this world is 'salvation', and we'll see what this means. But first and foremost his mission in this world is 'revelation'. His mission, his work, reveals who he is in himself in the 'other world'. He is, in the 'other world' the one 'sent by the Father' and at the same time the one 'going to the Father'. We'll see how this relates to infinite Freedom and infinite Love, as mentioned earlier, and in due course how we human beings will participate in this dynamic life of the Trinity.

to be continued...

William

Eighteenth Sunday of the Year, and
the Transfiguration, 6 August 2023