

## DEEPER INTO TRUTH

(JOHN 16:12-15)



Fragment of Holy Trinity Column in Budapest

The Gospel extract for our feast today is taken from Jesus' final speech to his disciples, in which he promises that the Holy Spirit will assist them in reaching a deeper understanding of his teaching.

He emphasises the unity between himself and the Father, a theme which has occurred before in John's account. It may well mean that the Spirit will lead the disciples "into the very heart of all truth": we remember that Jesus has described himself as "the way, the truth and the life". Jesus is the Word of God, God's most direct way of reaching out to human beings to invite them (and us) into a personal relationship, characterised by friendship. ■

### DO

Make the sign of the cross: think about the persons of the Trinity as God, Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier.

### SAY

The love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit.

(Romans 5:5)

### LEARN

In the Jewish scriptures, Wisdom is often presented as God's way of creating and revealing God's self to human beings.

At the beginning of John's Gospel, Jesus is presented as God's Word (*logos*) in similar terms to Wisdom in the Jewish writings.

The figure of Wisdom is reflected in Jesus' ministry and teaching in the Fourth Gospel.

## REFLECT

The Fourth Gospel begins by presenting Jesus in its Prologue as the eternal Word of God made flesh. In the course of the narrative, Jesus is depicted in similar terms to the figure of the Wisdom of God in the Jewish scriptures, which we heard in the first reading from the Hebrew writings in the book of Proverbs. Wisdom in the Bible (and the wider culture) indicated the ability to achieve a goal or purpose, good or bad. Wisdom is a female figure, presented as God's companion and instrument in creation: this is the figure transformed into the masculine *logos* of the Prologue and applied to Jesus, though he is never referred to in that way in the course of the Gospel.

When we think about the Holy Trinity, we talk about the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. "Father" and "Son" are masculine terms and figures. "Spirit" in the Hebrew scriptures is feminine; in the Christian scriptures, it is neuter, neither masculine nor feminine. So, is there perhaps something missing in our idea of the Godhead? We might recall that the most conservative writer in the book of Genesis points out – twice, in case we might miss the point – that God created woman in God's image and likeness. So where is that teaching mirrored in our understanding of the Blessed Trinity?

Strictly speaking, the pronoun used for the Holy Spirit should be "it", not "he". We do not consider it appropriate to refer to any person, even an infant, as "it". But suppose we began to talk about the Spirit as "she": what difference would that make to our understanding of God? It is true that in the Bible the Spirit is often presented in terms of an impersonal enabling power, as in the Acts of the Apostles. But in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus presents the Spirit in more personal terms. In our Gospel reading today, the text says "He will lead you to the complete truth": we would probably be uncomfortable if we heard "It will lead you to the complete truth"; but how would you feel if the reader said, "She will lead you to the complete truth"? And why would you feel that way?

As we contemplate the mystery of the Holy Trinity, we might take this wider biblical perspective into account. ■

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Blest be God the Father,  
and the Only Begotten Son of God,  
and also the Holy Spirit,  
for he has shown us his merciful love.

**GLORIA**

Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you,  
we bless you,  
we adore you,  
we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,  
with the Holy Spirit,  
in the glory of God the Father.  
Amen.

**COLLECT**

God our Father, who by sending into the  
world  
the Word of truth and the Spirit of  
sanctification  
made known to the human race your  
wondrous mystery,  
grant us, we pray, that in professing the true  
faith,  
we may acknowledge the Trinity of eternal  
glory  
and adore your Unity, powerful in majesty.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of  
the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

**FIRST READING** Proverbs 8:22-31

A reading from the book of Proverbs.

The Wisdom of God cries aloud:

The Lord created me when his purpose first  
unfolded,  
before the oldest of his works.  
From everlasting I was firmly set,  
from the beginning, before earth came into  
being.

The deep was not, when I was born,  
there were no springs to gush with water.  
Before the mountains were settled,  
before the hills, I came to birth;  
before he made the earth, the countryside,  
or the first grains of the world's dust.  
When he fixed the heavens firm, I was  
there,  
when he drew a ring on the surface of the  
deep,  
when he thickened the clouds above,  
when he fixed fast the springs of the deep,  
when he assigned the sea its boundaries  
– and the waters will not invade the shore –  
when he laid down the foundations of the  
earth,  
I was by his side, a master craftsman,  
delighting him day after day,

ever at play in his presence,  
at play everywhere in his world,  
delighting to be with the sons of men.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**PSALM**

Psalm 8

Response:

How great is your name, O Lord our God,  
through all the earth!

- When I see the heavens, the work of your  
hands,  
the moon and the stars which you  
arranged,  
what is man that you should keep him in  
mind,  
mortal man that you care for him? (R.)
- Yet you have made him little less than a  
god;  
with glory and honour you crowned him,  
gave him power over the works of your  
hand,  
put all things under his feet. (R.)
- All of them, sheep and cattle,  
yes, even the savage beasts,  
birds of the air, and fish  
that make their way through the waters.  
(R.)

**SECOND READING**

Romans 5:1-5

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the  
Romans.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, by faith  
we are judged righteous and at peace with  
God, since it is by faith and through Jesus  
that we have entered this state of grace in  
which we can boast about looking forward to  
God's glory. But that is not all we can boast  
about; we can boast about our sufferings.  
These sufferings bring patience, as we know,  
and patience brings perseverance, and  
perseverance brings hope, and this hope is  
not deceptive, because the love of God has  
been poured into our hearts by the Holy  
Spirit which has been given us.

The word of the Lord.  
Thanks be to God.

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to  
the Holy Spirit,  
the God who is, who was, and who is to  
come.  
Alleluia!

**GOSPEL**

John 16:12-15

A reading from the holy Gospel according to  
John.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"I still have many things to say to you  
but they would be too much for you now.  
But when the Spirit of truth comes  
he will lead you to the complete truth,  
since he will not be speaking as from  
himself  
but will say only what he has learnt;  
and he will tell you of the things to come.  
He will glorify me  
since all he tells you  
will be taken from what is mine.  
Everything the Father has is mine;

that is why I said:  
All he tells you  
will be taken from what is mine."

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

**PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with  
the Father;

through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

*(all bow during the next three lines)*

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary,  
and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under  
Pontius Pilate,

he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory

to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,  
the giver of life,

who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified,

who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and  
apostolic Church.

I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness  
of sins

and I look forward to the resurrection of the  
dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Sanctify by the invocation of your name,  
we pray, O Lord our God,  
this oblation of our service,  
and by it make of us an eternal offering to you.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Since you are children of God,  
God has sent into your hearts the Spirit of  
his Son,  
the Spirit who cries out: Abba, Father.

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

May receiving this Sacrament, O Lord our  
God,  
bring us health of body and soul,  
as we confess your eternal holy Trinity and  
undivided Unity.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.