St Peter the Fisherman – Whitianga
June 12th 2022

Theme: The gifts of Trinity Sunay

I runga i te ingoa o te papa, te tama, me te wairua tapu.

*In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

*Amen*

(Black slide)

How do you feel when you receive a gift?

I see three kinds of gifts, but there could be more:

*The one we don’t want and either dispose of or put out of sight; (image 1)
The one that is sort of OK but is unlikely ever to be used, and is probably either passed on now or sometime later; (image 2)
The one we accept with delight and immediately use. (image 3)*

Trinity Sunday, which I typically regard as the end of the ‘Jesus on earth cycle’, is all about gifts. Gifts from God, which as his chosen people we are at liberty to accept in any one of the ways just agreed. All of today’s readings illustrate not only God’s gifts but God’s intentions in giving them.

Our reading from Proverbs introduces us to God the creator, the giver of existence to this Universe and all that inhabits it. Especially we are introduced to the gift of this planet, and the perfect system which was established on it, described there as the gifts of Wisdom, with a capital ‘W’. If you can remember the Sunday School story about King Solomon, (the son of the great King David) and the wisdom of his decision about the baby two women were each claiming as her own, you can see why he was regarded as the Wise King. He is credited with being the writer of the book Proverbs. Today’s extract is very telling about God’s first gift; the Creation.

(Creation image)

*The Lord created me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of long ago. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.*

*When he established the heavens, I was there, when he assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress his command, when he marked out the foundations of the earth, ………rejoicing in his inhabited world,* ***and delighting in the human race.***

David himself, in Psalm 8 reinforces God the creator, and the gift to us as his people.

*When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?*

*You have given them dominion over the works of your hands;*

What a gift that is. So much happens in the Scriptures following this powerful gift, and centuries later is summarised in Paul’s letter to the Romans – that group of early Christians who were struggling to survive as worshippers in what had become for them, a brutal oppressed world. Here Paul is reminding that group of God’s next gift, Jesus Christ, who once accepted, gives us;

(Jesus image)

*The grace in which we stand, and the boast of the hope of sharing the glory of God.*

He goes on to write;

*hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.*

God’s third gift. All this reinforced by today’s Gospel where Jesus reminds his disciples that he needs to leave them now, so that the gift of the Holy Spirit (God’s Advocate for them) can be sent to them, to help them through the challenging times they will be facing;

(Holy Spirit image)

*When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth …. And he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, because he will take what is mine and declare it to you.*

Trinity Sunday is all about recognising and accepting the three gifts of God. The gift of creation, the gift of Jesus Christ, and the gift of the Holy Spirit – all from God and of God.

**God,** the one **to** whom we pray, the one to whom we look, to whom we call out, the one who made the world and who loves all that has been made.

And then there is God by our side, God once more the one **with** whom we pray; God in the life of this man who shares our life, this man who lives the life of God by our side, and who pours out his life in love for us.

And then there is God in our hearts, God one more time, one life, one love, one will, who works through these three to meet us when we pray, to catch hold of us, to bear us up, and support us when we ask.

(Trinity image)

We call the source; the one **to** whom we pray, God the Father. And we call the one by our side, the one **with** whom we pray, God once more, Jesus. And we call the one in our hearts, the one **in** whom we pray, God one more time, the Holy Spirit. And that is why we call this God – the God we meet when we pray, the God we know when we pray – that is why we call this God ‘three in one’; that is why we call our God Trinity.

This is God the mighty and eternal who calls worlds into being and loves us into life.  This is God the compassionate and merciful, who bears on his heart for all time the sorrow and pain of the world.  This is the God enthroned in majesty who answers the longings of the ages and shows us his glory.  This is God who is Trinity of persons, Father, Son and Holy Spirit to whom be all might, majesty, dominion and power now and to the end of time. This is God who absolutely unconditionally gave us these gifts.

(gifts slide)

Do we say ‘No Thanks’, or ‘Maybe they might come in handy one day – but not now’, or ‘Yes, thank you, this is the best set of gifts I could ever hope to receive!’?

In a moment, we are going to pray the Creed where we are meant to affirm our belief in, and acknowledgement of, those three gifts of the Trinity. It is up to each of us to decide into which of those three gift categories they fall.

(Trinity slide)

**Whatever you feel about those three gifts, my prayer is, may God the Father direct you, God the Son equip you, and God the Holy Spirit empower you and breath life and grace into your every word.**

**Amen**

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