

TRINITY SUNDAY (YEAR B) Sunday 26 May 2024

EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL

NIGHT SKY

EXPLORING NEXT SUNDAY'S THEME

Introducing the Gospel

The Trinity (John 3:1-17)

The full nature of God is a mystery which men and women have struggled to grasp and to express, a mystery that inspires us with awe and wonder. The doctrine of the Trinity affirms that God has been made known in the world in three characteristic ways, as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit. The way in which the Early Church chose to express this mystery was in terms of 'three persons in one Godhead'. In John's Gospel Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus provides biblical roots for the distinctive activities of God as Father, Jesus as Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Our image to stimulate reflection on the theme of Trinity Sunday is the *night sky* that also inspires us with awe and wonder.

Core extract from the Gospel (John 3.1-3; for reflection throughout the week)

There was a Pharisee named Nicodemus,
a leader of the Jews.

He came to Jesus by night
and said to him,

'Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God;
for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.'

Jesus answered him,

'Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God
without being born from above.'

Gospel prayer (for use throughout the week)

Holy, holy, holy
is the Lord of sky and sea.
Praise to the Father,
praise to the Son,
praise to the Holy Spirit,
praise to the Glorious and Holy Trinity;
now and for ever.
Amen.

READING NEXT SUNDAY'S GOSPEL

John 3.1-17

Nicodemus Visits Jesus

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, ‘Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.’ Jesus answered him, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, “You must be born from above.” The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus said to him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered him, ‘Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?’

‘Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

‘Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

ENGAGING WITH THE THEME

Dwelling with the text (John 3: 1-17)

Begin exploring John's account of Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus by employing the SIFT approach of Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking. You may find that one of these approaches comes easier to you than the others. But it is worth trying all four.

- What details in the passage catch your attention (Sensing)?
- What big ideas in the passage spark in your mind (Intuition)?
- What most touches your heart in the passage (Feeling)?
- What most stretches your mind and makes you think in the passage (Thinking)?

Thinking and talking

Identify topics within the passage that can get you thinking and talking. Here are some ideas to get you started.

- What is Nicodemus doing coming to Jesus by night?
- What do we learn about the activity of God the Father from this narrative?
- What do we learn about the activity of God the Son from this narrative?
- What do we learn about the activity of God the Holy Spirit from this narrative?
- What does this narrative say for us today?

Using your Bible

Connect this narrative with John's interest in the encounter between light and darkness.

- John 1: 4-5

Connect this narrative with the saving power of the serpent in the wilderness.

- Numbers 21: 6-9

Explore the awe-inspiring mystery of the sky in the Psalms.

- Psalm 8: 1-4
- Psalm 136: 1-9
- Psalm 147: 1-4
- Psalm 148: 1-5

Exploring online

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Widen your exploration of the mystery of the Holy Trinity by looking up some of the following themes and others of your own choosing.

- Mystery of the Holy Trinity
- Holy Trinity poetry
- Wonders of the night sky

Drawing on experience

The image to stimulate reflection on the mystery of the Holy Trinity is *night sky*. Draw on your own experience of the night sky. For example:

- Have you ever been moved to wonder and awe by the night sky?
- Have you visited a planetarium or watched films about one?
- Where have you been to escape from light pollution?

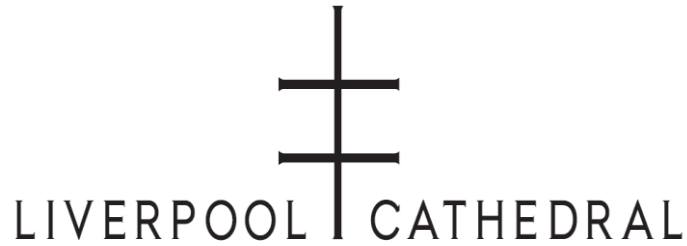
What have you learned about the mystery of the night sky?

Creating and making

This section offers pointers to some creative activities that may be inspired by the mystery of the Holy Trinity or by the image of the night sky.

- Create a collage of pictures of the night sky.
- Create a display of paintings of the Holy Trinity.
- Create your own image of the Holy Trinity.
- Create a reflection, poem, or prayer on the mystery of the Holy Trinity or on the image of the night sky.

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EXPLORING THE SUNDAY GOSPEL AT HOME

Each week we are inviting people in their homes to look forward to those Sunday services that follow the Revised Common Lectionary Gospel readings. We employ the SIFT approach (Sensing, Intuition, Feeling, and Thinking) to encourage reflection on the Sunday Gospel. We are suggesting a variety of ways in which people of all ages, and households working together, may engage with the Gospel reading and celebrate that engagement with shared activities.

Our invitation then is for you to share your reflections, prayers and photos of your creative work with the Cathedral by emailing them to smc.lesliefrancis@gmail.com.

These materials have been developed by the Canon Theologian of Liverpool Cathedral working in collaboration with the staff team here at the Cathedral, and with sponsorship and support from the St Mary's Centre in Wales and the St Christopher's College Trust.



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