

Readings and Reflections for the Week

Sunday 31 May - THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Reading 1, Exodus 34:4-6, 8-9, Psalm Daniel 3

Reading 2, 2 Corinthians 13:11-14,

Gospel, John 3:16-18

God sent his Son that through him the world might be saved

Monday 1 June - St Justin, Martyr

Reading 1, 2 Peter 1:2-7, Psalm 90(91)

Gospel, Mark 12:1-12

They seized the beloved son, killed him and threw him out of the vineyard

Tuesday 2 June - Feria

Reading 1, 2 Peter 3:12-18, Psalm 89(90)

Gospel, Mark 12:13-17

Give back to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God

Wednesday 3 June - St Charles Lwanga and companions

Reading 1, 2 Timothy 1:1-3,6-12, Psalm 122(123)

Gospel, Mark 12:18-27

The God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob is the God of the living

Thursday 4 June - Feria

Reading 1, 2 Timothy 2:8-15, Psalm 24(25)

Gospel, Mark 12:28-34

'You are not far from the Kingdom of God'

Friday 5 June - St Boniface, Bishop, Martyr

Reading 1, 2 Timothy 3:10-17, Psalm 118(119)

Gospel, Mark 12:35-37

'David himself calls him Lord'

Saturday 6 June - Feria

10am Confessions, Exposition and Benediction, no Mass

Reading 1, 2 Timothy 4:1-8, Psalm 70(71)

Gospel, Mark 12:38-44

This poor widow has put in more than all

Sunday 7 June - THE MOST HOLY BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

Reading 1, Deuteronomy 8:2-3,14-16, Psalm 147

Reading 2, 1 Corinthians 10:16-17,

Gospel, John 6:51-58

My flesh is real food and my blood is real blood

United with Churches together in St Albans this week we pray for all members of St Lukes Church.

SAINTS OF THE WEEK Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions

In 1879, the White Fathers, a French Roman Catholic society, arrived in Buganda, modern-day Uganda, to establish a mission to teach the Catholic faith. At that time, Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims were all seeking converts in the Buganda. However, the King Mutesa was tolerant of all three faiths. When he died in 1884, his son, Mwanga II became King. He, however, became convinced that the Christians were a threat to his throne and his perverted way of life. In May 1886, the king ordered all the members of his household to renounce the Christian faith or face torture and death; this included Charles who, while a catechumen, had entered the royal household as assistant to Joseph Mukaso, head of the court pages. On the night of Mukaso's martyrdom for encouraging the African youths to resist Mwanga, St Charles Lwanga was baptised. Charles courageously refused to renounce his faith as did many of the page boys with him. The outraged king ordered their execution. Imprisoned with his friends, Charles' courage and belief in God inspired them to remain chaste and faithful. For his own unwillingness to submit to the immoral acts and his efforts to safeguard the faith of his friends, Charles was burned to death on 3 June 1886. One of 22 Ugandan martyrs, St Charles Lwanga is the patron of youth and Catholic action in most of tropical Africa. He had protected his fellow pages, aged 13 to 30, from Mwanga, and instructed them in the Catholic faith during their imprisonment. When Pope Paul VI canonized these 22 martyrs in 1964, he also made reference to the Anglican pages martyred for the same reason.

Reflection: Like Saint Charles Lwanga, we are all teachers and witnesses to Christian living by the examples of our own lives. We are all called upon to spread the word of God, whether by word or deed. By remaining courageous and unshakable in our faith during times of great moral and physical temptation, we live as Christ lived.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MOST HOLY TRINITY

Taken from The Wednesday Word {www.wednesdayword.org}

Gospel, John 3:16-18

At first sight this part of the dialogue with Nicodemus seems to mention only the Father and the Son and not involve the Holy Spirit. A chief concern of the Gospel of John is to show the relationship of loving obedience between Father and Son. The love and equality in a perfect relationship between a human parent and a child is the nearest reflection of such divine love which we can envisage. In complete trust and confidence the parent gives to the child everything that is theirs. The parent's only interest is the advancement of the child. The child's only care is to please the parent and to be as close to the parent as they can be, in word, in action and in relationships. Each has a vibrant and continuous bond of love for the other. Such a relationship may be rare in human family life, but it can model for us a pale reflection of the loving relationship between the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit is the love between the Father and the Son, love in person, the living bond which unites them. We must, however, appreciate that any such language limps and belittles the divine relationship, which is of a different order of perfection and intensity. Human language can never fully explain the mystery of God which is beyond our total understanding.

We are familiar with St Patrick's clover-leaf image of the Trinity. Are there any other images of the Trinity which you find helpful? How are Father, Son and Spirit presented in this Gospel passage? How does the Holy Spirit bring us close to the Father? How can we respond to God's love for us?

First Reading Exodus 34:4-6.8-9

This is one of the really very central passages of the Bible. In Judaism the special name of God is never spoken. For two reasons. It is too sacred and awesome to be pronounced, for the name somehow makes the personality present. It is also too intimate: we do not bandy around in public the special family name by which we are affectionately known by our nearest and dearest. So where the name occurs in the Bible, a conventional 'the Lord' is used. The name itself was revealed to Moses at the Burning Bush, but not its meaning. Here for the first time the meaning is given, 'The Lord, the Lord, a God of tenderness and compassion.' Only when God has to forgive Israel for its first, heinous but rapid, rebellion, is the meaning of the name revealed. And this meaning is echoed again and again down the scriptures, in Deuteronomy, in Psalms, in Jeremiah. Even Jonah has to admit it when, to his fury, Nineveh is forgiven! This is the way Israel loves to picture its God, as a God of forgiveness. The Prologue of St John and the Parable of the Prodigal Son which witness to God as the one who forgives are no new inventions.

Is 'God of forgiveness' the most important way in which we can think about God?

Second Reading 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

This reading, concluding with the Trinitarian blessing, is the finale of this Letter to the Corinthians. The interrelationship of the Three Persons of the Trinity is a theological elaboration which was reached only gradually in Christian meditation. Paul, however, already often mentions the three Persons in parallel, making some distinction between them or at any rate between their functions in the story of salvation. When he mentions one he seems at the same time to be conscious of the influence also of the other Persons of the Trinity. The constant triple mention of each of the Persons in itself suggests equality, each playing a special part, as 'It is God who gives you a sure place in Christ, giving us as pledge the Spirit in our hearts' (2 Corinthians 1:21), or 'You have been justified in the name of the Lord all. When he mentions one he seems at the same time to be conscious of the influence also of the other Persons of the Trinity. Jesus Christ and through the Spirit of our God' (1 Corinthians 6:11). Rather than prying, so to speak, into the personal interrelationships of the three, the scripture limits itself to mentioning the part played by each in our creation, salvation and sanctification. God, whom we also address as Abba, Father, is the initiator. It is through the work of Christ that we are justified, saved, redeemed, reconciled. The Spirit is at work in transforming us in holiness.

Which three qualities does St Paul wish for the Corinthians in his Trinitarian blessing at the end of this reading? How do you experience the love of the Trinity?