

TRINITY NEWS

Trinity Sunday

William Paul Young wrote a bestseller in 2007 called *The Shack*. It used novel imagery to present the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity. “Papa” was a formidable black woman, The Holy Spirit is Sarayu, an Asian woman, and the Son is a middle-eastern man, apparently a carpenter, replete with sawdust and belt. This imagery provoked predictable reactions from the Christian traditionalists. This failed to appreciate the accessible and indeed sound theology of the Trinity found in the dialogues and comments. *The Shack* opened up the teaching of the Trinity to many people with no access to it. Now C. Baxter Kruger has written *The Shack Revisited*. It is a wonderful piece of Christian writing in the tradition of C.S. Lewis.

He quotes Matthew 1:27, a startling text in Matthew that reminds us of John’s Gospel: “All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son reveals him.” “All things are handed over” to Jesus. Nothing is withheld. He in turn passes such riches of God to us.

John 1:1 tells us that the Logos, the rational ground of all being that was enmeshed in Jesus of Nazareth, was “with God” always. Baxter notes that the preposition “with “ here “carries the Hebrew notion of face-to-face. It is an idea of personal relationship, of intimacy.”

Sarayu as the Holy Spirit figure in *The Shack* describes herself as a “collector of tears.” The Holy Spirit gathers up the broken pieces of our lives just as the priest gathers up the broken pieces of bread after the Holy Communion. Perhaps the Holy Spirit gathered up Jesus’ tears at the Cross.

Matthew sets Christ’s connection with the Father in the context of Jesus’ love of children and his use of the model of a child. I wrote these comments in a daily devotional this week on Matthew 18:6 which also placards the model of a child.

“Christ wrapped his arms round a child one day and placed the little one in the midst of his people. He declared that this was a real model for those who want to enter the heart of our heavenly Father. This warmth of Christ for the little one will also be given to those who recognise that the ‘size’ of a person depends on their humility. It is a lasting trait on which other

aspects of our person are configured. The reign of God reverses conceptions of greatness. Without humility we cannot see the other person in their fullness. Otherwise we are always comparing, an odious practice. Without humility love can be eroded by pride. With humility we measure ourselves by the imitation of Jesus, not our need for others to imitate us. With humility love is seen as a sacrifice, not selfishness or demand. The command to silence when we have been rehearsing what we will say to those who occupy the negative aspects of our thinking is a hard word indeed. The child mirrors transparency, curiosity, the unexplored future, the future itself in embryo. The deepest love is the unspoken that is only acted, not voiced. Love's silence is hate's enemy."

The child at Bethlehem brought love and joy and the cries of a child in the night. That little one is a model in miniature of greatest teaching of all about the heart of God, the Trinity. He is the mustard seed of the Reign of God.

Bishop Arthur Jones

TO PLAN:

May 29, Wednesday.

Bible study, 10am.

NEXT WEEK'S

READINGS:

Proper 4 (Sunday closest to June 1)

1 Kings 8:22-23,27-30,41-43

Psalm 96

Galatians 1:1-10

Luke 7:1-10