

# TRINITY NEWS

## Easter VI Global Humanity in Search of its Soul

Jesus in the Gospel of John speak of himself as the **True Vine** and how we incorporate ourselves or are incorporated by life's circumstances into him as the True Vine. The words "I am..." indicate that as the True Vine he is nurtured and grounded in the earth by none other than God. This in turn is linked to the revelation of God's name at the Burning Bush in Exodus 3:14, "I am who I will be." It seems clear that Jesus' use of this term in John's Gospel is consciously linked to his knowledge of this seminal incident and revelation of God's name in Israel. He associates himself directly with it.

It would appear from the encircling incidents, circumstances, and disgusting turns of events reeking of human evil that crowd around us every day that the credibility of faith in God in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is very much in question. The human dregs in Nigeria posing falsely as Muslims and committing horrendous acts concern us all, whatever we believe. The Muslim world seems to be as futile in its attempts or lack of them to curb such awful extremities of behaviour as we are in shutting the mouths of our extremists, some of them quite vicious. The Muslims rightly refer to the Crusades of the Middle Ages as a blot on Christian history, but what of the behaviour of the militant advocates of Islam now? Whatever our convictions, we need to avoid the unlimited murderous intent of the vile perpetrators mentioned above.

Where is the True Vine and how to become part of it and assured of our salvation in God? The notion of the existence of God has been hammered by militant atheism in the West and the burning brand of atheistic communism further afield which is far from being extinguished as has been witnessed in the past week.

Christ was certainly the True Vine. A recent book has presented him as a **Zealot** in Israel. Based on some very sound historical research and at times weak biblical exegesis, it makes a case for Jesus being a political revolutionary who supported a violent uprising in Israel. The evidence of the Gospels in particular does not support this even if some of the sharp edges of Jesus' message and behaviour may have been glossed over by the gospel writers.

The true model for Jesus as the **Vine** comes from the same source as the inspiration of the scriptures. That is, the prophets of Israel. He spoke of “Moses and all the prophets” on the Emmaus road after his resurrection. The same word that inspired the prophets to speak for God inspired those who wrote about the Christ and those who loved him. The True Vine itself is like the Lord’s Vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7. Jesus of Nazareth was very much aware of the dangers posed when the true intent and fruitfulness of the vineyard is destroyed by improper behaviour. This applies to the ‘house’ of the Church as it applied to Isaiah’s ‘House of Israel’. But Jesus saw clearly that even if he was executed and taken from the earthly scene his presence would live on in the world amongst those who loved him. He knew that his presence would never leave the world, that the “Spirit of Jesus” would continue to infiltrate the church even when people tried to shut it out. He knew that what he was offering would eventually prevail, that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. The Eternal, whether it is manifested in Christ or in some other sign for humanity, is unstoppable. The manipulations of humanity and its wars and violence and perpetration of evil go on, and as a great hymn says “once to every person and every nation comes the moment to decide between truth and falsehood.”

**It is no good crying out the truth of Christ unless we live the truth of Christ. It is no good saying that Christ is the Prince of peace when we behave in a manner that is completely contrary to his peace, to his Shalom. We must accede to his prayer and indeed his instruction to see through the heart of it all and find the heart of Spirit and love in God that prevails no matter what we may perpetrate that is contrary to it. Lift up your hearts and use mind, human spirit, and Divine Spirit to search for the heart of God and the reality of being fully alive and acutely perceptive in the world.**

Bishop Arthur Jones

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### **THIS WEEK:**

**May 28, Wednesday.**

- Bible Study, 10:00am
- Bible Study, 7:30pm, Parish Office

**May 29, Thursday.**

- Midweek Eucharist, 10:00am, Chapel

### **NEXT WEEK’S READINGS:**

*First Reading:* Acts 1:8-14

*Psalm* 68

*Second Reading:* 1 Peter 4:12-19

*Gospel:* John 17:1-11