

May I ask you to take up your green Prayer Books and turn to the very rear page 487?

Look at Line 3: *"And the Catholick Faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance."**Drop down five lines: *"The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible; and the Holy host incomprehensible."**Drop down three lines: *"As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated: but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible."**Drop down to the very last line of the Creed: *"This is the Catholick Faith: which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved."*

That last line seems to let you mums off the hook. * please put the prayer book down.

On this Trinity Sunday, the teaching can be so abstruse, that most devious parish priests haul in a hapless retired locum to preach, as they reach for their golf clubs and are away before the entrance hymn. The complex doctrine of the teaching on the Trinity may demand more ingenuity than my overtaxed brain can manage to preach succinctly today.

Trinity of love and power, our people's shield in danger's hour is a three-person community, a three-in-one-and-one-in-three God, called a "holy blessed three, glorious Trinity." The supposedly harsh Old Testament God becomes a God of Love when we read "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" [John 3.16]. God's love was not self-centered as the ancient Grecian gods on Mount Olympus were. Our God, through overflowing goodness, chose to get involved in the lives of fallen humanity. Brian Wren hymns, "Praise the God who changes places, welcomes us with warm embraces." So God reached out to save us by choosing to become human. God set the pattern of true love: when you love someone dearly, you are willing to give to the point of sacrifice, no matter the cost.

God chose to become a second person of the Trinity in a little place called Palestine. When we could not pay for our sins, the God-become-Jesus-the-Son showed us a proper way to live, then accepted the punishment, and offered us a new life that he had bought for us. God paid dearly with the life of God's Son, the highest price God could pay.

After three years' schooling his disciples, time ran out for God's Son, Jesus. He spoke sadly to his frightened fellows "I must leave you. I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now." That is, the simple brains of his mainly fisher-folk disciples could not take in anymore then. But, what were these pearls you omitted, Jesus? You could imagine the team crying "Don't leave us hanging, Lord. You told us we should not worry. Now, we're worrying like hell. We want to know all, starting with: will the Blues win the flag this year or not?" And Jesus answered "Steady on, chaps. I know that new situations and occasions call for new responses. I won't leave you orphan and alone. When I am the Spirit of Truth back in heaven, I will guide you from there into all truth about the nature of your mission, the opposition you will likely face, and the final outcome of your efforts."

"I came to die. If I do not die and remove your debt of sin and rise again, I will not defeat death and sin. I must go back to heaven to send you my Holy Spirit. While I remain here, earthbound, in the flesh, I can only influence you blessed handful of saints in the Holy Land. Now that you have got the church on the road, once freed from bodily constraints, I can feather out as a Holy Spirit to companion you to girdle the whole earth to a world-wide listening public as you convert them to our way. If I return to heaven, I won't be limited to any one place, and any one moment in history and any one group of disciples like you. As a Holy Spirit, I can be your great encourager, a giver of a future and a hope to all, I can help you reach out to communities of would-be believers. I can be your constant "comforter of priceless worth, to grant one mind to your flock on earth." That his Holy Spirit would be close at hand was a reassurance, to the crestfallen disciples. It was as if Jesus had told them "It will be just like having me around again to help you to understand."

Then the God-Son went back into heaven to become the Holy Spirit of Jesus, to continue his presence in tough times, in sad times and in confused times, to continue his progressive revelation of guidance to the Christian community. Again a hymn expresses this: "We thank you that your Church unsleeping, while earth rolls onward into light, through all the world her watch is keeping, and rests not now by day or night. And hour by hour, fresh lips are making your wondrous doings heard on high."

Through the ages, the Holy Spirit has guided Church teaching, interpretation and witness. Week by week, it calls on feeble-minded parish locums to struggle to break open the meaning of convoluted Scripture in the weekly homily, to create a creative conversation among the parishioners, so that the past spoken, privileged words of Jesus will be remembered by repetition, as the Holy Spirit plucks the strings of memory so that a contemporary, comforting melody is played.

What is required of us is to listen for direction and guidance from on High, to look for unmet situations of need, watching for every revelation of God, for every pathway of activity through the Spirit of Truth, who we know, will be at work forever to stir us to new ventures of faithfulness.

We pray "Holy Spirit, rushing, burning, wind and flame of Pentecost, fill our hearts afresh with yearning, ever forming mind of Christ." Amen.