

“Prayer” - Trinity Sunday 2011

I don't always find prayer easy. What I mean by that is, at times, I can't be bothered or I feel too busy to do it. Or, when I am praying, at times, I can be very distracted; stopping my mind going here, there and everywhere is a struggle. But this I know: when I do not pray I feel disconnected, apart from God. And when I do not pray, I am much more likely to be blown about by feelings or everyday events. Prayer is the anchor which helps me to weather the storms.

As a priest, you should expect me to be a man who prays. The very title 'priest' means one who offers up sacrifices in prayer. Have you noticed in the newsletter that, every Sunday, the Mass at the University is offered up for the intention of *Pro Populo* - that is, on behalf of the people, the people being all of us in the Parish and in the Chaplaincy? I do this because it is the law of the Church that the Parish Priest must offer up Mass every Sunday for the people of the Parish. Perhaps, I am most being your Parish Priest, when I pray, every week, this Mass for your needs.

But don't we all, through the waters of baptism, share in the Priesthood of All Believers? After a child is baptized he or she is anointed with the Oil of Chrism and the priest prays 'may you remain for ever a member of Christ who is Priest...'. Through baptism we become part of Christ and so share in his Priesthood. This means that to be a Christian is to be a person who intercedes for others. But more deeply, don't we all need to pray because how else do we have a conscious and on-going relationship with God?

On this Sunday of the Most Holy Trinity we dare to attempt to look at God and celebrate and glorify and worship Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Isn't that what we do when we are in love? Within ourselves we celebrate and glorify the person we love and, in our own way, we even worship them because we cannot believe that they have chosen to love us. And no one is more worthy of our love than God. At one level that is a hard thing to accept because God can seem far away and His care of us remote but, as God revealed to Moses, He is a 'God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger, rich in kindness and faithfulness.' What is there not to love, or even more, adore?

And so that Nicodemus was clear about God's attitude towards us, Jesus said to him in today's Gospel, 'God loved the world so much that He gave His only Son...so that through Him the world might be saved.' We have every reason to return God's love: to celebrate, glorify and worship Him.

Nothing would make me happier than to know that you are people who pray. At the university, I am preparing six couples for marriage. When I first saw each couple I asked them to do one thing: to begin to pray with each other every day, even if for only five minutes and by simply being silent together. It is impossible to consciously pray with someone and not grow closer to them. For if prayer is, as the Catechism teaches us, raising our minds and hearts to God, then to pray is to share in the life of God, who is Three Persons utterly in love with each other. May we in our celebrations of Mass consciously pray with each other and so be brought together by the love of the Most Holy Trinity.