



Alan Crawley

The Mystery of the Trinity

More heresy is preached on Trinity Sunday than any other Sunday in the year. Thus spake our theology lecturer, so I am a little hesitant to commit my thoughts on the Trinity to print! However, I want to argue that there is no simple description of the Trinity that we can use, despite the many sermons most of us will have heard (and some of us preached!). Instead I want to suggest that there are many different analogies and models of the Trinity and that to understand the Trinity we should look at all of them and add them together – including the contradictory bits!

The well known model of H₂O as water, steam and ice can be helpful but can also lead us to think of one God with different masks, which is not the same as three persons. Moltmann's Social Trinity sees the three persons of the Trinity as interpenetrating each other in an eternal dance – but perhaps tends too much towards the three persons and not enough towards the one God. It does however allow for a changing (or at least a changing perception of) God and this allows our dogmas and moralities to change – look at the developing understanding of God shown in the Old Testament (warning: - the books weren't written in the order they are printed).

Two other models are of revealer, revealed and revelation or lover, beloved and "love between". Both of these approaches are of relationship, however both treat the Holy Spirit not as a person but as the relationship.

All of our attempts to understand the mystery of the Trinity are hampered by our attempt to describe it by starting either from the oneness or the three-ness. By not limiting ourselves to one approach we can gain insights that might otherwise pass us by.

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Our Vision Statement

As a Christian community, we seek to engage with the world around us and to be a place of welcome and acceptance for all on a journey to God – believers, doubters and those who are seeking.

Sustaining My Sacred Centre

Roland Gillott offers the second contribution to our series on the different ways in which members of St Michael's sustain their sacred centre.

I am biorhythmically unable to be on my knees in prayer at 6 am. I can't manage a regular pattern of biblical study or theological reading. Extended periods of stillness and meditation are a thing of my distant past.

So writes Rosemary Lain-Priestley, a contributor to Radio 4's 'Thought for the Day' and a Church of England priest for over 10 years. The words are taken from her first book *The Courage to Connect*. I find them encouraging, having originally been drawn to her writing by the second part of the title of her second book *Unwrapping the Sacred – Seeing God in the everyday*.

Reading and "seeing God in the everyday" are key elements of sustaining the sacred centre for me. Reading distracts the mind, but leaves space for associated ideas. Everyday living is where these ideas are played out.

Jean Vanier's accompaniment to John's Gospel *Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus through the Gospel of John* is a book

which I have read, and re-read. There Jean Vanier, the founder of the L'Arche Communities with and for, adults with learning difficulties, assists in making accessible what can otherwise be a difficult Gospel, relating it to everyday experience.

Going back to what the Gospels actually say can be a useful experience, particularly where recollection of the detail has become a bit vague. Part of the pleasure is being reminded of the vividness of the descriptions which Jesus used. Given the chance to do so, a 21st century hen gathers her chicks under her wing in just the same way as one in the first century. At the same time, the generosity of the Good Samaritan is still a hard act to follow.

The workplace is somewhere I am reminded on a daily basis of the extent of people's willingness to help each other, and to share out tasks. It is interesting how important understanding can be, perhaps of something said in the heat of the moment, or in relation to a

Pullman's book *The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*. (It is not vital to have read this book first though it is both thought-provoking and challenging. Both Diana and I have enjoyed it hugely).

September 14 Difficult Stories

September 21 Why do good? Sin and Forgiveness.

September 28 Jesus the Christ

October 5 The 'Light of Truth' and the 'Darkness of History.'



task which could have been done better, giving scope for a fresh start and the opportunity to move on. On the way to work, in the cramped conditions of the tube, the extent to which people take care not to cause discomfort to others can be a surprise.

For me, therefore, sustaining the sacred centre is something which comes from a combination of church-related activity and everyday life. It is a case of taking advantage of opportunities as they arise. Although these elements may seem somewhat different, they enrich each other and as a result become part of a single activity.

New PCC member Susannah Christou

My husband (Mark) and I (Susannah) moved to Amersham in 2000 and we began attending St Michael's a couple years later. When our son (James) was born in 2006, he was christened at our original 'home' church in Nottingham, where we both grew up and were married but he was also blessed at St Michael's. My first training was as a singer, and I worked up to James' birth for many opera companies. Up until a year ago I was a volunteer and director of training for Samaritans. I think this led me towards a new career in Integrative Arts Psychotherapy and I am currently in the final stages of my training.

Advance Notice

Autumn Bible Study

Alison Woodnutt will be offering another four session Bible Study course at 11.30am, for an hour, in September/October.

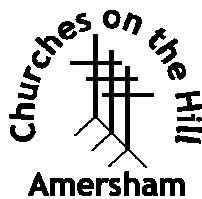
It will be based on some Gospel passages, a section from Acts, and some extracts from St Paul's letters. These will be compared and contrasted with some sections from Philip

Our Persecuted Church Family in NORTH KOREA

There is no other place in the world so isolated, so spiritually dark and systematically inhumane as North Korea. It is number one on the list of countries where faith costs the most. All religious activity is seen as a revolt against North Korea's socialist principles and the cult of their leader Kim Jong-il and his father Kim il-Sung. As a result of strict searches, considerable numbers of secret Christians have been discovered, arrested, tortured and sometimes killed. Despite this, and the lack of freedom to worship, many take the risk of sharing their faith, and

the church is growing, with an estimated 400,000 believers. Though many remain strong in their faith, some Christians struggle against despair; others seek to escape into China, but risk deportation back to N.Korea and to certain death

Pray for the believers' protection from arrest and torture; for mutual encouragement to stay firm in the faith; for Bibles, Christian books, food and medicines to reach them; and that human rights and religious freedom may come to the country.



Churches-on-the-Hill wants to invite you to some small scale, and, we hope, enjoyable and refreshing events. The special thing about them is that at each one there will be at least one or two people from each of our churches. The plan, of course, is that we should get to know each other better on all sorts of levels.

We have already held a few Prayer Breakfasts. You may have had an invitation to one. About 12 of us have gathered at 8-ish at someone's home, and been led in a 20 minute reflection with prayers followed by breakfast and chat – and a sense that praying, eating and being together is a lovely way to start the day. We are making lists of people who would like to be invited some time, so the COTHA reps for your

An Invitation from your COTHA representatives

church will be approaching you to ask, and maybe there will be a list on a notice board to sign.. In response to popular request, there will be some on Saturdays and some at a later time in the morning.

Another thing – how about going on some walks together? The first one was on a late Sunday afternoon this spring, while the bluebells were out.

As you read this, you may be thinking of other things we might do together. A painting group? A meditation group? Play-reading? Poetry? A book group? Feel free to start one! Just make sure that if it is a COTHA activity it always has someone present from each of our churches. Other friends can join in as well of course!

We look forward to seeing groups doing things together.

The Summer Parties

All of this year's bring-and-share summer parties will be on Sundays at lunch time – 12.30 pm – 3 pm. It is hoped that this will appeal to all age groups. Our hosts will be:

John Payne, Kelso, Devonshire Avenue, - **Sunday August 1**

Jenny and Richard Baker, 22 Highland Road, .**Sunday August 22**

Rae and Roland Gillott, Glenwayth, Hervines Road,
Sunday September 5

The usual notices, on which you can sign up to come and say what you will bring, will be put up in church nearer the time.

Faith in democracy

Over the past Election campaign we will have been made aware of how disenchanted with politics and distrustful of politicians people have become – and altogether alienated from the process. What will it take to get back proper democratic involvement? Churches-on-the-Hill has decided to investigate joining the MP Accountability Network, which particularly seeks to restore faith in democracy by ensuring that the MPs we elect take account of the real issues that affect ordinary people. The network would support us in setting up ways to engage with our MP, perhaps meeting with her about three times a year. This would enable us to keep issues like social justice and eliminating poverty firmly on the agenda.

Is there someone who would like to take on the job of being our MP Accountability Representative? It could be a really interesting job, and it is high time we all re-engaged with politics. Please contact me for more details: liz@waumsley.co.uk

Liz Waumsley,
Secretary to COTHA

Quiet Gardens Sustain the Sacred Centre



Many of you will know of the Quiet Garden Movement, especially from Philip Roderick's time at St Michael's. Perhaps not so many of you will know, however, that the main office of the Movement is now on your doorstep in Woodside Close! A few weeks ago, we had the pleasure of welcoming Diana Glover for coffee.

It seems an opportune moment with the church's focus on Sustaining the Sacred Centre, to share a little more about the Movement. There are now over 300 Quiet Gardens world-wide in increasingly diverse settings. Originally the most common venue was that of a private home and garden but now there are many churches linked with us. Some simply offer quiet space. Others have led meditation times as well.

Organisational settings such as schools and prisons are also showing much interest in creating

a quiet space where the mind can be stilled, the divine heard, and the soul replenished. I was recently at a prison in Lancashire where the Chaplain is eager to transform the area near his Chapel into a congenial, safe space where men can go to pray, and to reflect more privately especially if under stress. The Chaplain is getting help from one of our contacts at Kew in London.

If you would like to visit us at the office, please feel most welcome (address and contact details below). Or if you would like to offer a little time on a voluntary basis (for photocopying, occasional mail shots etc) you would also be most welcome!

And why not sustain your own sacred centre at a local Quiet Garden? A new Quiet Garden is just opening at Bray, near Maidenhead (01626 674517).

Alternatively, visit one further afield when you are traversing the world. They are all on our website, or if you prefer, please do contact us in the office.

Mollie Robinson
Quiet Garden Coordinator

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**We welcome in Baptism
Pansachol and Thanthai Child**

**COTHA invite everyone
to a United Service
at St John's on
Sunday June 27
11 am.**

**This will be followed by a
Hog Roast**
Church members will be asked to make a donation on the day for food and drink.

Our next Millennium Lecture

COMMUNICATING ACROSS DIVIDES
Reflection on an authentic language of the Spirit
by Harvey Gillman
Tuesday June 29. 8 pm

What do we mean by religion and spirituality? What do we mean by truth in a community of faith? How far can language embody meaning? How can communication lead to communion? These themes will be explored in relation to a world of conflicting understandings of truth. Harvey comes to this topic paradoxically as one who finds meaning in ambiguous poetry, revelation in music and depth in silence.

Harvey Gillman was outreach secretary for British Quakers for 18 years. He writes and lectures on spirituality, language and how we can use difference compassionately and with integrity. His books include: *A Light that is Shining*, an introductory book on British Quakers; *A Minority of One*; and *Consider the Blackbird*.

Junior Drama Group

*Invites members of St
Michael's and friends
to an*

Open Hour
Sunday June 27
**4.30 pm in the
Hall**

*There'll be a short
entertainment, tea and
biscuits and a chance to
meet the children and
their parents.*

FREE!



**St Michael and All Angels
Amersham-on-the-Hill**

DIARY

June 2010

Regular Weekly Activities		
Sundays	8 am	Said Eucharist
	10 am	Sung Eucharist
Mondays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
Tuesdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
	10.30 am	Said Eucharist. Lady Chapel
Wednesdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
	7.00 – 8.15 pm	Choir Practice
Thursdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
Fridays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel
Saturdays	8.30 – 8.55 am	Morning Prayer. Lady Chapel.
Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays.		10 am – 12 noon. Wheeler Coffee Pot. Wheeler Room.

The Church is usually open each morning from 8 am for anyone who wishes to meditate or spend time in quiet.

Other Activities in June		
Tuesday	June 1	LUNCH BREAK. Words and music. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	June 2	Healing and Wholeness. Lady Chapel. 4 pm – 6 pm
Saturday	June 5	<i>Saturday Slot.</i> 3 pm
Sunday	June 6	1st Sunday after Trinity
Tuesday	June 8	LUNCH BREAK. Good News (Tim Harper). Free Church. 1.10 pm.
Wednesday	June 9	<i>Praise & Play.</i> Lady Chapel. 10.30 am
Saturday	June 12	Bucks. Art Week Exhibition. 10 am – 6 pm (until June 27)
Sunday	June 13	2nd Sunday after Trinity. 2gether. Baptism
		Bucks Art Week Exhibition. 12.30 pm – 6 pm
Tuesday	June 15	LUNCH BREAK. Practical praying. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	June 16	<i>Praise & Play Plus.</i> Lady Chapel. 3.45 pm
Sunday	June 20	3rd Sunday after Trinity. Laying on of hands offered at 10 am Communion. Free Church. 6 pm
Monday	June 21	Not One for Lunch. Lady Chapel. 12.45 pm
Tuesday	June 22	My Sacred Centre – Audrey Oakley, at 10.30 am service
		LUNCH BREAK. Dr Challoner’s Boys in Recital. Free Church. 1.10 pm
Wednesday	June 23	<i>Praise & Play.</i> Lady Chapel. 10.30 am
Sunday	June 27	4th Sunday after Trinity. Joint COTHA service. <u>St John’s. 11 am</u>
		<i>Followed by a HOG ROAST</i>
		Junior Drama Group – OPEN HOUR Hall. 4.30 pm.
Tuesday	June 29	LUNCH BREAK. Jan Lemos (piano). Free Church. 1.10 pm
		<i>MILLENNIUM LECTURE.</i> Harvey Gillman. 8 pm
Wednesday	June 30	Tuesday Club outing to Oklahoma. (<i>Peter Binns 01296 330836</i>).
		<i>Praise & Play Plus.</i> Lady Chapel. 3.45 pm

Our next issue . . .
Our next issue will appear on **Sunday July 4-**. Please get your contributions to us by Sunday June 20. As usual there will be no August issue..