

# HOLY CROSS CATHOLIC CHURCH

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THE MOST HOLY TRINITY 07 JUNE 2020



Dear family of Holy Cross,

The Most Holy Trinity is the greatest mystery of our faith, a mystery we cannot fully comprehend. This mystery was revealed to humanity by Jesus Christ who revealed to us the Father and gave us the Holy Spirit. He revealed to us that God is eternal and infinite love, a communion of three divine Persons, an eternal communion of life and love.

As we celebrate the solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity today, let us celebrate the unity, life and love of the Holy Trinity in our families, in our parish, in our Mother Church and in the world.

## From Archbishop John – The Holy Trinity...

As we approach the great celebration of the Most Holy Trinity, what an incredible, mind blowing truth it is that we, poor as we are, share in the very life of God. With all our challenges, both personal and in our ministry, we are granted access to the relationship of love between the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Catechism of the Catholic Church puts this beautifully when it says: ‘...even now we are called to be a dwelling for the Most Holy Trinity: ‘If a man loves me’, says the Lord, ‘he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him, and make our home with him.’ (CCC 260) What we know to be true about God is revealed by God sending His Son, by the Son revealing the Father, and the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit. We are the dwelling place of the Most High God. God’s life is within us. We are caught up into the circle of love between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

That God’s life might grow within us, is captured in the ancient Christian greeting: ‘The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.’ I pray that this Trinity Sunday your sense of God’s indwelling in your heart, your experience of God’s loving relationship, might strengthen and encourage you in your ministry of service.



St Elizabeth of the Trinity wrote a prayer expressing something of what this means: *O my God, Trinity whom I adore, help me forget myself entirely so to establish myself in you, unmovable and peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity. May nothing be able to trouble my peace or make me leave you, O my unchanging God, but may each minute bring me more deeply into your mystery! Grant my soul peace. Make it your heaven, your beloved dwelling and the place of your rest. May I never abandon you there, but may I be there, whole and entire, completely vigilant in my faith, entirely adoring, and wholly given over to your creative action. Amen*

# From Pope Francis

Speaks out about the killing of George Floyd [Vatican News]

In the video of the May 25 arrest, an officer with the Minneapolis Police Department can be seen kneeling on George Floyd's neck for several minutes after he was taken into custody. Floyd could be heard saying "I can't breathe" several times. He died soon after.

Pope Francis said that he is praying for the soul of George Floyd and all victims of racism....:

"Dear brothers and sisters in the United States, I have witnessed with great concern the disturbing social unrest in your nation in these past days, following the tragic death of Mr George Floyd. We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life. At the same time, we have to recognize that the violence of recent nights is self-destructive and self-defeating. Nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost," the pope said.

Pope Francis prayed for the intercession of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron of the Americas, to intercede for peace, justice, and reconciliation in the U.S. at the end of his Wednesday audience, livestreamed from the Vatican's Apostolic Palace.

"Today I join the Church of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and of all the United States, in praying for the rest of the soul of George Floyd and all the others who have lost their lives because of the sin of racism," the pope said.

"Let us pray for the comfort of families and friends who are heartbroken, and pray for national reconciliation and the peace we yearn for."



The essential conditions for **peace: truth, justice, love and freedom.**  
Pope John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris*.

## Preparing to Open Churches for Individual/Private Prayer

[first guidelines from the diocese]

**The Government has yet to let us know when churches will be allowed to open. However, the following guidelines will help us prepare for when this time comes. A Risk Assessment will be sent to parishes next week so that we can have some idea of how many churches will initially be allowed to open their doors to parishioners in our Archdiocese during the initial phase.**

The first phase of opening will allow for private prayer only.

Every parish will be asked to complete a Risk Assessment which will be copied to the relevant area bishop/episcopal vicar and the Property Department. A church will only be able to open during this first phase if the parish can successfully manage all the necessary measures which need to be put in place as outlined in the 'Guidance on Re-opening of Catholic Churches for Individual Prayer' document.

Any parish which cannot put in place the necessary requirements, for whatever reasons, is not obliged to open. Opening the church will be a matter for local determination on the basis of capacity to fulfil the requirements. This decision will be communicated to the Archdiocese via the Risk Assessment. There will be full support from the Archdiocese for any parish that does not feel able to open its church in the first phase.

The requirements state that parishes will need to provide volunteers who oversee the opening of churches with suitable protective equipment. Please read the document attached entitled Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which gives details of the hand sanitiser, masks, and gloves, which are being bulk purchased by the Archdiocese and made available for parishes that need them. With regard to the cleaning of the church buildings, normal household cleaning materials, available from supermarkets, are sufficient.

The Risk Assessment will allow a decision to be made not only on whether a parish can open, but for how many days each week, and how many hours each day. In this first phase, churches will not be open for the celebration of Mass or any of the Sacraments, but purely for individual prayer.

There can be no timetabled or group events in churches. This means there cannot be meetings of prayer groups, communal rosary, or Benediction. Nothing which encourages a crowd to gather at a specific time is allowed.



The Blessed Sacrament may be exposed, but only during the time whilst the church is open until it closes, and only for silent, personal prayer, as if one were paying a visit to pray before the Tabernacle.

In this first phase it is not permissible to hear confessions in church, although provision for confession on request may take place outdoors, providing the confidentiality of the sacramental encounter is preserved. There can be no times for confession published, or for any other events which will lead people to gather or form a queue indoors.

## **HOW TO CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF CORPUS CHRISTI AT HOME**

*Next week we are going to celebrate the solemnity of Corpus Christi. As we are unable to participate in the Holy Mass and receive the Eucharistic Lord sacramentally, kindly find some ideas how to celebrate this solemnity at home.*

### **READ THE LAST SUPPER OR JOHN 6**

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke each narrate the Last Supper (Mt. 26:17–30, Mk. 14:12–26, Lk. 22:7–39). Gather your family in the living room and read these verses of Scripture which recall for us the moment when Christ first gave the Eucharist to his closest friends, the apostles. St. John's Gospel, however, does not include a narrative of the Last Supper. Instead, John connects the Eucharist to the miraculous feeding of five thousand. Every Catholic should know that John, Chapter 6, contains the "Bread of Life" discourse, wherein Jesus teaches that his flesh is true food and his blood true drink.

### **PRAY A LITANY OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

Adults and older children can read the invocations, and younger children can join in on the responses. Litanies often contain beautiful images, which are worth discovering and teaching to your family. [This litany](#) is a powerful prayer about the Blessed Sacrament.

### **PREPARE A SMALL ALTAR IN YOUR HOME**

If you are an activity driven person, why not prepare a little altar to mark the feast in your home? Place a crucifix to represent Christ at the centre, then decorate with candles and flowers. Most pharmacies and supermarkets have devotional candles, which you could burn all day in honour of the feast!

Thanks to Atelia: <https://aleteia.org/2019/06/20/how-to-make-the-feast-of-corpus-christi-come-alive-in-your-family/>

## In my eyes when I see your goodness... Lisa O'Hara



Dear God,  
May you bless me each day, with the guidance of  
your Son, our dear Lord Jesus Christ, in all that I say,  
in all that I do.  
May His purpose be mine,  
in my hands when I serve,  
in my eyes when I see your goodness,  
in my thoughts when I pray for peace, unity and  
justice,  
on my lips when I speak your word as Jesus taught us,  
wherever I go Lord, I pray my smile brings your joy  
to everyone I meet.  
I pray their souls are warmed with your humble  
delight, your love, your hope, your everlasting peace.  
May I be... with Your purpose.

I love you Lord, with all my heart, my mind and my soul.  
I pray you fill me with your goodness, so I can share it with others, your dear  
people.  
May I shine with your love,  
may I serve with your grace and wisdom.  
May I be... with Your purpose.

Help us Father, to keep our eyes fixed firmly on  
Jesus.  
Let us not lose sight of Him.  
Help us, Father, to open our hearts, receive His  
comfort, receive His unconditional love.  
May we be kind, may we forgive,  
may we understand,  
may we grow in confidence,  
may we know your love and how we can live and love in peace...  
May we be... With Your purpose  
In perfect peace...



**Bible Verse to Remember:** “God loved the world so much that he gave his  
only Son so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have  
eternal life.” [John 3:16]

# Spiritual Thoughts

[sent by Kath O'Sullivan]



## To bless the space between us

This is the time to be slow,  
Lie low to the wall  
Until the bitter weather passes.

Try, as best you can, not to let  
The wire brush of doubt  
Scrape from your heart  
All sense of yourself  
And your hesitant light.

If you remain generous,  
Time will come good;  
And you will find your feet  
Again on fresh pastures of promise,  
Where the air will be kind  
And blushed with beginning.

John O' Donohue

**Today's second reading:** Brothers, we wish you happiness; try to grow perfect; help one another. Be united; live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Greet one another with the holy kiss. All the saints send you greetings. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **2 Corinthians 13:11-13.**

# How I Understand the Creed...

[Franck Angubi, our parishioner]

The Creed – Symbol of Nicene [Part – 2]

## Who is Jesus Christ? the Risen - Our Saviour and Lord

I was watching this Christian movie named “Overcomer” in which a sick person lying on his hospital bed was asking a Christian volunteer: “who are you?”. The visitor started to give his name, age, marital status and so on. The volunteer did not describe himself as the sick person was expecting – I’ll let you watch the movie to understand why.

May I ask you the same question: ‘Who are you?’

In the Creed, we are saying about Jesus: “I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, .... his kingdom will have no end.”. This part of the Creed describes who Jesus is. It says something about His CV, His profile. A CV or profile gives us information about our experiences, our education, our aim.

- His education: “God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God ..... Through him all things were made.”
- His Experiences:
  1. Volunteer:” For us men and for our salvation, he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.”
  2. Man:” For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
  3. Divine: “he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.”
- His Aim:” He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.”

What is our religious CV?

Our education: Have we received the sacraments: Baptism, Reconciliation, Communion, Confirmation, etc...

Our experiences? Time, Talent, Treasure - All about Stewardship. How do you give back to our Mother Church? God is recruiting us for his Army to get involved in at least one service within the church/parish.

Our Aim should be Love, Mercy, pure heart and holiness to enter into our final destination, Heaven. Do not forget that Jesus will come to judge the living and the dead and we may be judged based on our CV.

I will finish by saying: when we introduce ourselves, we should start by saying we are Christian Catholic with a name given (confirmed) at our baptism. We should celebrate the anniversary of our baptism as it makes us children of God and gives us hope to enter the Kingdom of God when we finish this earthly journey.



## Useful Links

- **Morning Blessing from Holy Cross:** Every day you can receive a Morning Blessing from our parish via WhatsApp. Since there is no Mass is offered for the public, it is an opportunity to pray with me in the early morning and to receive the Spiritual Communion. In order to join this Morning Blessing group, please click the link: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/EG7VHLJfMAOHuDqCivs97w> or send your request to: 07578777461
- **Our Holy Cross church Mass** – every day I offer the Holy Mass at Holy Cross. You can access this Mass via YouTube by clicking the following link: <http://www.holycross-catford.org.uk/livestreaming.php>. It can be also sent to your WhatsApp number. Please text: 07578777461
- **Newsletter:** I still produce our Parish Newsletter in this lockdown and it is sent to people digitally. A few of our parishioners are also contributing to this newsletter. To receive our Newsletter, please send your request to: [catford@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:catford@rcaos.org.uk)
- **Contact:** If you need to talk to me, kindly ring to: 02086983672

## First Communion Families

Sadly, we do not yet know when we will be able to gather as a Parish family once again, nor when we can all celebrate your First Holy Communion. We must all continue to pray for that day to arrive. Over the next few weeks, we will have some questions for you, and when we do meet again, we can see who has been paying attention! You can write the answers in the back of your books (which should now be beautifully finished up to page 116)

7/6/20

1. What Feast Day do we celebrate today?
2. What do we mean by 'the Holy Trinity'?
3. What is the response to today's Psalm?
4. What colour are Fr Antony's vestments today?
5. How many times in the Mass is the Holy Trinity, or 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit' named?



you can find all the answers in: <https://us.magnificat.net/home/magnifikid>

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR PARISH

**Final Part (Anne Mellis)**

**Stewardship:** Over the last few years, we have been developing the Stewardship of Spirituality, using our Time, Talents and Treasure to build up God's Kingdom on earth. "We are created in Christ Jesus for good works" Ephesians 2:10<sup>1</sup>

**Parish Website:** In 2017, the Parish Website was redesigned; as well as current parish news and the opportunity to read and reflect upon the Sunday sermon, it provides links to many other sources of information.

## **Catechesis\* in the parish**

- Preparation for parents bringing children for Baptism
- Children's liturgy during Mass; for parents with babies and toddlers; and for children aged 3-7
- First Reconciliation and Eucharist
- Confirmation
- RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) for those wishing to become members of the Catholic Church

## **Ongoing formation**

**Diamond Club** on every Tuesday, for the 'more mature' members of the parish  
**Mother and Toddler Group** on two mornings a week

**Third Thursday Time [TTT]**, a drop-in evening to promote mental well-being  
**Union of Catholic Mothers [UCM]**, who have a varied programme of activities and also support the parish in many ways, including fundraising.

**The Catholic Mothers' Apostolate** provides a child-friendly environment where mums can develop their faith and prayer life together.

**St Vincent de Paul Society**, a charitable organisation providing support and practical help to families and individuals in need in the local area.

**Teams to visit the housebound**, and to take the Blessed Sacrament to them at home. Twice yearly Masses for the housebound, followed by tea and entertainment.

**St Joseph's Team** providing support at the end of life, and to the bereaved. Overseas relationships

**Supporting the Parish and School of Beaulieu in Grenada** since 2004, following severe storm damage

**The Ahotokorum** Rehabilitation centre and Special School in Ghana, originally a leper colony, now a wider mission for all those with disabilities.

There are representatives of **CaFod\*** and **Missio\*** to provide information and promote giving to these Catholic overseas charities

**[Many thanks dear Anne Mellis for your contributions]**

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<sup>1</sup> CCC 2011 "Grace, by uniting us to Christ in active love, ensures....their merit before God..."

## Your Suggestions... [LIFE AFTER LOCKDOWN]

**Rosita Thomas:** The logo is inspiring and perfect to be launched on Pentecost day when your friend Rev Dr Sahaya reflects on the universality of the Church 'different backgrounds, different languages etc.'

Turning to life after lockdown, I absolutely agree with Ann Mellis that care should be taken not to overtax you. I think you might want first of all to consider how many people will not be able to return to Church in the short term. For example,

- how many parishioners are 'sheltering' with major co-morbidities
- how many are 'sheltering' with other co-morbidities
- how many are self isolating because of vulnerabilities or simply age
- how many are living (like me) with any of the above 3 categories and therefore unlikely to return for fear of putting their loved ones at risk

These groups can continue to join in the celebration of the Mass either by YouTube live or (like me) later in the day during quiet moments.

Eucharistic Services performed by Eucharistic Ministers are not Masses and I don't think a good idea however well meaning...Just a thought.

**Anne Melis:** As recommended, we would need at least two volunteer stewards at all times, I am sure there should be enough of us willing to take part in any rota. (I would be willing to be part of such a team)

I would suggest the church should be open for designated hours (e.g. 9-12, or 10-2) each day, to allow time for cleaning afterwards. Maybe at least one day (or two) could be reserved for those who are more vulnerable

If the gate beside the church is open when the church is, then a one-way system would be easy to put in place. There would be space (if necessary) for people to wait safely in line to enter the side door, then leave by the street entrance, and if necessary go back through the gate to the car park.

It's good that the diocese will supply masks and gloves, disposable aprons would also be required, as recommended for those cleaning the church after opening. Guidance needed as to wearing/use of masks and gloves; worn incorrectly they can do more harm than good!

Would it be possible to block off alternate pews, and then mark out suitable distances on the remaining spaces?

Signs would be required to direct people, preferably laminated.

**Catherine Sanderson:** Obviously with regard to the safety of all, I don't see why we can't have Adoration, the Blessed Sacrament can be exposed and we could have timed slots for individual prayer, if we are given kitchen roll and spray to wipe where we sit and the bench around us, that should work. A Corpus Christi special next weekend could be a trial run. It also seems that confession could be possible in the car park so plenty of space for queuing safely, if you sat up by the doors of Hartley Hall, and chairs placed along by the fence the length of the car park, we could book a time slot, eg family ... At 10.30, family ... at 11, family ... at 11.30 etc, or if the weather improves next week try a session in the evening. I suppose if this works out then it would also be possible to distribute Holy Communion after Mass on Sunday Morning...

| MASS TIME | MASS INTENTIONS: 7 <sup>th</sup> June – 13 <sup>th</sup> June       |
|-----------|---|
| SUN 07    | <b>The Most Holy Trinity - Solemnity</b><br>Kathleen Doherty R.I.P. |
| MON 08    | John Roche R.I.P.   |
| TUE 09    | Alphones Manuelpillai R.I.P.  |
| WED 10    | Bortolo Cominetti R.I.P.  |
| THU 11    | Thierry Gnanakumar R.I.P.   |
| FRI 12    | Germaine Gogoua R.I.P. R.I.P.                                       |
| SAT 13    | For parishioners recovering from Covid 19 [UCM]                     |

**Please note:** you can request Holy Mass via email ([antonymegalan@rcaos.com](mailto:antonymegalan@rcaos.com)) or text (07578777461). **No need to send money.** We offer the Holy Mass for your intentions.



## MESSAGE FROM Damien Egan Mayor of Lewisham

Dear resident,

Lewisham prides itself as being an open borough that celebrates our diversity and has a history of standing up against racism. We know many residents who, like us, will have been appalled at the videos from the United States of the killing of George Floyd.



Racism and racial inequalities are not just an ‘American problem’. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) inequalities are endemic in the UK too. We have been shocked by images of police using excessive force to arrest black people in Lewisham in recent weeks and we have been meeting with the police to ensure these instances are investigated, and that we receive information, by ethnicity, relating to the increase of stop and search during lockdown.

Racism exists in many parts of society including in the criminal justice system, access to jobs, in the education system and in health too. COVID-19 has highlighted the disparity in health outcomes for BAME people – but it is important to remember that BAME health inequalities don’t end at COVID-19, they stretch across many aspect of our healthcare.

This isn’t news to us in Lewisham and we have been working over many years to reduce inequality and injustice for all groups. You can [read more about what we’re doing to fight inequality and injustice](#).

This week we lit our Town Hall in purple (see photo below) as our small way of not just remembering George Floyd, but to send the clear message to all our residents that we stand in solidarity with them against racism in all its forms.

Black Lives Matter in Lewisham, today and always.

Best wishes and stay safe,  
Damien Egan  
Mayor of Lewisham

**A Letter of St Athanasius:** ...This is also Paul’s teaching in his second letter to the Corinthians: *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* For grace and the gift of the Trinity are given by the Father through the Son in the Holy Spirit. Just as grace is given from the Father through the Son, so there could be no communication of the gift to us except in the Holy Spirit. But when we share in the Spirit, we possess the love of the Father, the grace of the Son and the fellowship of the Spirit himself.

# SUNDAY HOLY MASS

## First reading Exodus 34:4-6,8-9

### 'Lord, Lord, a God of tenderness and compassion'

With the two tablets of stone in his hands, Moses went up the mountain of Sinai in the early morning as the Lord had commanded him. And the Lord descended in the form of a cloud, and Moses stood with him there.

He called on the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, 'The Lord, a God of tenderness and compassion, slow to anger rich in kindness and faithfulness.' And Moses bowed down to the ground at once and worshipped. 'If I have indeed won your favour, Lord,' he said 'let my Lord come with us, I beg. True, they are a headstrong people, but forgive us our faults and our sins, and adopt us as your heritage.'

## Responsorial Psalm - Daniel 3:52-56

*To you glory and praise for evermore.*

You are blest, Lord God of our fathers.

*To you glory and praise for evermore.*

Blest your glorious holy name.

*To you glory and praise for evermore.*

You are blest in the temple of your glory.

*To you glory and praise for evermore.*

You are blest on the throne of your kingdom.

*To you glory and praise for evermore.*

You are blest who gaze into the depths.

*To you glory and praise for evermore.*

You are blest in the firmament of heaven.

*To you glory and praise for evermore.*

## **Second reading - 2 Corinthians 13:11-13**

### **The grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit**

Brothers, we wish you happiness; try to grow perfect; help one another. Be united; live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you.

Greet one another with the holy kiss. All the saints send you greetings.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

## **Gospel Acclamation - cf.Rv1:8**

Alleluia, alleluia!

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;  
the God who is, who was, and who is to come.

Alleluia!

## **Gospel - John 3:16-18**

### **God sent his Son so that through him the world might be saved**

Jesus said to Nicodemus:

‘God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son,  
so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost  
but may have eternal life.

For God sent his Son into the world

not to condemn the world,

but so that through him the world might be saved.

No one who believes in him will be condemned;

but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already,

because he has refused to believe in the name of God’s only Son.’

### **Final Hymn**

O Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder  
Consider all the worlds Thy Hands have made  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed

Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art  
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to Thee  
How great Thou art, how great Thou art

## REFLECTION ON TODAY'S READINGS

[by **Rev. Dr Sahaya G. Selvam**, sdb – Fr Sahaya is a friend of Fr Antony]

### **How real is your God?**

When I was participating in a training in Spiritual Accompaniment (Spiritual Direction), during my supervision sessions, at the climax of the session my director was fond of asking the question: “What is your God like?” She would then challenge me to go even deeper as she would continue to ask: “What does God feel like for you? What does He smell like? What does He taste like? What does He look like? What does He sound like for you?”

Initially these questions seemed silly, and even difficult to answer. Eventually they opened up for me a whole new way of perceiving God. I do the same now with people who come to me for Spiritual Accompaniment, and I see them proceed from impossibility to enlightenment. These questions simply make God more real to us.

For instance, if you were to ask me: “What does God smell like for you?” I might say something like this: “He smells like the fragrance of a cool evening in a hilly area after some showers; the air is fresh; there is a limy fragrance in the air; and you just want to take in a deep breath.” This God is real to me! Yes, it is analogical. In fact all our talking about God is analogical. But these images make God real to us.

Today we celebrate the feast of the Most Holy Trinity. The need for the belief in the Trinity in the Christian tradition has been necessitated by the truth that the Christian God is a real and a ‘concrete’ God. He is a God that I can relate to in a personal way. He is three persons in one! Some religions that are not able to have tangible images of God also do not have a belief in Trinity and Incarnation, and their God remain aloof and impersonal.

### **The Real Father**



The first reading of today from the book of Exodus (34:4-6,8-9) describes God in a very concrete way: “Moses called on the name of the Lord. The Lord passed before him... And Moses bowed down to the ground at once and worshipped.” It is almost like the scene in the Garden of Eden, though also different (Gen 3:8): “The man and his wife heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from Yahweh God among the trees of the garden.”

There are several such expressions in the Hebrew Scriptures to describe God in very real, tangible and experiential way:

For instance, in Genesis 18:1 – “Yahweh appeared to Abraham at the Oak of Mamre while he was sitting by the entrance of the tent during the hottest part of the day. He looked up, and there he saw three men standing near him.” These three men are described as angels, but later it is as if Abraham is bargaining with God himself about Sodom and Gomorrah.

And in Gen 32:25: “And Jacob was left alone. Then someone wrestled with him until daybreak.” This ‘someone’ is again initially presented as an angel, and finally it is alluded to as God himself.

In Exodus 3:1 “Moses was looking after the flock of his father-in-law .... he led it to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. The angel of Yahweh appeared to him in a flame blazing from the middle of a bush.”

Prophet Elijah was told (in 1Kings 19: 11): “‘Go out and stand on the mountain before Yahweh.’ For at that moment Yahweh was going by. A mighty hurricane split the mountains and shattered the rocks before Yahweh. But Yahweh was not in the hurricane. And after the hurricane, an earthquake. But Yahweh was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, fire. But Yahweh was not in the fire. And after the fire, a light murmuring sound. And when Elijah heard this, he covered his face with his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave.”

How many of us talk to God as Abraham did? How many of us have wrestled with God as Jacob did? Have you seen God in the burning bush or the gentle breeze? Is it that God does not appear this way any more, or is it that we have become too rational to recognise God in these images? Or is it because we are waiting to see God in extraordinary phenomena outside ourselves? I tend to think that the wrestling of Jacob, the burning bush of Moses, and the gentle breeze of Elijah are inner processes. I am more than convinced that often God communicates with us in the form of images during deep prayer. These images make God concrete and real! Are we ready to be surprised by this real God of ours?

## **The Real Son**

The Letter to the Hebrews begins with these lines (Heb 1:1-2): “At many moments in the past and by many means, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our time, the final days, he has spoken to us in the person of his Son...”

Johannine literature (the Epistles and the Gospel) is very articulate about asserting the reality of the Son. In 1John 1:1-2: “Something which has existed since the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our own eyes, which we have watched and touched with our own hands, the Word of life — this is our theme. That life was made visible; we saw it and are giving our testimony....” Yes, “The Word became flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory” (Jn 1:14).

The gospel text of today reiterates the mystery of incarnation: “God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son” (Jn 6:16). The mystery of incarnation and the mystery of the Holy Trinity co-exist together. One presupposes the other. Put in a very simplistic manner: when God was in Nazareth in the form of Jesus, who was maintaining the universe? Yes, the Father and the Spirit were in control! That is why even in talking about the resurrection of Jesus the expression used is “the *Father* raised him up” (Acts 2:33; Gal 1:1).

## **The Real Spirit**

“When Pentecost day came round, they had all met together, when suddenly there came from heaven a sound as of a violent wind which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and there appeared to them tongues as of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them” (Acts 2:1-3). Is this description an external event or an internal process? If you take for granted that these are external happenings that took place once upon a time, perhaps you may not experience it. It remains mere history. Whereas, if we understand that they are inner processes then we can experience them even here and now. Yes, God the Spirit is real and tangible. Those who have experienced Him can attest to it.

I experience Him as one who brings me the Good News. I experience Him as one who helps me discern. But I must hurry to add that it only happens when I am focussed on Him. I humbly submit to you one such example from my life. Since 2008, I have been in London working on a PhD project. Towards the middle of 2009, I was a little bit confused about my ministry. After having served in Africa, by then, for 16 years, I missed African youth as I was buried amidst my books in London. My ordination motto (in May 1996) had been: “Good News to Poor” (Lk 4:18). I felt I was isolating myself from the ministry to the ordinary youth of Africa with my PhD degree which will force me to minister to the academicians. I was not at peace. In July 2009, I went to the Divine Retreat Centre, Chalakudi, for the International Youth Retreat – my third retreat there! The question of my future ministry was at the back of my head,

but did not worry too much about it. On the Friday morning – the last day of the retreat – at around 4 am... can I say, the Spirit wakes me up and says: “Romans one fourteen ‘B’” (Rom 1:14b). I clearly see a text in my mind as an image; I do not know yet what the text was about; and I am told to read only the second part of that verse. So I took my Bible and read. The text says: “I am obliged... to the educated and the ignorant.”

Yes, the Spirit of God is real. He has a voice. Yes, the Son is real. He has a body. Yes, our God is real!

“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Cor 13:13)!!!



**Have a Blessed Trinity Sunday**

United in Christ we are never alone,  
Antony