



7 June 2009

Dear Parishioners,

When speaking on the Trinity, Tertullian—an early church theologian—takes an organic approach. He points to nature when addressing the nature of God. This approach reminds me of Jesus' way of teaching who would often point to the things of earth and stuff of life when addressing the mysteries of the kingdom. In this way both allow us to touch what might seem beyond the reach of our understanding.

An image of the Trinity for Tertullian is the plant: with the Father as the deep root, the Son as the shoot that breaks forth into the world, the Spirit as that which spreads beauty and fragrance “fructifying the earth with flower and fruit”.



To most, if not all of us, the Trinity remains a mystery. Yet, why should that surprise us since we remain a vast mystery to ourselves throughout this brief span of life? With all our sophistication have we even begun to fathom the mystery of who we are in relation to ourselves and one another?

And yet, Tertullian's metaphor and approach helps me apprehend something of the mystery due to my experience with plants and love for the earth. A plant, if it is to grow and flourish, must be rooted. Its existence issues from the other and inexplicably is one with the other. In plants, there is this interplay of relatedness out of which the plant grows into an organic whole.

Really, we are no different. We, too, must be rooted in a mystery other than ourselves. And it is within this interplay of relatedness where we become more ourselves. Apart from this interplay we cannot last. We will never grow and know ourselves. Apart from it life is barren, fruitless. So it is with life. So it is, mysteriously, with God the Source of life.

In God, we find the root of such interplay and presence. God is One, yet not alone. This is what we feebly are trying to say by this word “Trinity”. This is what Tertullian means when speaking of God's nature by way of his earthy metaphor.

On this feast, may we become more rooted in God. May we belong to God and become one with Him that this interplay of relatedness and presence might bear fruit and give life. In this way, we participate in God's nature. In this way, we live today's Mystery.

*Father Tim Clark*

Pastor