**TRINITY (Thoughts into Silence)**

Although I’ve been an Anglican all my life, my father, wanting to give me a good education, sent me to a Roman Catholic Salesian College where I was soon taught the Catechism and enjoyed debates on what happened to us poor protestants that died without converting to the one true faith!! I learned that the ‘get out of jail free card’ was to kiss the crucifix three times just before you died… so the question naturally arose, ‘What if you only managed twice!?’ ….And then of course there was mystery of The Trinity, how ***does*** three go into one? Well, in Maths, we learned that it doesn’t… so the stock answer from the very Irish Brother Michael Delmer was the Shamrock… and, at 12 years of age, that was enough to keep us quiet.

Years later then the Trinity still demands questions and a coherent explanation… Not easy, even for St Augustine. I like the apocryphal story of St Augustine walking on the beach and noticing a young boy running down to the sea with a spoon, ladling up the salt water and taking it back up the sand-dune to pour it down a small hole he found there. This was repeated several times until Augustine asked the boy what he was doing. The boy replied, “I’m putting the sea into this hole.” Augustine said, “You silly boy, you’ll never get the whole ocean into that small hole.” To which the boy replied, “No, and you’ll never work out the Trinity!” And promptly disappeared!

What I’ve now come to know is that although God is mystery… he is also infinitely knowable and that if we keep searching, new and deeper answers are always being revealed to us… because our spirituality along with the whole of nature, and not least our consciousness, is still evolving…

So, as St Paul wrote, “Now I have done away with childish things…” The Shamrock has long gone… and I have a new understanding. Trinity has delivered to me a new word, Perichoresis. ‘Peri’ meaning around, and ‘Choresis’ from the same root as Choreography. It is, if you like, a Divine Circle Dance. But it explains more than this… for in this dance the participants, like the waterwheel on an Old Mill, pour themselves one into the other causing creative energy and movement… and there is even more to it than just that… because for this movement to happen it requires that each one must empty itself completely into the other… in total self-giving.

Now you will all know of the beautiful Rublev Icon known as the Trinity… with the three figures sat around a table.

…And you may have noticed that in the front of the table there appears to be a small drawer… it looks a little like a letter-box There have been a number of ideas as to what this drawer exactly represents and iconographers have made a few suggestions of their own… but recently the art experts have had a much closer look at the original Rublev Icon and the so called ‘drawer’… Analysing what they thought was paint on the drawer, they found that it was not paint at all… in fact it was found to be a type of resinous glue…

So, originally, what might have been attached to the Icon by this glue…? Well, the historians did their investigations and it’s thought that most likely it was a mirror. And it makes sense… Icons with their kind of reverse perspective draw us into their story… This Icon, using a mirror, brings our own image right into the Icon itself and therefore we become part of the story, we become a fourth person in the Trinity, invited into the Cosmic Dance to participate in the giving and receiving of this outpouring of love…

In scripture we read of the same outpouring where we’re told that Jesus empties himself… this is Paul writing of this Kenosis in Philippians (2: 9-16)

Another image might be of a candle burning down, giving of itself in its giving of light.

At our hermitage silence is the space we offer where Centring Prayer becomes a simple bare gesture of giving oneself away… to make space for the Other…

**So, likewise our, ‘Thought into Silence’ this evening comes from Psalm 46 … ‘Be still and know that I am God’ …** By repeating and reducing this phrase eventually we are left with silence and God… to pour out whatever he chooses to offer us this day…

**So, Be still and know that I am God… Be still and know that I am… Be still and know… Be still… Be…**

The Trinity. Andrei Rublev (1370-1430). Moscow.

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