



'The Holy Trinity' by Andrei Rublev

We take a breath and come intentionally into God's presence

The Lord be with you: **And also with you.**

Holy Spirit draw us close and minister your grace to us. May we recognise you in our presence. **Amen**

Bible Reading Genesis 18: 1-14

The Lord appeared to Abraham by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the entrance of his tent in the heat of the day. He looked up and saw three men standing near him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent entrance to meet them, and bowed down to the ground. He said, 'My lord, if I find favour with you, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree. Let me bring a little bread, that you may refresh yourselves, and after that you may pass on—since you have come to your servant.' So they said, 'Do as you have said.' And Abraham hastened into the tent to Sarah, and said, 'Make ready quickly three measures of choice flour, knead it, and make cakes.' Abraham ran to the herd, and took a calf, tender and good, and gave it to the servant, who hastened to prepare it. Then he took curds and milk and the calf that he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree while they ate.

They said to him, 'Where is your wife Sarah?' And he said, 'There, in the tent.' Then one said, 'I will surely return to you in due season, and your wife Sarah shall have a son.' And Sarah was listening at the tent entrance behind him.

Now Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in age; it had ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. So Sarah laughed to herself, saying, 'After I have grown old, and my husband is old, shall I have pleasure?' The Lord said to Abraham, 'Why did Sarah laugh, and say, "Shall I indeed bear a child, now that I am old?" Is anything too wonderful for the Lord? At the set time I will return to you, in due season, and Sarah shall have a son.'

Your Reflection

What stands out to you about the text? Why might this be so?

Do you think anything – miracles- are possible for God? Have you experienced one? Do you know others who have?

Reflection

Abraham is resting in the heat of the day. He is stirred by the Lord, we don't know what he hears God say but his eyes suddenly focus on three strangers. He rushes to meet them, bows down and begs them to stay, eat and rest under the oaks of the Mamre tree. He brings them food and drink and we come to understand these guests are more than mortals. Abraham is entertaining the Lord. This scene mystically, beautifully captures human and heavenly hospitality.

The icon image above by Russian painter Andrei Rublev depicts this scene. The three guests, depicted as the Holy Trinity are gathered around the table. And just as they received and joined in with Abraham's hospitality, the openness of the picture, suggests that they now invite everyone to receive their 'God's' hospitality too. Where all, stranger, brother, sister, friend are invited to 'come' and find a place ready for them at God's table.

Apparently, beneath the Trinity's table is a small rectangle which some historians believe originally housed a small mirror. So as you gazed at the image, you saw one more person seated at the table – You!

At a conference for BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) Advisers our guest speaker was challenging us how we might know if there is true equality and celebrated diversity in the Church of England. She said you know 'when all have an equal space, voice and place at the table' be the table a local church, a community group, diocesan or general synod or in the house of Bishop's.

At God's table we all -regardless of colour, culture, identity, sexuality, material worth, physical or mental health- have an equal place where we are all invited, welcomed, valued to share in the joyful communion and feast of the Trinity of God.

To come and sit and refresh with God in church, under a big old Mamre tree, or sprouting oak! To feel your belovedness to God. And then to turn and invite your neighbour, even the one, especially the one, who is a bit different to you to join too.

You have a place at God's table. You are treated as God's special guest. How wonderful is that? Amen

Worship Hymns

Before the throne of God above (My name is graven on his hands, my name is written on his heart) with lyrics:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQ6QaZcPphM&list=PL8544BP5oQ39cOYB7oaBIxdUV9ljohjXP&index=21>

Come down oh love divine with lyrics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zXO4rqBQOAU>

Holy, Holy, Holy – Lucy Gibson (attached to email)

Prayers

Loving Trinity, thank you for inviting me to sit at your table. Give me the courage to accept your invitation, to believe that I belong and generosity to issue that invitation to others. **Amen**

God of justice, help us to work together for social and racial justice. For a society and world where inclusion and diversity are valued and resources are shared more fairly. Give wisdom to leaders and policy makers and humble hearts to commit to radical transformation. Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We pray for the family of Madeline McCann and all others who have missing loved ones. May news of their whereabouts be known. For the family of the two sisters who died. We pray for breakthroughs for those investigating.

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We continue to pray for the end of covid, for protection against second waves, for those countries still seeing spikes.

We pray for all who are in hospital or hospices, those waiting for operations. Those who struggle in body, mind or spirit. The lonely and the fearful. Surround them with your healing love and knowledge of their worth. For the needs of our families and our own needs and frailties...

Lord hear us: **Lord graciously hear us.**

We lift before you the recently departed, all those we have known and loved. We thank-you for the reassurance in Jesus of eternal life where we will be reunited with you and those we have loved.

In this moment of stillness we lift before you the prayers we carry in our own hearts

Joining all our prayers together we say the prayer our saviour taught us:

Our Father, who art in heaven; hallowed be thy name;

thy kingdom come; thy will be done;

on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our trespasses,

As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation;

but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

Go in peace to love one another and serve the Lord: **Amen**

God bless you and hold you,

Nikki