

Trinity Sunday – 30th May 2021

I think we would all want to send very many congratulations to Carrie and Boris on their wedding yesterday in Westminster Cathedral. Our prayers and hopes must be that together with they enjoy a long, fruitful and mutually loving family life together in a way that reflects the love at the heart of the Trinity.

In contrast to the cheering news of the wedding, the newspapers this weekend are also full of the breakdown of Dominic Cummings's relationship with Boris Johnson. They give an impression of the failure of a relationship in which each used the other. Boris used Dominic's intelligence and drive for electoral success and Dominic used Boris's support and encouragement to become influential in the decision-making processes of the government. At the very centre of government they worked together on political decision-making until their differences became insurmountable, their relationship spun apart and the claims and counter claims that we hear now are part of the fall out. Had they been running a council or a school it would have been scandalous. That they were effectively running our country in a time of crisis is tragic.

But although tragic, I would guess the progress of that relationship is familiar to those of us who have experienced the breakdown of a relationship – whether our own, or friends or relations. It happens like this: people come together, find success and encouragement working together, each finding the other stimulating and useful – and then disillusionment sets in as the going gets tough. If the relationship was not based on genuine love and respect and those involved are not prepared to give it time and commitment, all too often the result is anger, bitterness and the inability to recognise another's point of view. The fallout at the heart of government emphasises how important relationships are.

Within families, the strength of relationships which the parents have is the most important factor in building happy, stable and confident children. The parent figure may not be a traditional mother or father. They be an adoptive or foster parent, same-sex or trans, divorced and remarried. Grandparents can take on the role of parenting very successfully and the relationships the parent figure models may be strong friendships, or with extended family. But whatever they are, the relationships of the adult or adults who are in the role of parents are crucial for children to learn how they too can relate to others. Particularly impressive are those who single parents who, on their own, manage to provide examples of stable relationships for their children. To live and grow in a family rooted in faithful, supportive long-term relationships is the best possible start in life.

As baptised Christians, that is where we come from. That is our 'family history.' Because whatever our family backgrounds, and I recognise for some family life may have been tough or unorthodox, the relationship at the heart of the Christian faith in which we are grounded is the relationship of the Trinity.

The relationship of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit or if you prefer, 'Parent, Child and Inspirer,' or 'Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier' – that relationship between the three persons of the Trinity is, in some indescribable way, key to the nature of God who encompasses those relationships and yet is **one** God. We don't begin to understand the mystery of the Trinity, but the relationship at the heart of God is infinitely loving, infinitely creative and infinitely compassionate, big enough to hold within it the redemption of the whole world and to invite us to be part of that Trinitarian relationship. The promise of redemption of the whole world and our invitation to be part of the Trinitarian relationship of love is the theology underlying

our principle of inclusiveness in this church. God's love is so great in encompasses everyone.

'God sent his Son into the world... in order that the world might be saved through him' says Jesus to Nicodemus. 'Not to condemn the world,' he specifically explains, 'but to save it.' The relationship at the heart of the Trinity is a relationship of love and invitation – so how could God condemn? Rather than condemn, Christ says, 'God so loved the world, that God gave the Son so that all who believe in him shall not perish but have everlasting life'. The love at the heart of God means that God loves creation, in spite of the anger and bitterness and recrimination with which we have filled it. Rather than being condemned for our failure and anger, the love at the heart of God reaches out to adopt us as children of God's Trinitarian love. 'We are not called to be slaves,' Paul writes, 'But children of God and heirs - joint heirs with Christ.' And what we are to inherit as heirs? Eternal life. 'The Son of Man must be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.'

The chaos at the heart of the relationship between Boris and Dominic Cummings has produced anger, recrimination, bitterness and accusations of lies and counter lies. As with any news story it is tempting to be drawn into it and take sides and so become angry and partisan in our turn. But that is not where we are centred. We are children in a family in which the parental centre is the mutual love at the heart of the Trinity.

That is the source of creation, the origin of consciousness and the focus of our lives. That is where we are rooted and grounded, and that Trinitarian love determines how we believe and behave. As we are drawn more and more into it as heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, then Christ promises we ourselves can be incorporated into the working and loving of the Holy Spirit and become fellow workers in the work of eternal life here on earth.