

A REFLECTION FOR TRINITY SUNDAY



The icon above was painted about 1410 by Andrei Rublev. Arguably the most famous Russian icon, it is located in the Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow. Superficially, it depicts the three angels who visited Abraham at the Oak of Mamre (Genesis 18: 1-2). The background has what purports to be Abraham's house, the Oak of Mamre and Mount Moriah. But look again more closely; the icon is full of symbolism. The three angels are serenely looking at and speaking to each other. They are the Holy Trinity. You will find that your eye does not rest on any particular one but passes from one to another. Notice they are sitting equally spaced round the table, and their thrones are at the same height indicating their equality. But who is who? We might speak of the Church or of Heaven as the Father's House. The Father is the figure on the left below the house. A chalice sits on the table and, looking more closely, you will see that the inner edges of the two side figures form the outline of another chalice. The middle figure behind these two chalices that speak of sacrifice is Christ. The Oak hints at the tree that will form the Cross. The blue of the robes symbolises divinity. Christ's robe is half blue and half brown, the brown represents humanity. The figure on the right is the Holy Spirit whose robe, while blue in part, is generously endowed with green, representing an abundance of new life. And the mountain? The spiritual ascent that we can all climb with the help of the Spirit.

We need to remember the Trinity in our journeys of faith. People can become absorbed with only one Person of the Trinity. As when looking at Rublev's icon, our focus should be constantly moving between Father, Son and Spirit. When we pray to the Father, we have been moved by the Spirit and approach Him having been redeemed by the Son. The Son has told us about the Father and sent us the Spirit. The Spirit gives us life and the faith and strength to witness to the Father and the Son.

I bind unto myself today
the strong Name of the Trinity,
by invocation of the same,
the Three in One, and One in Three,
Of whom all nature hath creation,
eternal Father, Spirit, Word.

With kindest regards, Stuart McDonald, Reader in Training

This, extremely interesting, Reflection for Trinity Sunday - which through a visual image explains the Trinity in one of the best ways ever - was written by Dr Stuart McDonald (Prof McDonald) who is a Reader in Training, for the Church of Scotland. Dr McDonald is well known and greatly respected in Falkirk Presbytery and beyond. Dr McDonald sends his very best wishes in particular to the congregations of Dunipace Parish Church and the charges of Blackbraes & Shieldhill linked with Muiravonside, on whose websites his excellent Reflection for Trinity Sunday is posted. Our sincerest thanks are extended to him along with our best wishes for the remainder of his training.

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus”

Philippians 1:6

Rev Dr Jean W Gallacher

Parish Minister Dunipace Parish Church

Interim Moderator Blackbraes & Shieldhill linked with Muiravonside