

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

- Some words from this morning's Gospel reading. Jesus said, *'When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth'*. Jesus was speaking at the end of the Last Supper. Before Gethsemane. Before the cross. Before the empty tomb. Before Ascension Day And a long way before Pentecost when the Holy Spirit did come.
- Repeat it with me! JESUS SAID, *'When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth'*. X 3?
 - But now of course, the Holy Spirit has come. So what is the truth he is guiding us into? And who is the 'you', he is referring to when he says, *'he will guide you into all the truth'*? And what has all this got to do with Trinity Sunday? That's what I want to talk about today!
- JESUS SAID, *'When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth'*.
- I've got four fountain pens. Each one is rather precious to me for a different reason. You gave me one, to celebrate my silver jubilee of priesting. I fill up my four fountain pens and inevitably also cause another ink blotch on my blotter, which slowly expands to cause a rather interesting if rather messy pattern. Sometimes they are quite beautiful. Usually I get ink all over my fingers as well.
- JESUS SAID, *'When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth'*.
- There is a not very attractive tendency among Christians to keep their faith pure, to keep it safe, lest the truth should be sullied. You can't let just anyone receive communion you've got to do a course. Only priests can celebrate the Eucharist, otherwise the roof might fall in. All are welcome at our services but we don't want too many noisy children and it's important to do things in the right order otherwise chaos could result.
- There is not much you can do to stop an ink blot spreading. It slowly creeps further into whatever it has landed on and you just have to wait. Any attempt to contain it or stop it, usually just makes things worse.
- JESUS SAID, *'When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth'*.
- So what is this truth? And what can we do to keep it safe?
- John's Gospel, which contains the same number of references to truth as the other three Gospels put together, is very clear that *'the truth'* is Jesus. Just a few chapters earlier at the beginning of the same meal, Jesus has said, *'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.'* And in chapter one, speaking about Jesus, John writes, *'And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth'*.
- That's all nice and safe then. Christians have a monopoly on Jesus. Or we think we have. He's what unites us. He's what distinguishes us from those barbaric heathen outside the church door who we'd better not let in in case they disturb our peace. Keep the real world out, that's what I say!
- JESUS SAID, *'When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth'*.
- However St John does not let us leave it there.
- First of all, in that very same first chapter that we've just mentioned, we discover that Jesus was there before time and has a guiding, creating hand in the whole of creation. Listen to these well-loved words, *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life'*. Remember, *'the Word'*, is Jesus. So without Jesus, *'not one thing came into being.'* Not one person. Not even one caterpillar. Not one granite pebble on the beach. Not one waterfall. Not even one rainbow.
- So *'the truth'* is immediately opening the doors to the church and forcing us to include the people outside as well as the natural world around us. All this only happened because of Jesus, *'without him not one thing came into being'*. *'The truth'* is nothing less than the relationship between God and the whole of his created reality. And that relationship is made through Jesus!
- The breadth of God's love is bleeding out of the church into the world in which we live, like an ink blot on blotting paper.
- Have you noticed the extraordinary emphasis on creation in today's Trinity Sunday's, readings? Not just in the Gospel reading we've been talking about but also in that first marvellous reading from Proverbs. *'before the hills,*

I was brought forth – when he had not yet made earth and fields, or the world’s first bits of soil. When he established the heavens, I was there, when he drew a circle on the face of the deep’. Listen to the sense of joy, of God delighting in his creation as we read, ‘when he marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him, like a master worker; and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race.

- So it’s really not possible to ignore the refugee on your doorstep if you are going to follow Jesus. Because if you ignore the refuge, you are ignoring Jesus himself.
- And it’s really not possible to ignore the climate crisis if you are going to follow Jesus. Because if you are ignoring the coral reef dying on the Northern Coast of Australia, you are ignoring Jesus himself.
- But wait I hear you say, with a wry smile on your face. “Surely Jesus was talking to his disciples when he said these words?” So not to us at all then? So I don’t need to worry about refugees. All I’ve got to worry about is myself. *‘When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth’*. It’s the disciples’ problem, not mine.
- Are you not a disciple of Jesus, then? Because if you are, then he is talking to you. And the promise is yours! *‘When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth’* Is that what you want?
- One of the things you will have taken for granted is that Jesus is talking to more than one person. The disciples were together. We are not on our own. This is about community and relationships rather more than individuality and personal preferences. ‘you’ is in the plural in this reading every single time.
 - He’s leading you! It’s plural; he’s leading us! *‘When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth’* It seems truth is inseparable from movement and action.
- Can you see the influence of Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit in these readings? The creator God. The Spirit of truth here with us now. The truth himself, Jesus Christ, so intimately involved in our lives that he brings God to human life and human life to God and in Jesus you cannot tell the difference.
- And somehow it would not work if it were all just God, instead of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There would be no communication. No movement. No demonstration of love or sharing. No continual presence.
- Which leads us to our Romans reading. The core of St Paul’s teaching about salvation. Also probably the densest and most complex chapter in the whole of the bible. And right at the start of all this complicated theology about what it means to follow Jesus, practical action is stated loud and clear. Truth, *‘the truth’*. Following Jesus is about actions just as much as words. As we are guided *‘into all truth’*. Listen. *‘we boast in our hope of sharing the glory of God. ... we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us’*. Is this not Christianity in action? Is this not practical just as much as spiritual? The love of God through Jesus bringing hearts and minds together.
- So the conclusion we have reached is that it is impossible to be a Christian and ignore the world, neither the creation of which we are part nor the beleaguered underprivileged millions suffering because of the thoughtless decisions we make about how we buy food or where we go on holiday
- JESUS SAID, *‘When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth’*.
- What can you point to in your life that shows how the Spirit is guiding you? What does your belief in God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit influence you to do when you hear news reports about refugees struggling to get into Britain?
- How does your faith in Jesus affect your understanding of the climate crisis and what does it encourage you to do about it?
- And how does your honouring of Jesus affect your delight in the natural world or your desire to make changes so that we are more ready to cherish it.
- Or is there some other pressing concern that you feel all this is pointing you towards?
- Our wonderful God, Father Son and Holy Spirit. Have a blessed and meaningful Trinity Sunday. Keep the doors of the church open and let the inkblot of Jesus bleed outside. Amen.