

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

Today we rejoice that we as members of the Church will gain (have gained) a new member. Noah is too young to remember this day in the years to come, but I am sure his family and the people supporting him will. I, like Noah, was too young to remember my baptism. Fr Bernhard Schunemann, vicar of St Stephen's Dulwich where I attend church in England recently asked me if I remembered my baptism. He was very disappointed by my sharp answer, no, but I do know it happened as my grandmother took a group photo of everyone who attended the service, and this photo had pride of place in her living room for many years. So I suggest that all who are close to Noah do the same so that Noah too can look back on this important day.

Today is Trinity Sunday and so I want to reflect this morning/evening on a question at the heart of our faith. Why do we baptise people of all ages, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit?"

This morning (Earlier today) we will celebrate (celebrated) Noah's baptism mindful of the Gospel command: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19-20). These words are very familiar to most of us. It is easy to miss just how deep these words go. But what does it mean to baptise, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit? Why not just baptise in Jesus' name alone, as the early Christians sometimes did? Why this threefold designation?

In our Gospel today, Jesus prepares His disciples for a future that they can't yet fully imagine. He says "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now". There is a sense of invitation, but also of mystery. Jesus is hinting at something more, something that will unfold over time. Then He speaks of the Spirit: "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth". Notice how Jesus does not say the Spirit will bring a different truth, or a competing truth. The Spirit will take what is Jesus', and declare it to the disciples. What is Jesus' is also the Father's - "All that the Father has is mine".

Can we see a pattern emerging here? Jesus is showing us that God is not a solitary figure high in the sky, but a living relationship in Himself: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Three, yet one. Not three Gods, but one God in three persons - each distinct, each fully God, and each working together in perfect oneness. And so, when we baptise in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we are being drawn into the living relationship of the Godhead. Baptism isn't just a ritual or a symbol of belonging. It is God's own self taking us by the hand and saying "Come. Step into the mystery, that I am". Be part of my/our life.

Think about it! The Father, who made the world and loves us with a love deeper than we can imagine (or beyond our imagining). The Son, who came among us in flesh and blood, who knows our joys and our pain, who died and rose again for us. The Spirit, who breathes in us now, who comforts, guides, and shapes us into Christ's likeness.

To be baptised in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is to have the whole of our life - past, present and future - enveloped by God. It is to be a child of God be marked as Christ's own forever, living in the ongoing presence of the Spirit. It is a new birth, a new belonging, a new hope. But there is more. In baptism, we don't just receive God's love; we are also sent out to share this love. Jesus said "Go and make disciples of all nations". Baptism is the beginning of a journey in which our end is secure - a journey of learning to love as God loves, to forgive as Christ forgives, and to serve as the Spirit empowers.

So why do we baptise in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit? Because this is the God who made us, who saves us, and who sustains us. Because this is the God who calls us into a relationship, not just with Himself, but with one another. Because in His threefold one reality, in God's threefold being we find the fullness of life.

I understand today is not just celebration for some, even many of us. There are many reasons why today could be difficult. Some may be estranged from their children, others are estranged from their parents, or dealing with the challenges of having children. All of us gathered here are affected by the school shooting in Graz.

However we are feeling today, please remember we are not alone. There are people around us ready to support us, and we can lean into the love of God for strength and assurance.

In a world that can feel lonely and/or divided, baptism reminds us that we are never alone. We are part of a family, God's family, that stretches across time and space, a communion of saints. And at the heart of that family is the God who is love - a love that flows from the Father to the Son to the Holy Spirit, and overflows into our lives.

As we continue today, let us remember and give thanks for our own baptism - whether it happened recently like Noah's or some time ago. Let us give thanks for the God who has named us, claimed us, and calls us His own. Finally, let us ask the Holy Spirit to guide us, just as Jesus promised, into all truth, all the love, and all of the hope that God has for us.

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