

22.5.75
22.5.78 ✓

Lovey You Self, Lord
(Flame)

The Trinity of Mutual Love
[Faith, Faith, Faith]

Yesterday was Trinity Sunday

[A little song called 'The Trinity of Mutual Love': something to turn attention to the coming Sunday which is Trinity Sunday.] As a special day, Trinity Sunday, is something of an anomaly, I think — much more like 'Bible Sunday' or Christmas Day or Remembrance Sunday than the saving events which are the basis of the main celebrations of the Christian liturgy. Trinity Sunday is, rather, an ideological occasion you might call it: giving, like the other examples I mentioned, a special emphasis to an idea, to a truth, to a doctrine which is of course valid all the time but perhaps needs a particular emphasis from time to time. The mystery of the Blessed Trinity is a problem that theologians have for centuries grappled with trying to find adequate expression for, an understanding of: knowing all the time that our thought-patterns and languages can never fully understand or express God. Saints and Doctors of the Church too have tried, in writings and sermons, to help us understand the revelation of Himself which God has given mankind. But perhaps after all it's the mystics & poets, who've said little, who've given the best insights... for those who can glimpse what they've tried to say. Ignatius of Loyola, a very practical man and a man who wrote volumes of letters and instructions and detailed procedures for government and organisation of his then-new order in the Church; his mystical experience, once, of the Trinity, reduced him to saying it was something like three perfectly sounded notes of an organ — and he wasn't known to have competence or interest in music! If the best attempts to express the reality are the reality of the Trinity in human words can come out as seeming either so banal or so hopelessly complicated

in language and concepts as some writings of the doctors and theologians of the Church often appear to be: well, what can we hope to learn? Cynics and others may say it's all just a waste of time, at best: there are those who believe we can never know anything about God, anyway: and those who hold that God, however we think of Him, is only a projection or construction of our own minds and imaginings. Psychologically, then, maybe it is both necessary and instructive to have Trinity Sunday following on the Christian celebration of real facts and events in the life of Christ, a man whose historical existence is in fact (again) better attested than the life of almost any other human being who lived two thousand and more years ago. And to keep it clear that Christ is more than just a human figure in the history of mankind, however great a man people may think Him to have been. He was not an invention: and God is involved in His life, what He did and what has happened as a direct result among His followers and in the world since then. So there are questions, problems, difficulties, mystery: Christian thinkers have ever since been trying to tease them out, find ways of understanding the facts that we know and the conclusions that derive from them. We don't all have to be theologians or even to know theology: the heart of the mystery has not been penetrated by the greatest of the theologians, much less by philosophers and rational thinkers. The holy people come perhaps the closest any man can: and we can all, in the words of St Hilary of Poitiers, "fulfil in simple faith what we are bidden to do: that is, adore the Father, honour the Son with him, and be full of the Holy Spirit." Let us then praise God in our prayer and in music now, God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The

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old hymn of praise 'Te Deum Laudamus', ^{in the plainsong setting} (part of the setting of Delalande: "the glorious
hymn of apostles ... Q")

MUSIC - PRAYERS.

There are

→ (677 '83) two opposite tendencies these days, it seems to me, where the Christian doctrine of the Trinity of God is very relevant. I mean the search for mystery and mystic experience (not only in the religious sphere but everyone people are looking for something beyond the rational, the logical, scientific, planned, computer-able): and the desire for simplification, convenience, ease (of comfort or of not having to think). It's said that Christianity isn't simple enough for ordinary people today; and the doctrine of the Trinity is quoted as a case in point. Allowing that at times perhaps too much emphasis has been laid on intellectual understanding at the expense of genuine Christian living, it is all the same true that simplification is often also falsification to some extent. Christ, His life, His teaching, His message is not at all convenient in any sense; and His often-remarked simplicity also carries depths of meaning and resonance for those with ears to hear. No, we must not make God to our own weak image: yet at the same time it isn't necessary to invent mystery beyond our understanding — and mystic experience starts with acknowledgment and love of God who is both totally "other" than we are, yet most closely involved in our human lives, God who is Father and creator, Son and Redeemer, Holy Spirit and sanctifier who loves you and me and wants us freely to love and be united with Himself.