



St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Sunday, 12 June 2022 – Trinity Sunday
Readings: Romans 5: 1-5. St John 16: 12-15
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

To boast or not to boast ...

If we had only listened with half an ear to Paul's letter to the Romans, possibly the one word we would remember is, 'boast', as Paul uses it twice. Boasting jars, as it's contrary to polite etiquette of not bragging about one's own achievements, unlike so much of social media that projects the 'Look at me society'. I suspect that self-projection often stems from a feeling of inadequacy, needing recognition to counteract personal vulnerabilities. But those who do acquire fame find their cravings are seldom satisfied: much wants ever more.

Boast only of the things we do not deserve

So, why is Paul advocating that we boast? The foundation of his urging is based on something that we have not achieved by our own efforts; something that we have no right to deserve; rather, only by God's grace have we been justified in our faith and have a hope of sharing the glory of God. In other words, only by God's loving care for us have we been declared righteous in his sight. Paul confirms this saying 'God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.' Now that makes sense: we are right to boast of everything that God has bestowed on us. That takes care of the first boast but, what about the second? As with most things, there's a catch. If we want to share in God's glory then we have to use our faith purposefully. When we stick our heads above the parapet and stand by our faith, we can expect that not everyone will agree with us either, they try to undermine us or, ignore us altogether. If we think about it, that is taking up our cross and following Christ, for as we know, his ministry and mission did not receive universal acceptance. So, our second boast is that suffering for faith produces endurance, character, hope and, hope in God, never disappoints.

We have much to boast about

Jesus, in the gospel, was endeavouring to instil this self-same knowledge in his disciples, whilst being realistic that only after his death, resurrection, ascension and the gift of the Holy Spirit, would they fully comprehend his message. So, on this Trinity Sunday what is the message we can take away? Why, that we are made and loved by God the Father, forgiven and redeemed through Christ his Son and justified in faith by the Holy Spirit. In summary, as Paul implies, active faith grafted onto the Holy Trinity means that boasting is good for our eternal health! Amen.