



Sunday, 16 June 2019 – Trinity Sunday
Sermon for 10.00am Eucharist at St Andrew's Parish Church Guernsey
Readings: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31 & Gospel St John 16: 12-15
Given by Rev Juliette E C Robilliard

Question?

On Trinity Sunday, in respect of our identity, 'Whose are we'?

Happy Father's Day!

As it's Father's Day, Dad's get the focus of my thoughts to illustrate my points. However, male or female, parents or not, whatever our age, these comments apply to all of us equally, because we are all called to have a care for others.

Pearls of wisdom

Dad's, I'm sure that as your children grew up you did the best you could to instil your pearls of wisdom into them, so that when they left home, they would be able to stand on their own two feet without your constant support.

I am my own person

For grown-up children, leaving home permanently is a signal moment, as we suddenly find that we have our own identify. Outside the family social circle, no longer, are we introduced, as in my case, "Paul de Garis' daughter."

Independence v support

Next, comes the crunch moment, it means learning to live on our own resources. Being free to act on our own initiative comes with daily challenges of discerning what is the right or wrong course of action to take. The longed-for freedom of choosing our own life-style and 'living the dream' can end up being a living nightmare once the safety net of parental support has been left behind. Hopefully, however, the leave taking has been well planned and the channels of communication remain open between parent and child, so that advice can be sought and given. We need look no further for an example than the prayer-time Jesus had with his Father: between heaven and earth communication continued constantly between them and loving wisdom flowed.

Wisdom & truth

But how do we acquire wisdom in the first place? The reading from Proverbs implies that wisdom is to live in pursuit of the truth. Truth, however, can be a blunt instrument if it is not honed with love. I well remember having an abject dislike my

father's knitted mustard-coloured tie: it didn't suit him at all. I can hear my teenage-self saying "Daddy that tie is revolting!" If only I had had the wit to say lovingly "Daddy, you deserve a better tie, than that one": I'm sure he'd have stopped wearing it a lot sooner! Oh, to have the wisdom of truth personified of God's Son who in his earthly life and ministry became the Way, the Truth and the Life for our salvation.

On-going support

After Christ's ascension to God the Father, he did not leave us without a permanent means of support, as we celebrated last week, the Holy Spirit was given to mentor our faith into all truth. The thing about faith is it's not a one-off acquisition but something that matures with the passage of time. Jesus indicates this in the Gospel telling his disciples that they had many more things to learn but they couldn't bare them then. Only by living through the rough and tumble of life with the Holy Spirit's support do our spiritual horizons expand. Not only do we understand more about ourselves but we begin to see ourselves as God sees us, which is not the same thing. God loves us not when we have become perfect but loves us, to make us perfect so that we may discover the truth of whose we are.

My way or God's way?

To apply wisdom truthfully means living God's truth or we end up doing, as Frank Sinatra's song says, "I did it my way." To have our own identify is a good thing after all God created us as individuals, but living life 'our way' can be self-centred and oblivious to the life of those around us. Living lovingly, like Jesus is living with wisdom. Hence Jesus told his disciples that they would receive the gift of the Spirit of truth. So too, we who are baptised, have received the gift of the Holy Spirit conferred by God the Father through his beloved Son. But like any gift, it is only beneficial if it's used.

The heart of things

When we are confirmed and come to receive communion, this is not merely a weekly re-enactment of the Last Supper. The association of bread and wine, as symbols of Christ's broken body and shed blood are not an end in themselves. In making the once and for all perfect sacrifice for us on the cross he conquered death and sin making our redemption whole. Through the power of love alone, Christ is no longer broken but fully whole and divine. In faith, we come to the altar rail as individuals, however, in receiving communion together, we join with Christ and have a new identity, as his earthly body with him providing the wisdom. At the close of the service we are sent out to share that identity with the world.

Answer

So, to answer my question 'Whose, are we?' In our daily living can we say "Why, God's of course!"

Amen.