Proper 18 (Trinity 13)

A sermon preached by the Rector, the Very Reverend Tim Barker, at the parish church of St Andrew Guernsey on Sunday 6 September 2020[1]

Readings: Romans 13 vv 8-end and Matthew 18 vv 15-20

Today's Gospel reminds us of the good we can do together, and how we can do it. Jesus says, 'Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.' If any group of us will gather, work, act with the Holy Spirit guiding us, with God's spirit intentionally a part of what we do, we become much more than simply the collective number of people we are. Two becomes more than two, and three becomes more than three. The sum of our individual ideas and resources and abilities becomes much more because of the power and the synergy that God's presence provides.

We gather in Jesus' name. We celebrate his continuing presence with us. And that makes him a part of us and of what we do. That is what we experience at each Eucharist, each celebration of the Holy Communion: we are in him and he is in us. But we don't celebrate the Eucharist alone. If only the priest shows up for a service, for instance, there will be no celebration of the Eucharist. There is no community for whom to break bread. This is one of the reasons why I did not celebrate private Eucharists in the rectory during lockdown.

Ours is a faith of community, of twos and threes and fours. Individual faith is important, but we need each other. We act together so we can help one another and so we can work in God's name, thereby multiplying our resources and ability to do what God calls us to do. Our community is the lifeline to the experience of God and to the power of God moving among God's people.

---

[1] A shorter sermon than usual, because the church's Apple Fair followed the morning service