

Trinity Sunday 2026

At the height of the so-called new atheist wave about twenty years ago, Rowan Williams was asked what one question would he ask Richard Dawkins. He reflected on one of Dawkins' own passages describing the universe - not polemical, but lyrical. It was full of wonder: the intricate complexity, the layered beauty, the sheer elegance of things. And Williams' question was simple: *'Does that really suggest nothing to you?'* Because, he said, when you read those words, it doesn't sound like someone merely analysing the universe. *'You're not just describing the universe'* he said, *'you're in love with the universe and where the blazes does that come from?'* ([Rowan Williams on Richard Dawkins](#))

So if you've ever loved someone, imagine being asked to explain all the reasons why you love them. Why do you love your children? Or your spouse? Or your mother? Or your dog? Presumably you could list all the things you like about them; you could tell us how they make you feel, or experiences you've shared, things you have in common - they might be funny or charming or caring. All wonderful things, but if you were really pushed to explain why you love someone, you would likely find that words didn't really capture it. You feel it in moments of tenderness – holding the hand of a loved one coming to the end of their life, or gazing at a newborn baby. People looking for love don't approach potential partners with boxes to tick; words *'fall'* short. Instead we talk about *'falling'* in love - there is a mysterious helplessness to it.

It's the same with art, or music. If you asked someone why they love Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, or Fauré's *Requiem*, or Radiohead's *'Paranoid Android'* - they might run into the same problem. We can talk about colour or skill or harmony or rhythm, but eventually, words run out. These things don't just ask to be analysed - they ask to be entered into. They are mysteries - and they invite us to enter into them, not to explain them away.

And so to Trinity Sunday which has tended to present itself as a trap to the preacher. Visual aids like a three-leafed shamrock or ice, water and steam have probably failed to inspire generations of filled pews. We must resist the temptation to try and explain God. The Trinity is not ultimately a problem which needs to be solved, or a complex formula with which to bamboozle people. The Trinity is above all a mystery. It is the mystery - the mystery of love.

The Church teaches that God is one and undivided. The one God dwells together in relationship in three distinct persons - without any difference or inequality. God is not an object among other objects in the universe. God is relational, and personal. That is the doctrine of the Church. As the Spirit is poured out upon the Church at Pentecost, the Triune God is now fully revealed to humanity - now we know that God desires communion not only within himself, but also with us.

The mystery of love that we encounter in our lives - in our relationships, in the beauty of art and the world around us - all serve as reflections of that greater and more beautiful mystery of God into which we are invited. The heart of the Christian claim isn't simply that God exists, but that God isn't eternal solitude. Before there were galaxies, oceans, life on earth and who else knows where, there is already love: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in perfect communion.

In our gospel reading from Matthew, Jesus commissions the disciples after the resurrection. *'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'*. Our witness to Christ is rooted in the proclamation of this great mystery. The life of the Trinity is not closed off or self-contained. This love is to be shared. That's the life of God into which you have been baptised. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit - not simply as a formula, but as a calling, an invitation into communion.

We can choose to reject this invitation. *'The Christian tradition has always understood sin partly as a kind of inward collapse. Pride curves the soul in upon itself. Envy traps people in comparison and bitterness. Selfishness isolates. Love does the opposite - it moves outward toward another person and, in doing so, enlarges the soul.'*

You can see this in ordinary life. Some people seem emotionally cramped inside themselves, constantly anxious about status, recognition, or control. Then there are people whose presence feels expansive - they make room for others, listen carefully, aren't perpetually defending their own importance. Their lives possess a kind of spiritual hospitality. That's one reason the saints are often so attractive even to those who don't share their faith. Holiness doesn't make them less human. It makes them more fully alive.' (Mark Clavier - [The Deepest Truth Is Love - by Mark Clavier - Well-Tempered](#))

Christianity isn't, at its heart, a system of ideas or a moral code. It's a life lived in this love. And that means the Christian life is always relational. It's why community matters. It's why church isn't just about watching a service online or reading a book on your own. We are made in the image of this God - a God who is not isolation but communion - and we find our joy, not in perfecting ourselves, but in opening ourselves to love. And when that seems too difficult, or too painful, or even too far beyond what we understand - then we are exactly where we need to be. We're not meant to master the mystery. We're meant to surrender to it and let it shape us. So, perhaps the question on Trinity Sunday is not, *'Can you explain God?'* but rather, *'Will you enter into the mystery of love?'* If you do, you'll find something - not necessarily easy answers, but a presence. A stillness. A joy that doesn't need to be explained. *'Remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'* In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.