

## HYMN REFLECTION Malcolm Sturgess

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty*

*Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee*

*Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty, God in three persons, Blessed Trinity!*

*Holy, holy, holy! Though the darkness hide thee*

*Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see*

*Only Thou art holy there is none beside Thee*

*Perfect in power, in love and purity*

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty*

*Oh thy works shall praise Thy name in earth and sky and sea*

*Holy, holy, holy! Merciful and mighty, God in three persons, Blessed Trinity!*

*Oh God in three persons Blessed Trinity!*

In my youth and adolescence, after the musical feast which is Whitsun, Trinity always seemed a bit of an anticlimax, including its drab green altar frontal in place of the tongues of fire. On the other hand, from November to May we had used perhaps 150 of the hymns in the book, leaving 500 or more for the other six months. Some priests could use them well; some hadn't a clue. But there has never, in the 74 years since I first joined a choir, been any doubt as to how Trinity Sunday would begin.

In 2020 do we have to have *Holy, Holy, Holy* yet again, or might it be time for a bit of imagination or "spiritual refreshment"? A chance actually to think afresh about the Trinity? However many times you've chuntered through "casting down their golden crowns around the glassy sea", have you ever understood what you are singing? If not, look up Revelation, Chapter 4, and see if you are any the wiser!

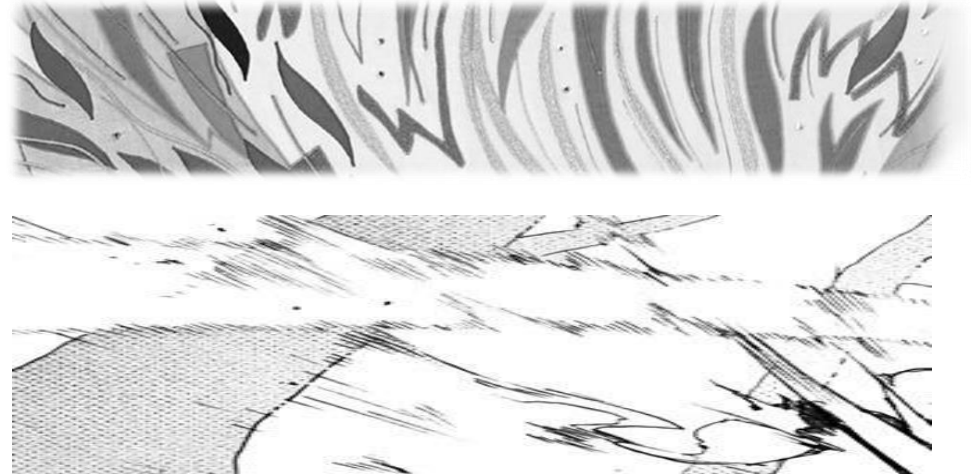
This hymn was specifically written for Trinity Sunday. It is certainly clever, the way he weaves in ten sets of three things. But it is a "marmite" hymn: The HSUSC voted it the greatest hymn of all time; but there is a 21st-century Anglican priest living not a million miles from Salisbury who can't bear it; she was bored by its inevitability, by the tune, and by not understanding the words in her youth. Nobody knew it existed at-all until Bp. Heber's widow found it when she was sorting through his papers after his death. It is a pity the rather solid tune is not in three time, as Bach might well have written it. It would be quite easy to turn *Nicaea* - the usual tune - into three time. Meanwhile we have it as today's hymn. Same as usual. For the 194th time since Mrs. Heber found it - in Calcutta, where the Bishop had gone as Bishop.

If we don't have to have *Holy Holy holy*, we could still remember the missionary Bishop and sing '*I the Lord of sea and sky.*'

## Trinity Sunday

**Isaiah 40 v 12-17, 27-31, 2 Corinthians 13 v 11-13 Matthew 28 v 16-20.**

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."



*'There are two words used a great deal by Jesus in the gospels.*

*One is 'Come' and the other is 'Go'.*

*It is no use coming unless you go.*

*It is no use going unless you come.'*

(Anon- Visions of Faith)

***Here I am, Lord Is it I, Lord?***

***I have heard you calling in the night***

***I will go, Lord If you lead me***

***I will hold your people in my heart.***

(I the Lord of Sea and Sky by Anna Laura Page / Daniel L. Schutte)

### **Go and make disciples!**

Jesus gives all his disciples the same command: "Go and make disciples." The word "Go" is what brought the disciples to Galilee, they had followed the angels command at the resurrection and now they hear Jesus command to "Go" again!

Some of these followers do not have their faith figured out. Some of them still have unanswered questions. Nonetheless, the word is "Go."

Craig Koester writes 'One wonders whether this is a good idea, to have this group of disciples who do not all have their act together going out to make other disciples. Jesus might have been more selective in whom he called and sent. But apparently Jesus sees things differently.'

When we think of the disciples being sent out to 'Go and make disciples' it is easy to think 'Who me?' or 'How me?' It is also easy to think of St. Peter and St. Paul as a comparison and think 'No thanks! They were so good at it, it's not my remit.' Even Paul writes in his letter to the Philippians, that he has not 'taken hold' of all knowledge of Jesus Christ. And we do not know about the many other people who shared their faith both then and now.

The good news is that God works through all of us whoever we are and however much knowledge we have of Christ. And if we feel we need to know more then there is so much we can learn from- the lives of Saints, the wider church community, the online communities of learning and faith.

No one can *make* anyone follow Jesus but we have the promise of Jesus Christ with us. It is God who beckons others to follow his Son Jesus Christ and who can work through us.

So how do we trust this and take action to 'Go' out to others? Perhaps we cannot know in advance the ways God will work through us as a community or individuals but we have to trust and listen to the Holy Spirit's guidance, that Jesus will prove his word and his presence, to be true.

In being active and GOING- We are to make and take opportunities to teach others and we know that Jesus taught in a manner of ways: with questions and answers; with stories; through prayer; through going and doing; in community and in response to individuals. We know the disciples learned by watching, by asking questions, by making mistakes and by knowing Jesus restoration. We also know that whilst the disciples were with Jesus he helped them to learn by sending them out in twos to pray and heal, and to tell people about the kingdom of God.

We also know that whilst Jesus was speaking to his disciples before he died he emphasised that they have even more to learn and promised them the Holy Spirit who would continue instructing them after he has returned to heaven. (John 14 and John 16 v 26)

### **Discipleship**

Rowan Williams explains discipleship into the life of the Spirit as four building blocks:

- a. Self- knowledge. What is keeping me human in my discipleship and ministry? He advises Christians to stand back and give themselves a moment to name feelings, instincts and desires and to ask 'What is this really about?' Discipleship is about seeing ourselves honestly but also lovingly as God does.
- b. Stillness- of body, heart and mind. 'It's not that God isn't there; it's that we aren't. We are all over the place entertaining our fantasies, memories and anxieties. God is there in unending patience saying 'When are you actually going to arrive, when are you going to sit and listen, to stop roaming about and be present?''
- c. Growth- We need to be open to God who continues to call us to new life and not to confuse settling down with something that will not stretch or challenge us. We could ask ourselves how we will allow God to 'have cleared away some of the clutter during my prayer and worship.' We are being pushed, pulled, enlarged, bit by bit and will be gently urged towards a new level of life. (Philippians chapter 3)
- d. Joy- overflow, superabundance. 'Out of a believers heart shall flow rivers of living water.' (John 7 v 38) He writes 'God help us if our impulse is to say 'You can't do that here' or 'Let's go back to the proper channels.'" We are to be joyously open to the new and learn as we share Jesus Christ.

Our diocesan strapline is 'Pray, Serve, Grow.'

- Trust grows gradually. Faith grows intentionally. What could be the first step for you to share your faith with another?
- There are many people asking questions about life and faith as a result of the lockdown perhaps now is a good opportunity to listen and discuss the bigger questions about life with those who you know. Why not try?