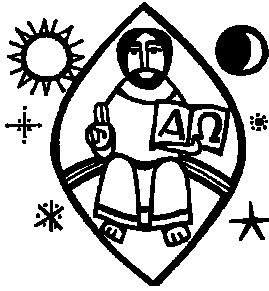


Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity.

This year the month of June sees the three great festivals of the Church Year which conclude the Easter Season; Ascension, Pentecost and Trinity.



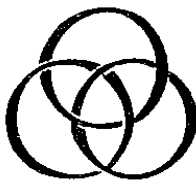
Ascension, celebrated forty days after Easter, recalls St. Luke's story of the resurrected Jesus being parted from his disciples. You can read the story in *Acts 1: 1-12*. The picture language of this separation is put in the spatial concepts of the time, Jesus goes up into the sky and a cloud hides him from sight. Yet behind this lie concepts that exceed the limitations of the language. It is the completion of birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus, who having shared our life with its joys and sorrows takes what it is to be human into what it is to be God. We worship and experience God who knows us better than we know ourselves. *Hebrews 7:25-28* speaks, in the language of a heavenly court, of the exaltation of Jesus, seated at the right hand of God, and interceding for us. It means quite simply that God loves, understands and, in Jesus, has experienced what it is to be human. God is able to relate to us on all the levels of our existence. The language of the Ascension of Jesus "going-up" is also a way of speaking of the necessary parting of Jesus from his first disciples. He is no longer bound in time and space to the Holy Land in the 1st century AD. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus is now present, active and accessible in all time, in places, to all people in all situations. The parting of the Ascension is but a prelude to a greater and fuller communion between Jesus and his followers.

Ascension is celebrated on Sunday 5th June.



Pentecost, celebrated fifty days after Easter, is the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit. In the *Acts 2:1-21* St. Luke speaks of the Spirit in the symbolic language of wind and flame, mysterious, unpredictable elements which can shape, create and destroy. Behind the language lies the concept of the dynamic love of God as a gift to his people. The concept of God alive and active in the life and action of the Church is a sobering thought especially when we look at ourselves! The Church can be the continuation and vehicle of the triumph and victory of the Resurrection. Through the life, worship and sacraments of the Church the Holy Spirit can reach out to touch lives and change worlds. We should, however, be careful not to limit the limitless lest we are tempted to think that the Church is the only sphere of the Holy Spirit's activity.

Pentecost is celebrated on Sunday 12th June. Together with Christmas and Easter, the Church of England teaches that Pentecost is one of the three occasions that all Church Members should receive communion.



Trinity is the Sunday after Pentecost. The tragedy and triumph of God's relationship with creation has taken shape. Through God's interaction with the creation, God is revealed as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, an ultimate mystery whose nature is love. Trinity Sunday is an occasion to worship and adore the God who is poured out in love as creator, redeemer and sanctifier. We may question the how three can be one and one be three but God is by definition beyond our understanding. Surely our response to the Trinitarian revelation of God's love is to love God in return.

Trinity is celebrated on Sunday 19th June.