**26th May 2024**

# Trinity

**"There are, therefore three things: the lover, the beloved and the love."**
St Augustine, *On the Trinity*

I confess that I've never steeped myself in the writings of St Augustine of Hippo. His *Confessions* (which I touched on briefly in college over 50 years ago) is a masterpiece from the end of the fourth century, thirteen books written in Latin, an autobiographical work outlining Augustine's sinful youth and conversion to Christianity. His writings *On the Trinity,* however, were a greater focus in my theology classes, a book which Augustine took twenty years to write, with a text so enormous that it was published in parts. So, today being Trinity Sunday, this is where I begin.

Unlike most of Augustine's other work, *On the Trinity* wasn't written as a defence of Christianity in the face of heresies, but out of his own conviction of the importance of the doctrine. The first half of the work contains Augustine's explanations of the Trinity, while the second half discusses how that image is seen in the human condition – what he calls *Imago Dei,* "In the image of God".

Now, this interests me. So today I'll leave heavy Trinitarian Theology to trinitarian theologians, and concentrate on "the image of God" part – in our common humanity. For tucked away in the depths of Book 9 of *On the Trinity* there is the quote above, which in context reads:

> *When I, who conduct this inquiry, love something, then three things are found: I, what I love, and the love itself … There are, therefore three things: the lover, the beloved and the love.*

This is a trinity I can get my head around, a trinity I know to be true, and – in the face of much wrestling with the Trinitarian doctrine of Father, Son and Holy Spirit – this is a trinity that makes sense in my life. For I know who I am – I know I am capable of love. I know what and whom I love – and I'm given the gift of people's love creating new life in me. And, therefore, I know what love means – for it is a living, quantifiable entity, at the heart of my humanity, which makes my life worthwhile.

So, me as a lover, what and whom I love, and the love itself, is my trinity today. And if God is in that, and if, in my humanity, I'm "in the image of God", that's enough theology to be going on with on Trinity Sunday.

**A prayer for today**

*Love, three ways, my Trinity for today? God is good indeed.*

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