

## Trinity Sunday 2023

“Behold, a door was opened in Heaven.” (Revelation 4.1)

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

A cell is the smallest unit that can live on its own. It consists of the cell membrane which surrounds the cell and controls the substances that go into and out of the cell. Then, there is the nucleus. It is inside the cell and contains the cell's DNA. And then there is the cytoplasm, which is the fluid inside the cell. Cells make up all living organisms and the tissues of the body.

Interestingly, even though they are invisible to the naked eye, and must be examined under a microscope, cells have some lessons to teach us about human behaviour. For example, healthy cells have a specific identity with a purpose. They have a job to do in the body. So, they gravitate towards other cells with the same function to accomplish their mission. On the other hand, unhealthy cells fail to develop an identity and they remain permanently immature.

As part of their design, normal cells communicate with one another. They form networks and systems that contribute to the body's health. On the other hand, unhealthy cells are rogue. They do not communicate or work for the greater good.

As a third characteristic, healthy cells know when to quit; when to turn off for the sake of the body. But unhealthy or malignant cells do not – they reproduce uncontrollably.

In analysing these characteristics and reflecting on how they are like some of our human behaviours, Edwin Friedman made this big statement: “All entities that are destructive to other entities share one major characteristic: they are not capable of self-regulation.” (repeat) In other words, they do not have the capacity for empathy. They are not concerned with the needs and feelings of others. They are selfish.

For instance, a rogue cell that reproduces uncontrollably is invasive. It takes over the space of other cells. So do some people! It seems that their only purpose is to quench their own thirst and satisfy their own hunger, and they disregard everyone and anyone who gets in the way of that. As Friedman points out, it is precisely this behaviour, in combination with the other negative characteristics, that creates the regressive process we have come to call cancer. These unhealthy cells of which we speak are malignant.

But hold on, there is good news! On the other side from the malignant cell there is the healthy cell. There is the healthy, empathetic heart! There is the heart, open to the Holy Spirit; the heart that wants to reach out. The heart that seeks what is true and holy. The heart that wants to build up rather than tear down. The heart that desires unity, not isolation. The heart that remembers, restores, loves and lifts up. The patient, long-suffering heart. The heart that dispels fear and brings reassurance. The heart of God the Holy Trinity revealed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is the heart which St. John encountered in his vision of heaven as described in today's Lesson. He wrote, “Behold a door was opened in Heaven: and the first voice which I heard was as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, ‘Come up here, and I will show you things which must be hereafter.’” It was the Voice of

Love Himself, extending an invitation. The Holy and Almighty One demonstrating concern for the mere mortal. The Creator with His loving eye on the creature. That Voice was of the Mysterious and Everlasting God reaching down to give reassurance and hope of the new life.

The first Article of Religion on page 699 underlines the motive behind God's invitation to St. John. It says:

"There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in the Unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

The words "the Maker and Preserver of all things" that underline why God spoke to St. John. God, the Holy Trinity, not only has made all things but He wants to preserve all things. He wants to lift up, redeem and save. In fact this is so deep in His Heart – this is so completely Who God is – that He sent His Son to suffer and to die as our Sin-bearer.

The thing is, God's desire to lift up our sinful, fallen humanity comes from His infinite goodness. As the Trinity, God is Three Divine Persons united as One. I would like to repeat that: as the Trinity, God is Three Divine Persons united as One. The Lord God is a Mystery that we cannot understand; nevertheless, as the Great Three in One, His very Being speaks to us about how we should live. His very Being speaks to us about His design for His creation, and it has everything to do with unity; but not just any unity. Rather, an eternal unity that is perfectly founded in the Truth and Righteousness of God the Holy Trinity.

The Lord Jesus prayed this for His disciples on the night before His Crucifixion. He said, "O Father...that they may be one; just as I am with Thee, that they also may be one with us." (St. John 17. 21) And then in following through on His prayer, the Lord Jesus went to be mocked and falsely accused and killed for us.

Following His Resurrection, He sent His Spirit to dwell in the Church, and in each believer. And as a sign of this mystical Union between Himself and His Church, the Lord gave us the holy estate of Matrimony wherein a man and woman are joined together – united in heart, mind, soul and body as one, in one life.

It is amazing – and yet I should not be surprised at all – that the Goodness, Love and Unity of God, and the characteristics which flow from His Heart – the patience, compassion, sacrifice – are imprinted in the smallest building blocks of His Creation. Even cells – invisible to our naked eye – carry the mark of the Creator and speak to us about His nature AND His plan of salvation. Healthy cells gain an identity and carry out a purpose for the good of the body. They communicate and co-operate. Malignant cells – which were never part of God's creation – are a result of Adam and Eve's disobedience. They are destructive and do not have the capacity to self-regulate. As an invasive organism, they reproduce uncontrollably.

We are like these malignant cells; but by His Spirit, God the Holy Trinity offers us redemption. Through the Blood of Christ, He calls out to us, offering to lift us up and save us, and give us new life. He offers to lead us from the isolation of our sin into union with Himself, (from darkness into Light); transforming us into the healthy cells – the children of God – He has created us to be.

And now Unto God Almighty: the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost...