

Talk 1: The mystery of God (Sermon slide)

Penguin – “Hello”

Oh, hello! Who are you? “Penguin”. Yes, silly question. What are doing here? “Needed somewhere cool and the heating’s off.” Ah, well, you’re very welcome.

Today is Trinity Sunday...

Penguin – “*What’s that?*”

It’s the day when we think about the nature of God – how God is 3 persons in one form.

Penguin – “*What’s that?*”

The idea that we have Father, Son & Holy Spirit, but just one God. You don’t get it? Oh, it’s easy, there are loads of examples to help explain it!

Shamrock – 3 leaves in one! (**shamrock slide**)

Penguin – “*So God is a mixed leaf salad?*”

No, not quite. Let’s try another...

An egg! 3 parts – shell, white and the yolk! – 3 parts, but one egg! (**egg slide**)

Penguin – “*So one nice part, one bit you can just about stomach if you eat it quickly and one bit to throw away?*”

No, no, no...right let’s just try one more...**H2O!** God is like H2O! (**H2O slide**) – H2O can be liquid as water, vapour as mist and solid as ice! But all H2O! Three in one!

Penguin – “*OK, now I get it – you can drown in God, lose your way in God or He can just leave you cold!*”

Agh! This is tricky. Is there no easy way to explain what God is?

(Penguin shakes head)

What's that Penguin? There is no easy way?! So how can we explain to people? (*Penguin whispers*) "**Show them**".

Ah ha! the best way to help people understand what God is, is by showing them?

Brilliant Penguin! I owe you a fish! That's absolutely the case. (**Slide – revealing God**)

At the heart of a life of faith is a commitment to take what we have seen in Jesus and make it known, not through words alone – words that so often mean very little to our western culture – but through our actions. When we show people what our faith inspires in us, then they are much more likely to understand what we mean by "God" and perhaps even want to find out more for themselves.

Words without actions mean little, but actions without love can be equally impotent. Referencing the Bible or going to church doesn't show the heart of the Christian faith. Nor does waving a Bible

around, even outside a church, even if you have great power and influence. If you're not living out the love that stands at the heart of the Christian faith, then such gestures count for nothing.

Shall we hear our first reading?

Reading: Isaiah 40: 12-17, 27-31

Talk 2: The nature of God

Penguin – "*That was a long one!*"

Yes, but don't worry, the next one is very short!

Penguin – "*So what was that reading all about?!*"

Well, it's a reading about the nature of God (yellow slide)– the prophet Isaiah is wondering why God would ever need to engage with us. Perhaps even more so, why he would ever need to create anything beyond Himself. You see, if God needed us for anything, then he would be dependent on us to some extent, and that would make him, well, not God!

God is completely self-sufficient and yet, as God, by definition, is love, he cannot help but share his nature. Creation is the overflowing of God's love. And when we accept and receive this, then we become a part of this nature ourselves.

As the reading says (**eagle slide**) *"...those who wait upon God get fresh strength. They spread their wings and soar like eagles, they run and don't get tired, they walk and don't lag behind."*

The Trinity shows that God is all about relationship (**brown slide**) – the three as one, fluid and yet together, revealing the great mystery of God's love, but also inviting us to join in with that relationship.

And how do we join in? By connecting with each aspect – with God the Father as creator, marvelling and giving thanks and praise for the joy of creation; with God the Son, following in His perfect ways, loving our neighbours and even our enemies; with God the Holy Spirit, inviting God to move us, to

occupy us, even now, and asking for inspiration to work for a world filled with justice and peace.

Penguin – *"Didn't Jesus say something about us going out into the world to share these gifts?"*

Indeed, he did! Clever Penguin! And we're now going to hear that reading...

Reading: Matthew 28: 17-20

Talk 3: The great commission

Penguin – *"That's a better length for a reading! Are you going to talk again now?!"*

Only briefly O patient one!

These are Jesus's final words in Matthew's gospel, spoken as he departs from this world and returns to the Father and just before the gift of the Spirit inspires and changes the disciples at Pentecost.

This is after the resurrection and we might expect all those who have gone to see the risen Jesus to be

willing to do whatever he asked, but we're told that even then, some doubted.

Responding to Jesus, it seems, has always required some faith, but for those who do respond, Jesus assures them that he will never leave them. If they teach and implement Jesus's commandments, then they will always have Him with them – God will always be there. (**Latin slide**)

Again, as we heard in the music at the beginning of our service “**Ubi caritas et amor, deus ibi est**” – “Where there is charity and love, God is there...”

And the same promises apply to us today, as attested by the billions who have followed in the way of Christ. If we accept God's free invitation to embrace his nature, his loving, inclusive, relational nature, then we will get fresh strength to work in this world. Whenever we seek to mirror Jesus's pursuit of justice, of forgiveness, of compassion, of love for all people - irrespective of race or gender

or sexuality or background - then the Spirit works in us to do God's will. (**Go slide**)

We are all invited to accept God's love, revealed through the example of the Son, and then work to make this known in the world through the gift of the Spirit. That is our calling in our homes, our neighbourhoods, our workplaces, wherever we speak or act or carry influence in any way.

Without doubt, our world needs healing, a lot of healing, and that will not be found in the outworking of power, pride and aggression, but in the ways of gentleness, humility and love.

Amen