

## Trinity Tuesdays

### What is prayer?

19 January 2021

Who are we as human beings? <sup>1</sup>

- We are part of God's creation, made in the image of God.
- We are free to make choices: to love, to create, to reason, and to live in harmony with creation and with God.
- From the beginning, we have misused our freedom and made wrong choices.
- We rebel against God and put ourselves in the place of God.
- God first helped us by revealing God's very self and will
  - through nature and history,
  - through many seers and saints,
  - through the prophets of Israel.

What have we learned about God through the revelation to Israel? <sup>2</sup>

- We have learned that there is one God, who is the creator of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
- We have learned that the universe is good, that it is the work of a single loving God who creates, sustains and directs it.
- We have learned that the universe belongs to its creator; and that we are called to enjoy it and to care for it in accordance with God's purposes.
- We have learned that all people are worthy of respect and honour, because we are all created in the image of God, and all can respond to the love of God.

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<sup>1</sup> 'Human Nature' in *The Book of Common Prayer* 1979, 845.

<sup>2</sup> 'God the Father' in *The Book of Common Prayer* 1979, 846.

Every human being has a spirituality.<sup>3</sup>

- Augustine of Hippo called this our *ordo amoris*, the ordering of our loves.
  - What do we cherish?
  - What do we most desire?
  - What is the treasure stored in the core of our being?
  - Our spirituality is not what we profess to believe but how we order our loves [cf. Butler Bass re belonging, behaving, believing].
- There are secular spiritualities:
  - Consumerism
  - Avoidance of pain
  - Seduction of violence
  - Temptation to passivity
- Christian spirituality is that what we want and what we love is God.
  - Christian spirituality is shaped
    - by loving God with all our heart, soul and mind, and
    - by loving our neighbour as ourselves.
    - The order is important because our spirituality is
      - contemplative and
      - active,
      - because it is lived in the midst of relationships
        - with God and
        - with those around us.
- Christian spirituality is practical, earthed and real because it is the way we live out our professed 'beliefs', our professed *ordo amoris*.
  - It is reflected in our relationship with creation.
  - It is reflected in our relationship our own deepest selves [cf. Socrates via Plato – 'Know thyself'].

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<sup>3</sup> Guenther, *The Practice of Prayer* 1998, 7-12.

What is prayer? <sup>4</sup>

- “The secret of prayer is hunger for God. The will to pray is the essence of prayer.” Thomas Merton
- God calls out to every human heart and longs to make a home in every human heart. But God waits for us to respond.
- 1 Samuel 3.1-10
- We learn to pray by praying.
- Using set prayers is one of the best ways to get started.
- The Lord’s Prayer

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<sup>4</sup> Cottrell, *Prayer* 2020, 7-13.