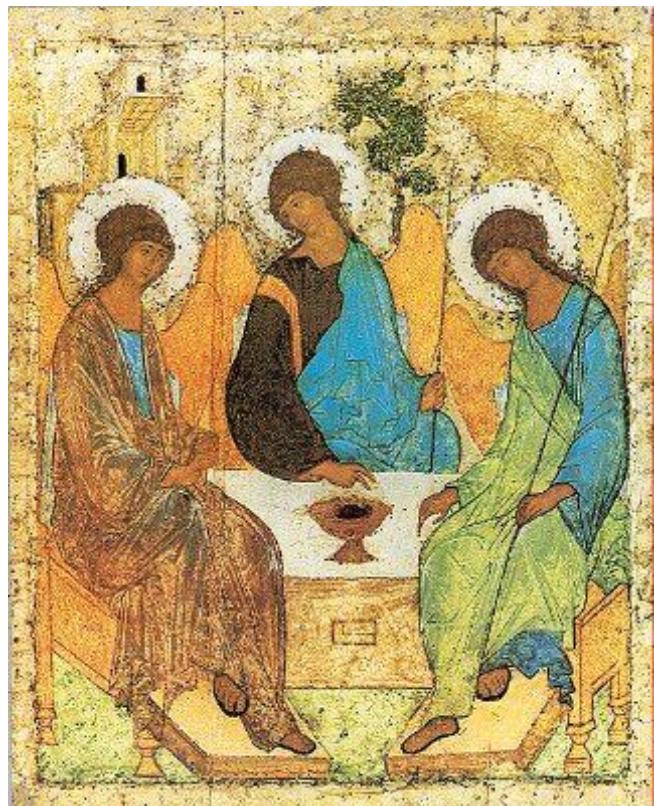


A reflection on Rublev's Icon of the Trinity (c1410)

Adapted from http://wellsprings.org.uk/rublevs_icon/beloved.htm © 200X Wellspring



The icon depicts the three angels who visited Abraham at the Oak of Mamre – but is often interpreted as an icon of the Trinity.

The figures can be enclosed in a circle. What might this tell us about the life of the Trinity?



All the figures wear a blue garment - the colour of the heavens... but each wears something that speaks of their own identity - A blue robe speaking of divinity - A green robe representing new life.

- The Spirit -

If you can, spend time gazing at leaves against a blue sky. Reflect on the link between what you see and the figure in the icon....

The Spirit touches the table - earthing the divine life of God. Reflect on that touch and its meaning for the life of the world..."Lord, You are holy indeed, the fountain of all holiness"...



Behind the figure is a mountain. Mountains are places where people often encountered God - where heaven and earth seem to touch. Moses met God on mountains. Jesus was transfigured on a mountain. Reflect on your own "mountain top" experiences - times when you have felt very close to God - when you have felt transfigured and filled with the Spirit....

Elijah could not find God in the earthquake, the wind or the fire on the mountain but in the still small voice. When have you been aware of the presence of the dynamic stillness which is the Spirit within you?

The Spirit inclines - drawing our gaze to the central figure - representing Christ. The figure wears the blue of divinity. The brown garment speaks of the earth - of His humanity. The gold stripe speaks of kingship.

- The Christ -



Reflect on the form of kingship being represented here... The Christ figure rests two fingers on the table - laying onto it His divine and His human nature. He points to a cup filled with wine... What does this represent?

Behind the figure is a tree. This could be the oak tree at Mamre where the three angelic visitors rested. The hospitality of Abraham and Sarah was rewarded in the gift of a son. What does this tell us of the importance of hospitality? The tree may also represent the Cross - the tree on which Jesus died.

The tree of death which becomes the tree of eternal life - lost to humanity by the disobedience of Adam and Eve - restored to us by the obedience of Jesus. Reflect on the paradox of the Cross - the place where death and life confront each other - where death gives way to resurrection and eternal life.

In Revelation the tree of life bears twelve kinds of fruit - one for each month of the year. And the leaves of this tree are for the healing of the nations... What is the promise here - waiting to be fulfilled?

The Christ figure in turn inclines towards the figure on the left -and we are drawn to gaze there too. A figure at rest within itself. The blue garment almost hidden by a shimmering - ethereal robe.

- The Father -

The One who is Creator who cannot be seen by His human creatures. Both hands clasp the staff. All authority in heaven and on earth belong to the Father. What kind of authority do you find in the figure in the icon?



Behind the figure is a house the dwelling place of God. "In my Father's House are many mansions - I go to prepare a place for you..." What is the promise for you in these words of Jesus?

The three figures can be enclosed in a circle but they are not closed in upon themselves. There is an open-ness. They are turned towards the one looking at the icon - drawing them into their relationship. Imagine yourself being drawn into that relationship. What does this tell you of the love that God as Trinity has for you?