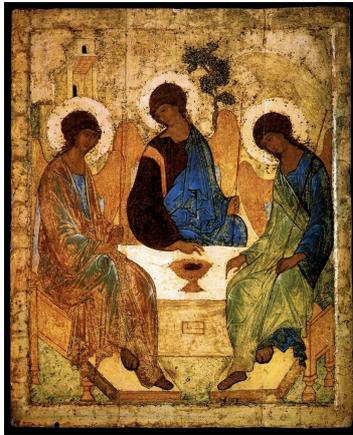


Prayer Exercise for Session 4

The Icon of the Trinity



This exercise is best done in small groups. The listening groups are the natural place with the Group Enabler leading the reflection using the points below. Obviously it is necessary to have a copy of the painting for each group.⁶

This painting speaks powerfully of the relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. There is much for the viewer to ponder, all we offer is twenty minutes, with some simple prompts for attention and reflection. As in all these exercises, the aim is to let God speak through it, rather than telling people what God is saying. Time needs to be given between the prompts for this reflection.

- Spend time with picture, let yourself be aware of the figures and their sense of each other
- The colours of their clothing helps identify the figures. All have a blue garment – blue in icons indicates divinity. The green of the figure on the right indicates growth – the work of the Holy Spirit. The gold on the other two indicates royalty. The brown of the middle figure is the colour of earth – indicating Christ.
- Behind each figure is a symbol of who they are.
- Behind the figure on the left – a house, ‘In my Father’s house are many rooms’ (John 14.2)
- There is a tree behind the centre figure ‘He himself bore our sins on the tree’ 1 (Peter 2.24)
- The figure on the right has a mountain behind – indicating the place of encounter with God, for instance Jesus at the transfiguration.
- Notice the sense of their relationship – their figures form a circle of loving support – around the ‘cup of salvation’
- There is a space in the front of the circle – a space for the viewer to join the circle
- Let yourself be drawn into this place – of receiving the loving welcome of God
- Stay with this until you feel you want to move on.

Give all but the last few minutes as space to be with the picture.

Near the end of the time encourage the group to make some notes of their experience.

Then offer the Window on God exercise to take away for further reflection on how they have experienced God in their lives.

The Icon of the Trinity was painted by 15th Century Russian Iconographer, Rublev. It was painted around 1410 and is probably the most famous Icon in the world.

It depicts the three angels who visited Abraham at the Oak of Mamre (Genesis 18.1-15) - but is often interpreted as an icon of the Trinity. It is sometimes called the icon of the Old Testament Trinity.

The image is full of symbolism - designed to take the viewer into the Mystery of the Trinity.

Icons can be understood as ‘windows on God’. They are to be looked through, the images intended to help the viewer see beyond the picture to engage with the reality of God.