



# ST. STEPHEN'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

11856 MAYS CHAPEL RD., TIMONIUM, MD 21093

Trinity Sunday, June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014

✠ *In the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
And of the Holy Ghost. AMEN* ✠

My first automobile was a 1928 Austin Seven. It was billed as “an occasional two seater” – a description that was only apt if you could persuade two folks with a death wish to ride in the rumble seat. It had only a modest 15,000 miles on the clock when I paid a princely £15 (about 50 bucks back then) to its original owner, who’d just been banned from driving.

There was no starter motor so you had to hand crank the engine to get it running. Its drip feed fuel tank – conveniently lodged behind the dashboard – meant the only way to go up any sort of a hill was in reverse. Instead of an alternator, the electricity to run the engine was generated by a dynamo. And while it generally worked pretty well, it had one major drawback: If you took your foot off the gas pedal, the lights went out.

Driving at night was, thus, a hairy business. If you wanted to see where you were going you had to drive flat out all the time – even when going round corners. But as the steering had a marked tendency to wander, and road holding seems to have been a totally alien concept to its designers, its top speed of 45 miles an hour felt like dicing with death.

Yet despite all of my little Austin’s faults, flaws and drawbacks – and my own lack of mechanical aptitude – I understood that machine completely. I could replace a cylinder head gasket in a trice. An oil change – whether for engine, gearbox, or rear differential – was simply a piece of cake, as was tuning the

carburetor and adjusting the points. Indeed, I could completely rewire the thing in an afternoon.

The same can’t be said of my current automobile. Open the hood and I’m confronted with a great slab of what appears to be sculpted aluminum. I can’t even see where the spark plugs go – assuming it has spark plugs, of course. There are electric leads, but I have absolutely no idea of what sort of thing they are connected to or what it does. And there is no sign of a carburetor. And while I am well aware it has a turbocharger that makes it go extremely fast, the principles behind it entirely elude me.

The same is true of many other things in my life. As a boy I built a number of radio receivers called “crystal sets.” A friend and I even put together a more up-to-date radio using good old-fashioned vacuum tube technology. But I wouldn’t know where to begin when it comes to maintaining my computer. In fact even a modern fuse box is a bit of a puzzle.

Today’s machinery is infinitely more complex than it was 50 years ago. Indeed things are so complicated nobody can so much as contemplate mastering every single aspect of the technology we rely on a daily basis. True, some folks can come much closer to it than others, but close is by no means the same as mastery.

But truth to tell, we don't need to understand, still less master, the technology we rely on daily. We do not need to understand fully how our automobiles and computers work. It is enough for us to know there are people who do and that they will take care of our cars and electronics as the need arises.

What on earth, you might ask, does all this have to do with Trinity Sunday, the Feast of the Church we are celebrating today. The fact of the matter is there is distinct parallel between today's complex technology and infinite complexity of the Holy, Blessed and Undivided Trinity.

Just as we have no need to understand today's technology to use and enjoy it, so we have no need to understand the infinitely complicated nature and relationships involved in the Holy Trinity in order to accept God and relate to him. Yet the Trinitarian nature of God – the three divine persons sharing one divine nature – is still a major stumbling block for many people today in coming to terms with the Christian faith.

But, then it always has been so. A number of our Founding Fathers were, for instance, entirely comfortable with the concept of an intelligence, a God, behind creation. Yet they found it hard to accept God as Trinitarian being. Read the first three chapters of Genesis, however, and it should come as no surprise the heresy called Unitarianism was a product of the so-called Enlightenment.

The very idea that the tiny finite minds of even the most intelligent among us could grasp so much as an inkling of God's infinite, all-powerful and eternal intellect is quite outlandish. The Jews – no slouches when it comes to brainpower, and whose forebears actually met God face to face in the Wilderness – struggled unsuccessfully with the conundrum for 1,500 years prior to the coming of Christ.

Aristotle – one of the most intelligent, if not the most intelligent, human beings that have ever walked the earth – conducted a lengthy intellectual investigation into the question of whether or not God exists. His conclusion was

that most certainly he does, but that he is so vastly different from us, the only way we can get an inkling of what he is like is for him to reveal himself to us.

Greek intellectuals were enthralled by his thesis. And, thus, some 300 years after Aristotle's death, when St. Paul visited Athens' University he found the faculty and students had erected an altar to Aristotle's Unknown God.

Paul, an intellectual educated in both the Rabbinic and Greek traditions, was not a man to miss an opportunity. "Men of Athens," he declared, "I see you have an altar to the Unknown God. I can now reveal him to you in the person of Jesus Christ."

And it is Jesus who is the key to understanding the nature of the Trinity; not in all its complexity, of course, but in the very essence of the divine, in the most important aspect of it. God, Jesus tells us, is love. Not that he loves, but that he actually **IS** love. Indeed, it is only because God's very essence is love that the three persons of the Trinity are able to share their One nature.

In his First Epistle to the Corinthians St. Paul explains something that we, in the arrogance of this materialistic age of ours, find hard to accept. It is not necessary for us in this world to know what makes God tick in any technical or scientific sense. One day we will know, but then we will know everything else as well, so it won't matter.

All we in this world need to know is this: God created us because he loves us, and so that we can love and enjoy him. What's more, God is in control at all times and, because he loves us, what ever happens to us – good or bad – he will, if we allow him, ultimately make it turn out for the very, very best. The Beatles, you see, had it right. Love is, actually, all you need. *AMEN.*

***To the Only Wise God, Our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, Both Now and Forever. AMEN.***