

Views from the Pews - Explaining Mysteries

As I sit writing this, it is the week before Trinity Sunday, The Trinity is one of the great mysteries of Christendom, appearing to contradict every law of physics and every experience we have tucked away in our logical minds, or explored in our most imaginative fantasies. To try and understand the mysteries, writers constantly resort to investigating them and decoding their meanings by using familiar images, kete full of ideas and information. A kete priest in sandals is humble, with glasses intelligent, in full robes clearly the servant of God, in civvies indistinguishable. The adornments become part of the unmistakable kete definition of priest, Each kete/image is something we see, or something we read, which connects to our own experience.

The Trinity is the ultimate Christian mystery. John says (1 John 5.7) “...There are three that testify in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit **and these three are one...**”. (My bolding) and in that single word, 'one', lies the key.

Now life becomes a little precarious, as some readers may see the following kete/image as facetious, even sacrilegious. For most humans, images based on everyday and universal functions such as sleeping, talking, greeting, eating, are understood more easily than quantum physics. It occurred to me after an intense Cathedral morning tea discussion about shortbread and how it was invented in Scotland as a portable lunch to replace a piece of cold porridge, sheds its own light on our mystery. There are real historical truths about the development of shortbread, one of which is that there are only three essential ingredients – flour; the strong father element, sugar; the sweetness brought with the Word in a loving relationship, and butter; the element which magically turns all three into one, whole and inseparable. It is a very simple way of unlocking the Holy Trinity for new, as well as ageing and traditional Christians. Just as shortbread is a mystery which is greater than the mere sum of its parts (just try eating flour without the other two) so is the Holy

Trinity. We do not need to be bakers or chefs to experience the joy of shortbread. Neither do we need to be semanticists and philologist intellectuals to know that ideas and promises carried in the kete we call the Holy Trinity, work for us, even if we never solve the mystery of their genesis.

Sam Edwards