



Society of Holy Trinity

A collaboration of Anglican New Monastic Communities

Our Rhythm of Life



At the heart of the project is the recognition that with God, the Holy Trinity, “community is the deepest and most foundation reality that exists” (Leonardo Boff). Therefore, being part of an intentional Christian community enables us to meet our longing to deepen our relationship with God, with one another, and the wider world into which God leads us. It provides an alternative way of life in a culture that is dominated by individualism and consumerism.

The Society for the Holy Trinity is made up of communities who are pursuing the religious life, that is a life of 'wholeheartedly following Christ, setting the Gospel into practice'. This vocation is common to all its members, who pray that by offering their lives in this way they might become a resource and treasure that enriches the whole life of the church. The Society feels called to particularly express this life in the city and in urban settings, praying that it might be a sign of the New Jerusalem, showing forth the light of Christ to all. The Society is called to express its life as a service to and for the Church, in parishes and in deaneries, seeking to be servants of the servants.



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1. Introduction and Background

The Society of the Holy Trinity was first instituted as a female monastic order, one of the first to be reconstituted back into the Church of England as part of the Oxford Movement in the Nineteenth Century. These brave women literally had a fight for the right to begin this order, with famous participants such as Florence Nightingale amongst others. Unfortunately, the Society was also one of the first of the Anglican Religious Communities to end in the latter part of the twentieth century.

In honour of this important story, we seek to reconstitute this important Society to be an umbrella organization to support and encourage the growth of small contextual new monastic communities and will seek permission from the Advisory Council for Religious Communities of the Church of England, for the Society to become a formally Acknowledged Religious Community of the Church of England.

This Rhythm of Life (ROL) seeks to articulate the disciplines, promises, commitments, charisms and theological precepts of this renewed Society of the Holy Trinity. It is an expectation that all constituent communities will commit to these disciplines, promises, commitments, charisms and theological precepts as an articulation of their own local rhythms of life.

This ROL document and the Constitution of the Society are the key authoritative instruments of the renewed Society.

The ROL and Constitution define a number of different spaces of belonging, reflecting the different expectations and practices of the Society. The disciplines listed below reflect the seasonal vows which are the expected commitments to be made for those in the Professed Space of Belonging. The promises are the commitments expected to be made for those who are Participants and Associates. The commitments are those expectations for those seeking to be Companions to the Society and local constituent communities. For more information on these differing spaces of belonging, see the Constitution of the Society.



2. The Disciplines

Communities belonging to the Society of the Holy Trinity are expected to include the following disciplines for those seeking to commit to these Seasonal Vows.

Those in the professed 'space of belonging' will be expected to affirm these disciplines as Seasonal Vows.

- **Prayer and Devotion**

"Jesus was praying in a certain place, and after he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray...'" Luke 11:1

We seek as Communities and as Individuals to commit to:

The practice of prayer (in listening and in stillness; in silence and aloud; individually and in community; daily and within a weekly rhythm).

The practice of devotion (in meditation; in contemplation; in leading and participating in communal worship; and in the giving of time and resources).

Each community has a rhythm of daily prayer in common (which may include the Anglican Offices of Morning, Mid-day and Evening Prayer and Compline). Each community is encouraged to include in their rhythm of prayer, space and time for individual and corporate spiritual exercises (which may include contemplation, Examen, Lectio Divina). Members of the Society are expected to receive the Eucharist regularly.

Communities are encouraged to enable members, together or as individuals, to make regular retreats, to make pilgrimage, to receive spiritual direction/accompaniment from outside the community. This can include counselling and therapy support if required.



- Reconciliation and Learning

“Then Peter came and said to him, ‘Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.’
Matthew 18

“For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them ... truly, I tell you, whoever receives one whom I send receives me; and whoever receives me receives him who sent me.” John 13:13-16, 20

We seek as Communities and as Individuals to commit to:

The practice of learning (in dialogue; in biblical and personal reflection; in reading and study; in spiritual direction and retreats; and in the understanding of prayer practices).

The practice of reconciliation (by listening to God and to others; by continually choosing to forgive; by sharing hope and love; and through humility and peace-making).

We seek to be communities of forgiveness. Faithful to one another even when we mess up, as we are on lifetime a lifetime of conversion. ‘Seek wisdom while she may be found’. Refusal to see learning as simply knowledge, but a seeking after wisdom and a common sharing, that feeds our whole selves, and our communities, that shapes our heart, mind and soul.

We desire spend time studying together and apart. Most especially the scriptures and also learning from the Mothers and Fathers of the Church (particularly St Benedict, St Ignatius, St Clare and St Francis). Seeking to learn from one another, and from the communities that make up the Society of the Holy Trinity. As well as those writers, poets, artists today who speak, write and image Divine love. Seeking ‘treasures old and treasures new’ that we might ‘renew the face of the earth.’



- Service and Hospitality

“So if anyone is in Christ, they are a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. As servants of God we have commended ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, riots, labours, sleepless nights, hunger; by purity, knowledge, patience, kindness, holiness of spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute.” 2 Corinthians 5 and 6.

We seek as Communities and as Individuals to commit to:

The practice of serving others (by responding in compassionate action to the social, spiritual and ecological needs of our neighbours, the voiceless, the poor and the excluded).

The practice of hospitality (by welcoming the stranger, the isolated and the lonely; through preparing and sharing food; by celebrating and lamenting together; and by being the guest of others).

We desire to serve those areas in which we live. Recognising that Christ welcomes all, and Christ is All in All. Seeking to be obedient to the will of God and the call on our lives and our communities, recognising that Christ ministered to those who were poor, excluded and marginalised, seeking together to build the Kingdom of God. We commit to sharing our material resources with those in need, to regular tithing to the church and to other charitable endeavours, and to sacrificial giving of our time and energies.

We affirm the Anglican marks of mission to: proclaim the good news of the Kingdom; to teach, baptise and nurture new believers; to respond to human need by loving service; to transform unjust structures of society; to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation; to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.



- Work and Wellbeing

“That is why we labour and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, and especially of those who believe.” 1 Timothy 4:10

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” Matthew 11:28-30

We seek as Communities and as Individuals to commit to:

The practice of following Christ in our work (by seeking to serve God through our work, and by integrating the values of our faith in our places of work).

The practice of maintaining our wellbeing (by receiving the love of God; by balancing work, rest and play; by pursuing activities that give life; by seeking the good, the true and the beautiful in all we do).

We are called to do ordinary things beautifully, to see work as a sanctuary, to recognise the beauty of God in the world. Our vocation is to see God in our work in the world, for prayer and work are mirrors of one another, each deepening our faith and relationship with God. Out of prayer and learning come the challenges of discerning where God is calling you. We desire that our faith is rooted in living practically, especially in seeking justice and understanding injustice. To see Christ and faith in others informs our way of life and our ongoing conversion.

At the heart of the Christian faith is the New Commandment of Jesus (Luke 10:27) which Abbot Jamieson summarised as learning to receive the love of God, to learn to like or even love yourself, to be able to love others. Wellbeing then lies at the heart of the Christian understanding of the New Commandment. This is at the heart of a Christian understanding of wellbeing.



3. The Promises for Participants & Associates

For Participants

Are those who are committing to following Jesus Christ but not ready yet to commit to the Seasonal Vows because of pressures of work or other issues that prevent regular weekly participation in the worship, mission and community life of the community.

As Participants we commit to praying or meditating once a day, to participating in the worship, mission and shared life of the Community when we are able, and to supporting the work of the Community through intercessory prayer and financial tithe.

For Associates

Are those who live at a distance from the community, who support the community in prayer and financial support, and attend events when able.

As Associates we commit to praying or meditating once a day, to pray for the community from afar, and where possible visit the Community when we can, and support the community by financial tithe.

4. The Commitments for Companions

Companions are those who are spiritually journeying with the community who aspire to live to some of the charisms of the community but are not yet ready to commit to being a follower of Jesus Christ.

As Companions we commit to travelling with the constituent new monastic community local to us, to explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus through dialogue, spiritual exploration, loving service to the poor, meals and other social activities.



5. The Charisms of the Society

Charisms seek to name the unique calling and vocation that we believe the Holy Spirit is calling us as a Society to focus, these include:

Called to be in the city: So many images of Christian life often depict country pastoral scenes, outside the city, outside of urban life. Yet biblical trajectory of the city and urban life is from the great fallen city of Babylon to the redeemed city of the New Jerusalem. We are called to be the antithesis of so much city and urban living, often isolated individualism, where you are unknown and anonymous. We desire to be a community where you are truly known and truly know people.

Seeking to re-enchant the city: within our cities and urban life is a secular disenchantment with life, the material world if so often seen as simply something to be used. We desire to bring the material back to life, through the ritual in our liturgy, and using our bodies in prayer. At the heart of worship is mystery, reflected in our liturgy; our use of incense and icons, in our movement and our desire to reflect the beauty and majesty of God. For all of who we are and the whole of creation speaks of the glorious mystery of God. Beauty, mystery and enchantment are linked. Our singing and the rhythm of the liturgical year all reflect this interplay. For “he who sings prays twice” said Augustine.

A unified & welcoming community: our city of London can be an inhospitable place, unwelcoming and excluding. We desire to be a place for all, where together we co-create, co-curate a vision of the life of the Church which filters out into a vision of the life of humanity in the city. This will disrupt established norms and conventions as people encounter something of the fullness of Christ who is in all and draws all together. We do not find our unity in conformity, for to question, doubt and disagree are all signs of growing in maturity. We do not reconcile ourselves; we are reconciled in and through Christ.

A learning Community that desires to be stretched: we seek to develop life and faith together, not to be left on one’s own. Learning to communicate, our story, our song, our rhythm and those precious gifts of faith that have been passed on to us. “Bringing forth treasures old and treasures new”



(Matthew 13). We desire to allow God to grow in us something strong and beautiful, an abundance, an enough, that we wish to share. Our ROL provides safety for us to do this. We desire to resist seeing learning as achievement, and strive to learn as a growing in wisdom and holiness.

Offering food for the soul: We desire to offer worship that enables the whole person and whole community to encounter the riches of God, that deepens our relationships with God and one another. We desire that our worship allows space to feel and to think and makes explicit the interconnectedness of the rational and the emotional. We recognise that the Eucharist is the very heart of our worshipping life, where we encounter the grace and goodness of God. St Ignatius speaks of worship as a resting in the being of God.

6. Theological Principles of the Society

- **The Revelation of God**

“Our God is gracious and compassionate, abounding in love and slow to anger” Psalm 145

God is ever present, sustaining the whole of creation, all things, created and uncreated. Even when all things are stripped away God is with us. God is the foundation of all things, from whom we receive light and wisdom. God is faithful to us, present even in the darkness and at the darkest of times. In Christ we see the fullness of God and all things are gathered up in Christ who is All in All.

We acknowledge that our faith in God develops over time, over the whole course of our lives. Simplistic models of God give way to ever-deeper visions of God, emerging out of our lives and our interaction with one another and the whole of creation.

Faith does not grasp after certainty, we can all be disillusioned with certainty, disillusioned with too many words and ideas. God is not the object of our study or knowledge but the gift-giver, the source and author of all. To grow in faith, in study, in our learning, is not just about knowledge but wisdom and experience, as well as an opening up of oneself to the



wisdom of the past, those Mothers and Fathers of the Church who have gone before us in the Way of Christ.

- **The life of the Church**

“All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.” Acts of the Apostles 2

The Church is the bedrock of faith. It expresses the prayer of Christ “that we be One” as Christ and God the Father and the Holy Spirit are One. To be Christian is to commit to being together, growing together, desiring to every more deeply see Christ in one another. The Church is the place to take time out of the ‘world’ – it is a Sabbath. Entering into its life brings forth the knowledge and experience that who we are is not just our jobs, or our relationships, or our background and history. For we are loved and held in the infinite grace of God, who desires for us to know and love Christ more, and for us to invest time in relationship with one another. Christ is the ‘head of the Church’, its centre, we see Christ in one another. Being baptised into the Church exemplifies that we are each in need, we each need God and one another to be whole, to be true persons not individuals. To offer worship together is to make Eucharist, thanksgiving, for all that we have received, and to find joy in seeing one other worshipping and experiencing God.

The life of the Church is built upon the foundation of the Apostles. Women and men who were all different yet each called by Christ. We are called to imitate Christ as they did. Christ’s words to the disciples in the upper room were “do not to be afraid”. So we need not fear. We need not hide behind language, or structures, we desire to enter into the radical call of what it means to follow Christ, to be a Christian. It is not a label or brand. To be Christian is to be porous, to show the Divine life within us, to show forth the radical inclusiveness of Christ, to challenge and evolve people’s perceptions, actions and experiences.



- **Human experience of God**

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.” Hebrews 12

To inspire, deepen and intensify our faith we look to those who have walked before us in the Way of Christ. Having deep relationships with God, walking with Him as He walked with them. We desire this same life.

We look to those who showed Courage: to live out the gospel, to work against oppression, to live out Christian faith in all places, who were not afraid to speak out and live their beliefs, who sought justice even when it was costly. In them we see true integrity, for how you live reveals your true heart and nature.

We look to those who have Listened: to those different than themselves, providing space for other points of view, were gracious not angry, listened not argued, walked with and did not walk away, humbly listened, welcomed all regardless of views held, created space for others to be.

We look to those who were Prayerful: quietly prayed, not loud, but with a gentle prayer, which led to being a gentle person, where simple prayer led to simplicity of life, and an inner contemplative life led to a calm(er) exterior life.

We look to those who showed Faith in Ordinary Life: who had infectious joy, simplicity, generosity, service, hospitality, which all flowed from their faith in Christ, who did not just speak about faith, but quietly lived it in an ordinary and flawed way, who saw that they did not need to be special.

We look to those who were Honest and Intellectual: who were able to explore and allow doubt to be part of faith, who were not afraid to engage with the intellect, being prepared to be stripped back emotionally and mentally in their seeking after God.



We look to those who were Present to Others: those who were hospitable, who knew people deeply, who as St Francis would say, “had a high view of friendship.”

We look to those who were Aware of God’s Love and Desire for Them: who saw that nothing they can say or do would make God love them any more, who know this deeply. Who saw that God has given them all the time they needed to do the things God wanted them to do.

We look to the Religious Life: To the passionate prayer and devotion of St Benedict, the seeking of reconciliation with God and the passion for learning of St Ignatius, and the hospitality and service amongst the poor of St Francis and St Clare.

7. Collect Prayer to God the Holy Trinity

Almighty and everlasting God,
you have given to us your servants grace,
by the confession of a true faith,
to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity,
and in the power of your divine Majesty to worship the Unity:
Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship,
and bring us at last to see you in your one and eternal glory,
O Father, who with the Son and the Holy Spirit live and reign,
one God, for ever and ever.

Amen