

# TRINITY SUNDAY

**May 27 2018**

Old Test: Isaiah 6:1-7

Epistle: Rom. 11:33-36

Gospel: John 3:1-15

## ***Standing...***

Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Christian faith is built on a paradox:  
God is One, and He is three.

This confession is how we began our service,  
and with those same words you were baptized—  
having the name of the Triune God placed upon you.

Let us pray. These are Your words Holy Father. Sanctify us in the truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

## ***Sitting...***

The Athanasian Creed gives us a thorough explanation of the Trinity,  
but even it falls flat.

It was compiled in response to errors that crept into the Church.  
Some were trying to make sense of God with their own ideas—  
with their own reason...  
rather than accepting what God revealed about Himself in Holy Scriptures.  
The Creed confronted those false teachings.  
But when you come to the end of it, two thoughts emerge:  
First, humankind would never invent a God such as this.  
And second, the Holy Trinity is a mystery.

Yet, just because we come upon a mystery,  
doesn't mean we throw Christianity out with the bathwater.

There are quite a number of mysteries concerning God—  
things that don't make total sense to us.

I mean, can one explain the Incarnation—  
how true God becomes true man?

You believe it—you confess it—but fully explain it?  
It's a mystery.

How about how Christ's death satisfies the full wrath of the Almighty God,

or that how the blood which flows from Jesus' pierced side has made atonement for every last one of your sins—including the sins of the whole world.

If that weren't enough, this same blood flows into the chalice for you,  
for the forgiveness of your sins.

Talk about a mystery (I Cor. 4:1).

So, just because we can't fully understand or adequately explain certain things doesn't mean we throw it out. There are some things we simply believe by faith and the Holy Trinity is one of them.

It shouldn't surprise any of us that God's Being is magnificent—  
that He is incomprehensible—beyond our understanding.

We heard this referred to in our Epistle lesson. St. Paul says,

**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!** No—we don't claim to comprehend the fullness of God—

because understanding everything there is to know about Him is  
above our pay grade.

However, what we can understand is quite evident.

God is for you, not just one time, in One Person,  
not just two times in Two Persons,  
but He is for you three times—Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
bringing about the salvation of sinners.

You say, "sinners?!"

"Are you referring to me?" Yes, I am.

As a child of Adam, you were fallen from birth—  
spiritually dead and doomed from the start.

The rebuttal is, "But what about all the things I've done?"

"My good deeds?"

"My sacrifices?"

"My works of love and obedience?"

The Psalmist says,

"There is none who does good, no, not one."

See, every person on earth has the same problem,

the same incurable, natural, hereditary disease called Original Sin.

It has corrupted our flesh, and the soul within, beyond remedy—

It's the root cause of all unbelief and every false religion in the world.

It's at the heart of every homicide,

every angry outburst,

every lazy attitude,

every feeling of jealousy,

every act of self-service,  
 every thought that the rest of the world really exists to serve “me.”  
 You can’t fight it,  
 you can’t correct it,  
 you can’t beat it,  
 you can’t get rid of it.  
 Your only hope is a new birth.

This is what Jesus explains to Nicodemus by saying,  
 your natural birth is useless for getting you into the kingdom of heaven.  
 All of your works are useless, too.  
 Nothing will get you in,  
 except for a second birth—which comes with a new heart.

And this second birth—or rather, your birth from above—  
 is not something you do.  
 It’s something done to you.

St. Paul echoes what Jesus said to Nicodemus when he reminds Titus:  
**Not by works of righteousness which we have done,  
 but according to His mercy God saved us,  
 through the washing of regeneration (rebirth)  
 and renewing of the Holy Spirit,  
 whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.**

There’s a reference to the Holy Trinity—  
 God (the Father) who saved us,  
 through the Spirit’s washing of rebirth, through Jesus Christ our Savior.  
 A prominent text though on the Trinity is Matthew 28—which you know well. “Go and  
 make disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy  
 Spirit and teaching them...”

Almighty God has specifically attached  
 His promise of forgiveness and regeneration to lowly water.  
 It’s the means the Holy Spirit uses to wash away sin, to justify sinners.  
 Baptism is the way into God’s kingdom  
 and into the divine mystery of the Holy Trinity.

Nicodemus struggles to understand this...  
 The Pharisees were so proud of their birth,  
 so proud of their heritage as Abraham’s children.  
 They were so proud of the decent, religious,  
 law-abiding citizens they worked so hard to become.  
 Yet Jesus tells Nicodemus, it’s all worthless.  
 It’s all for nothing.  
 You’ll never be good enough to see the kingdom of God,

to escape death,  
 or enter heaven.  
 Unless...you are given a new birth,  
 so as to become a new person.

The only way to heaven, to see and behold and enter this Kingdom of God,  
 is for it to come to you as a gift.  
 And that gift is the work of the Holy Trinity.  
 Each person with His own specific task and authority,  
 each working for you.

So, more important than wrapping our minds around the intricacies of the Trinity,  
 is hearing how the Trinity comes to you—through Holy Baptism.  
 In Baptism, God doesn't explain anything to us.  
 He simply puts His **Name** on both your forehead and your heart.  
 And when someone puts their own Name on you,  
 you have been made a member of the Family.  
 He not only brings you into His kingdom  
 but makes you a child of God. Amazing...

Think of it like this:

Jesus said, "All authority on heaven and earth has been given to me..."  
 Then He says, "I am with you always, even to the end of the age."  
 All authority in heaven and earth—that's space.  
 To the end of the age—that's time.

This Name—of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, placed upon you, lasts forever.  
 So that, you're never alone.  
 You are never unloved.  
 You are never lost and you are never left behind.

So we believe in the One God,  
 the Father—who has created and sustains your life,  
 and yet, He is the One who knows your sin,  
 putting a plan in place for your salvation.

We believe in the Son,  
 who fulfilled the Father's plan—dying on the cross,  
 satisfying the justice of God so as to redeem you.

And we believe in the Holy Spirit—  
 sent by the Father and the Son to create and sustain faith in you,  
 the Holy Spirit who sanctifies you and makes you holy  
 by means of His Word and Sacraments.

Sure—God in His infinite wisdom has seen fit to keep the glorious miracle of the Trinity a mystery. But what He has revealed is all you need to know to be born from above.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

***Standing...***

And now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Sitting...***

Hymn 786