

The Holy Trinity, John 3:1-17 (B)

Isaiah 6:1-8

Psalm 29

Romans 8:12-17

Preached at the Lutheran Church of Our Saviour, Greenville, SC on Sunday May 30th, 2021.

**“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” Amen.**

*The **benediction** I just quoted
is from the last verse of **Saint Paul's 2nd** letter to the **Corinthians**.

It is the earliest recorded **Trinitarian formula** known to humankind;
written around **A.D. 50**.

It was these words of **Saint Paul**
which led to the formation of the **doctrine** of the **Holy Trinity**,
established in the **early church** during the **4th** and **5th** centuries. ____

We usually hear these words spoken
each time we gather together as a Christian community.

This **benediction** reminds us that although there is only **one** God,
God is presented to us in the form of **three** persons:
God the **Father**, God the **Son**, and God the **Holy Spirit**;
that is, God our **Creator**, God our **Redeemer**, and God our **Sanctifier**. ____

*However, on this Festival of the **Holy Trinity**,
we are **not** celebrating a day of **doctrine**,
but a day recalling the “**great mystery of faith**.”

The "**Three** in One and **One** in Three" as Saint **Patrick** voiced it. ____

This is a special day - as should be every day -
when we **re-examine** how we live in **grace**, **love**, and **fellowship** with God:

We live in the **grace** of God:

- recalling the many **blessing** we receive,
- recalling the many times we are **forgiven**.

We live in the **love** of God:

- recalling the **sending** of God's only Son, Jesus Christ, to **die** for us!
- recalling God **resurrecting** his Son,
so that all believers in Christ may have **eternal life!**

And we live in the **fellowship** of God:

- gathering together as the **body of Christ**
 - to **praise** God,
 - to **remember** our baptism into the **mission** of the Church,
 - to **celebrate** Holy Communion,
 - being **nourished** and **strengthened**
 - through the partaking of bread and the fruit of the vine,
 - and to **go out** into this world,
 - sharing the **Good News** of Jesus Christ with others. ____

Through the three persons of the **Trinity**,
we can **attempt** to understand God more clearly, but never **fully** understand. ____

*Throughout history,
humans have tried to explain the **Trinity** in simple terms;
how God can be **One** yet Three and **Three** yet One.

Saint Patrick tried to explain this with a **Shamrock**
which has three pedals, yet is only one plant.
Others tried by using a **pretzel** - it having three sections, yet being one.
And still **others** tried through the example of a **room**
- having height, depth, and width; yet being only one room. ____

Although these are wonderful **examples**,
they still do **not** catch the **true essence** of the **Holy Trinity**.

It **cannot** be explained in **human terms**, but remains a “**mystery of faith.**” ____

And yet, it **is** the Gospel Truth!
Almighty God is **One** God revealed to us in **Three** persons! ____

*But still our **common sense** and **science** tell us
"How can a being be **Three** yet One? This is an **impossible** notion!" ____

Nevertheless, this is a **fact** that can never be **proven** by scientific means,
but is known to be **true** through **faith**. ____

Martin Luther wrote (*Quote*):

"...the truth of the Christian faith stays in the **middle**,
teaching and confessing the **individuality** of the persons
and the **individuality** of God's nature.

The Father **is** a different person from the Son,
but he is **not** a different God.

Whether or not our **natural reason** comprehends it, it's still correct.
Faith alone must grasp it." ... (*End Quote*) ...

We, as humans, always try to explain everything through the use of **science**;
yet here is something that cannot be proven or **disproven** through science.
It is **beyond** our understanding. ____

And because of this "**great mystery of faith**,"

when we speak of the **Holy Trinity**,
we must do so

as the early 13th century church theologian **Thomas Aquinas** (*ah-QUI-nas*) stated:
with "...**Caution** and **modestly**." ...

*The Christian Church is a **Trinitarian** Church.

We confess that we believe in **One** God,
revealed to us through **Three** persons.

We confess that we believe in **God the Father**,
who created heaven and earth.

We confess that we believe in **God the Son**,
made known to us in the person of Jesus Christ,
who rescued us from sin, death, and the devil,
and has given us the promise of eternal life.

And we confess that we believe in **God the Holy Spirit**,
who is our provider of strength, knowledge, faith, and guidance. ____

As a congregation, we proclaim our faith in the **Holy Trinity** of God
through the words of one of **three** Creeds:

The oldest being the **Nicene** Creed, first formulated in A.D. 325

- this Creed is **proclaimed** during the seasons of Advent, Christmas,
Lent, Easter, and on other Festival Days;

The **Apostles'** Creed, most likely originated in the 5th century A.D.

- this Creed is **proclaimed** during the season of Epiphany,
the Sundays after Pentecost, and at Baptisms and Funerals.

And the **Athanasian** Creed, believed to be written in the 6th century A.D.

- which *may be* proclaimed on **Holy Trinity Sunday**. ____

When we **stand together** as a congregation voicing the **Creed**,

we are proclaiming our **faith** - our **belief**, our **truth** -

in the **knowledge**, that with all our heart, soul, and mind,

we **truly confess** God as being **One** yet Three, **Three** yet One;

we **truly confess** our acceptance of this "**great mystery of faith!**" ____

*Daily, the voice of God Almighty - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -
speaks to us.

Our Lord speaks to us through **Creation**.

Our Lord speaks to us through the **Cross**.

Our Lord speaks to us through our **Conscience**. ____

Do you hear the **voice** of God calling out to you? ...

Do you hear God **calling us** into the **mission** of the Church

to **go share** the good news

of **forgiveness** of sin and the **promise** of eternal life

through **faith** in Jesus Christ? ...

Do you **feel** the presence of God

living daily **through** you, **with** you, and **in** you? ...

As servants **baptized** into the Body of Christ, **boldly** answer our **Lord's call**;
proclaiming as the prophet **Isaiah** did, saying: "Here am I; *send me!*" ...

Boldly, go forth - led by the **Spirit** - making known to the world

God's never-ending **grace**,

God's unconditional **love**,

and God's **fellowship** with us

- as **together** we **walk** and **talk** and **experience** life as **one**;

one in the **presence** of our **Triune** God -

the **Father**, our Creator

the **Son**, Jesus Christ our Redeemer

and the **Holy Spirit**, our Sanctifier.

... The **Three** in One and **One** in Three" Amen.