



We Believe
Holy Trinity Sunday
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May 30, 2021

“May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.” (2 Cor. 13:14)

Today is another festival of the church year which is at times forgotten. Today is Holy Trinity Sunday.

You may ask what is that—the Holy Trinity. Well, it’s not an event like Christmas or Easter. It is a doctrine of the church **we believe** in deeply. While the developed doctrine of the Trinity is not explicit in the bible nor is the word, “Trinity” used, it does mention the three persons of the Trinity many times; for example, my greeting this morning from 2 Corinthians and also Matthew 28:19, Ephesians 4:4-6 1 Peter 1:2 to name a few others.

An early church father, Tertullian, was the first to explain and defend the Trinity in the early third century. Over a century later, the Council of Nicea confirmed the Trinity as official church doctrine.

The concept of the Trinity can be confusing but is also a most unique, defining, and awesome mystery. But, if we look at its parts, that may help explain what it is and what it isn’t.

At times we begin worship service by saying: “ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” or, “Blessed be the Holy Trinity, one God, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever.” That is our calling upon the name of Jesus. (But it is more than just Jesus whom we call to our worship, it is the

Holy Trinity, God in three persons who comes to our worship and abides with us.

God is Three and at the same time---One.

We say in the Apostles Creed, **I believe** in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. We believe in God the creator. We believe in the God who made everything – this planet and each thing on and in it, the beautiful stars in the night sky, the sun, the moon and each one of us. We believe in a God who loved us enough to send his son to earth and die for us. God is loving and compassionate wanting what is only good for us, His children. But we want a God we can understand and control on our own terms. As Harry Emerson Fosdick once described Him, “ a cosmic bell-hop God for whom we can press a button to get things.”

But our God is bigger than that. Our God cannot be controlled or manipulated for personal glory and reward. Our God is more than just one god.

And, that brings us to the second part of the Trinity, God who is Jesus Christ. We say, **I believe** in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, died and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

Our God is not only the God who created the universe, but our God became human and our God became Jesus Christ who died on the cross and rose again.

We say that we are Christians and the first 6 letters of that word are C-H-R-I-S-T, not God, but Christ. For we believe in God who became Christ and died for us. Our God is more than a creator. He is the giver of life now and in the future. We have a God in

Jesus who came to earth and taught us to love our neighbor as ourselves. He taught us not to judge others but to treat them with kindness and humility. We reach out to the last, lost and least and all our brothers and sisters with hands of compassion, mercy, and inclusive acceptance. At Nativity we provide a food pantry and free clothing to those in need and to migrant farm workers in Dade City, gifts and food to children of prisoners with the angel tree project, 'days for girls' ministry, many quilts and shawls for Lutheran World Relief, cards, calls and visits to homebound and those living in care facilities and many other ministries. We are reaching out for and to Christ as we carry light and love to the world.

We then say: **I believe** in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Amen. This, then, is the third part of the Trinity. We believe in a God who has become a Spirit who dwells in each believer. For at our baptism, we were given the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not a thing or something that fills us like water, but the Holy Spirit is a person, the third part of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is not an influence, a substance or a power like electricity. We even tend to refer to the Holy Spirit as "it" forgetting that the Holy Spirit is the third Person in the blessed Holy Trinity.

(15) When we cry: "Abba! Father!" (16) it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, (17) and, if children, then heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him. (Romans 8:15-17)

When we cry to God for anything, it is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity giving our own spirit (understanding or awareness) the grounds it needs to believe in the God who is Three in One.

We pray to God through the Spirit and in the words of Andrew Murray, “True prayer is the living experience of the Holy Trinity. The Spirit’s breathing, the Son’s intercession, the Father’s will, these three become one in us”.

The Trinity is not a vague doctrinal experience, but it is personal. The Trinity is God relating to each of us on a personal level. The Trinity is not a puzzle to be solved, but a relationship to be lived.

The name of our God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That is three. Yes, but only one. **We believe!** Amen.