



## St John Lutheran Church

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St. Matthew 28:16-20

Trinitarian and Christian

**To be Trinitarian** is to be Christian. **There can be** no separation of these two identities... **these are** forever connected... **connected by** the inspired, inerrant, and unchanging Word of God. **He reveals His** triune-ness to us...**the Holy** Trinity and the undivided unity... **the three** Persons in the one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. **To believe in** Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord is to believe in God the Father, who sent His only-begotten Son into the world to bear our sins and be our Savior. **It is to** believe in the Holy Spirit who makes us holy by creating and sustaining within us faith in this same Son of God. **True worship of** God is praising all three persons of the Godhead... **the Father** who has created us... **the Son** who has redeemed us... **and the** Holy Spirit who has sanctified us. **As the people** of God, we pray to the Trinity... **we praise** the Triune God... **we give** thanks to the Three-in-One. **True worship of** the Trinity is true worship of Christ. **This has been** central to the Church's worship since her beginning ... **for the** Church has been rooted in the Word... **incorporating the** Word into her public liturgy.

**In the liturgy** the Church unites and with one voice worships God. **In the early** centuries of the Church, she united and spoke with one voice against the heretics.... **those who** sought to introduce into the Church teachings which are completely opposed to the Word. **The Church reached** into the sacred Scriptures... **taking its** truth and formulating statements of the faith of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church in the words of the Apostles, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds. **When we use** the word catholic (with a small "c") in this context, we are speaking of a faith that is universal..."**according to the whole**" one that is exclusively Christian, one that is whole, **one that is one.** **The Three Ecumenical** Creeds, as they are known because they confess the faith of all Christians at all times and in all places... **found their** way into the liturgy of the Church. **We are the** blessed recipients of this gift of the good confession. **When we confess** our faith by one of these creeds... **we are** doing so as a response... **responding to** our God who has come to us in His Word... **having heard** Him come to us through the Old Testament, Epistle, and Holy Gospel...**three readings.**

**The third of** our readings for today, the Holy Gospel, shows Jesus giving the divine command of the Holy Trinity to the Church... **the command** to make disciples of all nations. **In this so-called** Great Commission... **there is** only one direct command... **that of** making disciples. **The Greek lists** the other verbs as participles... **describing how** we are to make disciples. **Jesus tells us** that we are to make disciples by **going, baptizing, and teaching.** **We are to** teach others to observe **all things He has taught us...**not just the easy things...**all things...** including our worship of the Triune God. **We are to** baptize in the Name of this same Trinity.

**We are to go in His Name... with His Name upon us as we leave here today and move out into our vocations... witnessing to others through our words and our actions. We move from here with the Triune God's Name placed upon us and, with His Name, all His blessings. The Father bless you and keep you. The Son make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Holy Spirit look upon you with favor and give you peace. With His Name our Triune God gives us Himself, and there is certainly no greater gift for us to get than our gracious giver God.**

**God loves to place His thrice-holy Name upon us. He loves to give us His gifts. He desires to give us Himself. This is a tremendous gift from Him... but do we really get it? In other words... do we really understand what God has been saying to and doing for us? Is the doctrine of the Trinity too difficult for us to comprehend? Or would we rather remain ignorant of what the Bible teaches rather than keeping our minds open to the truth in Holy Scripture? Does it even matter to us that we believe that the only true God is the Triune God. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit?**

**Granted, the Bible contains many articles of Christian doctrine. Some have greater bearing on our salvation than others. Few are more fundamental to the faith than that of the Trinity. Yet this important article is difficult for us to logically comprehend. Every example that we can think of to describe Him falls short because of our finite abilities to understand. We know, believe, teach, and confess that there are three Persons in one God... but we do not know how this is possible. We also confess that each Person of the Trinity is fully God...and yet there are not three Gods but one God... as we confess in the Athanasian Creed. We also confess that ...there are not three eternals but one eternal. As there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles... but one uncreated and one incomprehensible. And yet they are not three almighties but one almighty... they are not three Lords but one Lord. This is one of the great mysteries of the faith because we... due to our finite mental capacities and our sinfulness... will never be able to concretely grasp such an abstract teaching. The mystery of the Trinity will be revealed to us fully in heaven. But until then, the devil seeks to keep us confused and discouraged... he seeks to seduce us into false belief.**

**One of the most dangerous false beliefs in our age is that everybody prays to the same God and that all paths lead to heaven. God tells us in His holy Word that He indeed wants all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Another dangerous and false teaching is that truth is relative... that there is no absolute truth. That is an absolute lie! God warns us in the Scriptures not to add to or subtract from His teachings... whether we like them or not... and Jesus tells us that the Scriptures cannot be broken. Jesus also prayed in His High Priestly Prayer that His Father would sanctify us by the truth, for His Word is Truth. What we teach is not a "version of the truth." It is not just our opinion or idle speculation. It is not just truth for us. What we believe, teach, confess, and practice is the eternal, unchanging Truth from God's unchanging Word. We have Jesus' command to teach others to observe all things that He has commanded us.**

**He reveals to us in His Word that He demands to be worshiped in spirit and in truth "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" and that He will not share His glory with false gods who cannot do anything for us. Those who follow other gods... those who reject Jesus as Savior and Lord, while praying to someone they call God... such will not have their prayers heard. The one true God hears the prayers of only Christians... as He states in His Word. We pray, moved by the Holy Spirit, and our prayers go through the Son and to the Father. Prayers from non-Christians are of the devil and go back to the devil. Anyone who does not believe in and pray to the Triune God... the God revealed in the Bible... glorifies Satan and stands in judgment for unbelief, rejecting the work of the Holy**

Spirit, who seeks to bring all to faith in Jesus Christ... **the only-begotten Son of the Father. As we confess** in the Athanasian Creed, **"This is the catholic faith, which, except a man believe faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved."**

**To believe faithfully and firmly...that seems** like a tall order. **It is too** tall for us to fill by ourselves. **We cannot** by our own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ our Lord or come to Him. **But we need** not despair because **"the Holy Spirit calls us by the Gospel, enlightens us with His gifts in Word and Sacrament, sanctifies and keeps us in the true faith, and the catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in three Persons and three Persons in one God, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance."** **This is the** faith the Holy Spirit gives us. **He is forever** at work in us, creating, sustaining, and strengthening our faith in the Triune God. **The Holy Spirit** moves us to pray to, praise, and give thanks to the Three-in-One.

**We spend our** entire time here doing just that. Our worship of Him begins in this way... **the same** way our lives as Christians began at our Baptism, **in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We call upon** Him... **invoking His** Name, praying that He would indeed be present among us as He has promised. **Having the assurance** He is with us... **we confess** our sins to Him, receiving the forgiveness of the entire Godhead. **Almighty God has** had mercy on us and has given His only Son to die for us and for His sake forgives us all our sins...**and has** given us His Holy Spirit. **We pray the** Psalms, giving glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. **We pray for** His continued mercy: **Father, have mercy upon us; Christ, have mercy upon us; Holy Spirit, have mercy upon us. We sing the** praise of the entire Trinity in the Gloria in Excelsis. **We pray through** Jesus Christ our Lord... **who lives** and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit... **one God**, now and forever. **We hear the Trinity** revealed in the Sacred Scriptures. **Hearing the** life-giving and life-saving Word... **we confess** our faith in the Triune God. **We praise the** thrice-holy One in the Sanctus. **Before we depart** we will hear our Lord's placing His three-fold Name upon us... **a blessing** that moves us to our callings in this world... **where He** has given us the task to tell the truth of the Trinity... **that God** the Father sent His Son to die for us. **Having risen from** the dead, Jesus has given us the victory over the unholy triad of sin, death, and hell... **the original** axis of evil.

**Being Trinitarian... being Christian... we eagerly** look forward to the day when our God calls us to our heavenly home. **When we will** be enjoying our eternal reward in Christ... **those who** remain, while mourning... **witness the** power of Jesus' resurrection while the thrice-holy Name is spoken over our bodies. **Those gathered there** will hear these words of comfort:

**"We now commit this body to its resting place; earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly bodies so that they will be like His glorious body, by the power that enables Him to subdue all things to Himself. May God the Father who created this body, may God the Son, who by His blood redeemed this body, may God the Holy Spirit, who by Holy Baptism sanctified this body to be His temple, keep these remains to the day of the resurrection of all flesh."**

**God the Father** grant this in Jesus' Name, for His sake, and by the Holy Spirit. In the Name of the Father and of the Son + and of the Holy Spirit...Amen.

Trinity Sunday, 2008

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