



Holy Trinity

May 30, 2021

Introduction

When we say God is the triune God, we are saying something about who God is beyond, before, and after the universe: that there is community within God. Our experience of this is reflected in Paul's words today. When we pray to God as Jesus prayed to his Abba (an everyday, intimate parental address), the Spirit prays within us, creating between us and God the same relationship Jesus has with the one who sent him.

Thanksgiving for Baptism

You may want to have a small bowl of water available to remind you of your baptism!

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,
we are clothed with God's mercy and forgiveness.
Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism, the gift of new life.

We give you thanks, O God,
For in the beginning your Spirit moved over the waters
and by your Word you created the world,
calling forth life in which you took delight.

Through the waters of the flood you saved Noah and his family.
Through the sea you led your people Israel from slavery into freedom.
At the river your Son was baptized by John and anointed with the Holy Spirit.
By water and your Word you claim us as daughters and sons,
making us heirs of your promise and servants of all.

We praise you for the gift of water that sustains life, and
above all we praise you for the gift of new life in Jesus Christ.
Shower us with your Spirit,
and renew our lives with your forgiveness, grace, and love.

To you be given honor and praise through Jesus Christ our Lord
In the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

Opening Hymn ELW # 408 / LBW # 522

Come, Thou Almighty King

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Prayer of the Day

Almighty Creator and ever-living God: we worship your glory, eternal Three-in-One, and we praise your power, majestic One-in-Three. Keep us steadfast in this faith, defend us in all adversity, and bring us at last into your presence, where you live in endless joy and love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

Psalm: Psalm 29

¹Ascribe to the LORD, you gods, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

²**Ascribe to the LORD the glory due God's name;
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**

³The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders;
the LORD is upon the mighty waters.

⁴**The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice;
the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.**

⁵The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees; the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;

⁶**the LORD makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

⁷The voice of the LORD bursts forth in lightning flashes.

⁸**The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

⁹The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips the forests bare.
And in the temple of the LORD all are crying, "Glory!"

¹⁰**The LORD sits enthroned above the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

¹¹O LORD, give strength to your people; give them, O LORD, the blessings of peace.

Second Reading: Romans 8:12-17

In describing the new life of faith, Paul refers to all three persons of the Trinity: the Spirit leads us to recognize that we are children of God the Father and joint heirs with Christ the Son.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Gospel: John 3:1-17

Jesus' miracles prompt Nicodemus to visit him in secrecy. Jesus tells him about being born of the Spirit and about the Son who has been sent by God to save.

Read the complete text [here](#).

Reflection on the Text

When I started reading resources for today in a favorite preaching commentary, as I turned the page from Easter and Pentecost, I encountered a divider page, simply named Ordinary Time. And it is true.

Today we enter into Ordinary Time after several months of festivals and holy holidays beginning with Reformation at the end of October. After that came All Saints Sunday, Christ the King Sunday, Advent and Christmas, Epiphany, the Baptism and Transfiguration of our Lord, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week filled with Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, then Easter and Ascension, ending with Pentecost last Sunday.

It seems odd that this festival celebrating the Holy Trinity is the beginning of Ordinary Time – but Pentecost last Sunday was the end of the great fifty days of Easter, and there is no season OF Pentecost, simply a long string of weeks AFTER Pentecost. Holy Trinity is the first, then we begin a series of Sundays numbered with ordinal numbers. Second, third, fourth, and so on. Not ordinary as in dreary, boring, or uneventful; but carefully numbered, one after another.

As I turned to the next page in the commentary, the first words of bible scholar and Anglican bishop N.T. Wright stood out to me: *“God’s love, Jesus’ death, new life in the Spirit.”* (**Twelve Months of Sundays, Year B**)

I’ll admit, I wish Wright had written “the Father’s love” just for clarity; but there you have it: the connections between the three persons of God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - as we focus on the Trinity today; plus a clear connection to the gospel text we just read where Jesus speaks clearly about God’s great love, his own impending death, and the mysterious work of the Spirit.

It also shows us a connection to a period of time that we might not all count week by week, but might really consider to be quite normal or ordinary. Because God the Father loves all of creation SO much that God sent Jesus to live and die among us AND sent the Holy Spirit to live alongside and even within us, giving us new life.

Nicodemus came to see Jesus that long ago night, with questions he may have struggled to put in words and that he scarcely dared to ask. He was a well-known leader in the temple. Someone far more accustomed to giving answers and advice than receiving them. Yet, he was wise enough to know he had questions that only Jesus could answer and brave enough to humble himself to come and ask them.

But listen closely to the conversation that is recorded in John’s gospel. With two millennia of hindsight, we still struggle to make sense of Jesus’ answers and we echo Nicodemus’ question: “How can these things be?” Scholars still debate Jesus’ choice of words and the depth and breadth of their meaning. One thing is certain. While Jesus did not mean that we needed to become babies again, he did declare that we all need to be born from above.

We really are reborn when we are baptized, as we are named and claimed as a child of God, profess faith in Jesus – or have it professed for us as a small child – and the Holy Spirit is invited into our lives.

Some people remember that moment. Or remember an experience that made them ask to be baptized. Others of us, who were baptized as infants, probably do not remember anything about it, although we may have seen pictures taken on that day.

It doesn't matter. Our re-birth does not rely on our desire for it to happen, or our memory of the experience. Being born again is always completely God's work in our lives.

We gave thanks for our baptism at the beginning of worship today, as we often do. When we do that, we may be grateful for our parents and sponsors who brought us to the font, but we are really giving thanks to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because our lives have been changed forever by God.

Our lives do not just progress along unchanged until after our death, when we are invited into eternal life in the presence of Almighty God. New life in the Spirit begins here and now.

We are called to live and breathe the reality God's love for us and for all of creation each day. We are entrusted with the good news to share with others that that Jesus' death and resurrection have granted us forgiveness of our sins and reconciled us and all of creation with God. And we are empowered to live a new life of faith now. Each and every day, in all our words and deeds.

“God's love, Jesus' death, new life in the Spirit.” One Father, one Son, one Holy Spirit. Love and death and life multiplied together equal one God. And one eternal life for each of us in the presence of the Holy Trinity here and now and throughout eternity. Amen.

Hymn of the Day ELW # 413 / LBW # 165

Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty

Listen and sing along [here](#).

Nicene Creed

We profess our faith with the whole church in all times and places:

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,*
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Prayers of Intercession

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

A brief silence.

We pray, O God, for your holy church around the world. Revitalize and renew us, that we may be reborn once again through the waters of baptism and the blowing wind of your Spirit. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks for your power revealed to us in creation; for cedar and oak trees, for rushing waters, for the echoes of thunder. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the nations and our leaders, that led by your Spirit, they work towards a world where all of your children enjoy peace. We pray especially for nations experiencing war or turmoil. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for healing for all those who suffer, especially victims and survivors of trauma or violence. Give respite to those living with PTSD or any other mental health concerns. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for this worshiping community, that the splendor of your majesty and the holiness of your mystery may be glorified through our worship and our relationships with one another. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Here other intercessions may be offered.

We pray for the Spirit's guidance on the rostered ministers and lay leaders who gather online later this week to conduct the business of the North Carolina Synod, including the election of a bishop and others who will lead the synod for the next several years. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We give you thanks, O God, for those who have died in the faith. We remember also those whose lives have been lost due to the horrors of war. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray:

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Closing Hymn ELW # 414 / LBW # 535 *Holy God, We Praise Your Name*

Listen and sing along [here](#).