

The Feast of the Holy Trinity with the Rite of Confirmation for Samantha  
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27 May, Anno Domini 2018  
St. John 3:1-17  
Pr. Kurt Ulmer

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

St. Paul the Apostle writes “For with the heart one believes and is justified and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” This is a day filled with believing and confessing. Today, together with the whole Christian Church, we rejoice to spend a few extra minutes to simply marvel in a great mystery that defies all explanation and understanding. The Holy Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three distinct persons, one divine Godhead. All equally God, but none the same as the other. The math doesn’t work. The logic doesn’t work. All the apples and eggs and clovers and circles in triangles are completely insufficient to explain the how of this great and eternal mystery. It simply is. God has always been Triune. He may never have revealed the three-fold name in the Old Testament but He was there, dropping hints - some subtle, others not so subtle. “Let US create man in OUR image”; the Aaronic benediction which is placed upon us after every Divine Service; “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabbath.” The Old Testament is full of pointers, clearly teaching a multiplicity within the unity of the Godhead.

But where the Old Testament leaves hints, the New Testament shouts from the mountaintops. The Son in whose Baptism the Holy Spirit descended as a dove and to whom the Father spoke saying “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”, commands that Christian Baptism be done “in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” “I and the Father are one.” “The Holy Spirit will take from what is mine and give to you.” There is simply no question, no reason for debate. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit are of equal divinity. They are not three separate Gods, nor are they simply different masks that the one God wears. Any confession that confesses another god is utterly false and to be rejected because it rejects God’s own clear revelation of Himself. The Arians and Monophysites and Sabellians of old, the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, Lodges, Unitarians, and Jews of our own day all reject the one true, Triune God in favor of a false god of their own imaginations. They fell into the prideful position of trading in God’s clear testimony for the stunted

and erring wisdom of men. These false teachers are to be utterly rejected and refuted as those who spew the devil's lies. They are sent to draw people away from Christ and into the pit of self-righteousness.

This is not a day of understanding or figuring out. It is a day of simply believing and confessing. It is a day to rejoice that God has revealed Himself to us. He has given us His Name that we might know Him and call upon Him in truth. He has clearly taught us who He is so that we might bow our heads with the angels and cry "Holy, holy, holy" and worship the divine majesty, calling Him who He is, and confessing His glorious and saving Name. You don't have to be able to explain. You don't have to be able to understand. You can't.

Simply confess. Say "Amen. I believe what you have said, O Lord, to be the divine truth, all of it. I don't need diagrams. I don't need you to justify yourself to my reason. I certainly don't deserve to know you or to call upon you. You are holy. I am filled with sin. I am a man of unclean lips and I live amongst a people of unclean lips. I should perish in your presence. Yet you have graciously made yourself known to me in the Holy Scriptures. More than that, you invited me, even commanded me to call upon you in my need and seek your help. More than that, You, Holy Father, sent your Holy Son to be incarnate in my sinful flesh (another incomprehensible mystery!) so that He might suffer death and Your righteous wrath which both rightfully belong to me. And You have cleansed me by the precious Blood of Jesus, washing me in the waters of Holy Baptism, and claiming me, once Your enemy, now as Your dearly beloved child. You feed me and nourish my weary and hungry soul with the Bread of heaven, the Body of my Lord, Jesus Christ. You pour out Your Holy Spirit upon me to give me life and to conform me to the image of Your Son, that I might no longer walk in the death of sin but in the newness of life according to Your holy commandments. Wonder of wonders! Miracle of miracles! What good is an explanation? What more can be said than "Amen"?

Today Samantha, you will confess. You will confess before heaven and earth your faith in this one, true God. You will give your hearty "Amen" to His Word which you have spent the last three years studying and which should be the object of study your whole life long. You will speak with your own tongue that which the prophets and apostles and martyrs confessed with their mouths and their blood. You have already been Baptized, clothed in Christ's righteousness and been absolved of all of your sin.

Today you will confess publicly that which you have long believed - that God has loved you as He has loved the world, by sending His Son to die on the cross and forgive all your sins. And we will all together rejoice and celebrate by receiving with you the Christian meal of true fellowship and unity - Holy Communion. Here at the rail is the highest expression of our unity with the Triune God and with one another. Here we share in the Body and the Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ and with one mouth proclaim His death as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. This day, what you have longed for in faith, you will at least receive in your mouth. And as you continue every day in the Lord's Word and in prayer, though the mystery of the Godhead and your salvation won't become any easier to understand, yet it will be more and more comforting to you. It will be a source of joy and courage to pray to the God who has revealed Himself to be your heavenly Father who loves you and who loves to hear the voice of His precious lamb.

But beware, Samantha. As surely as you will stand before us making the good confession, Satan will seek to fill your ears with his lies. He will proclaim to you a different god, one who is easier to understand, one who loves you because of what you have done. He will offer you the opportunity to make a god that fits your desires. Satan hates what you are about to say. And as you confess the one, true God today you also confess Satan to be your enemy and all his works and ways to be nothing but lies. You confess that your own flesh and the world in which you live are wickedness. You pray against them that their will would be stopped and that only the will of God would be done. You will be sorely tempted. Satan will seek to lure you away with his false promises. He will use everything at his disposal in order to bring you into false belief, despair, and other great shame and vice.

Remain in the Word as one who knows and confesses the truth that the Word is your life and your light. Without the Word, the Christian dies. Daily take up the armor God provides you against temptation and false teaching. Pray every day that the Lord would defend you from all evil and strengthen you in the hour of persecution from within and without. Pick up your Bible, your hymnal, your catechism. Study them. Meditate on the Good News that they proclaim. Boldly confess your sins and even more boldly receive the forgiveness which your dear Savior gladly gives. As I said before, we have only begun to scratch the surface. And rejoice that God has revealed Himself to you - not simply as God, but as your Father and your Savior.

Likewise, whether we are newly confirmed or approaching the end of our earthly lives, we must all as God's children remain in the Word because the Word is the only defense against all evil. We must flee all those who bend and twist and pervert the Word of God and try to leaven the lump with their idolatry. We do not need to discover the truth. It has already been revealed to us. There are no new teachings to be found, no new revelations, no development in our doctrine. The truth has been proclaimed in Holy Scripture once and for all.

This truly is a day of confessing, of not only standing in awe of the Holy Trinity, but worshipping Him, receiving from Him the life and salvation that He comes to bring and rejoicing to know Him. Therefore, let us encourage all our catechumens by word and example. Let us pray for them and for one another. Let us stir one another up to the holy life of faith in Christ. Let us comfort one another in our sorrow and rejoice with one another in our gladness. Let us not neglect to meet together in Lord's house to receive His gifts of life and salvation, let us come to the table when our Father calls us. Let us not set aside the things of heaven so that we can have more of the things of earth.

There is no other God and no other faith. We are not given to understand God or His ways, only to confess them and to rejoice in them because the ways of God are the ways of our salvation. This is the catholic faith; whoever believes it faithfully and firmly will be saved.

In the Name of +Jesus.