

Fellow witnesses in Christ, do you want to be saved? Do you want to live and reign with Jesus in heaven forever? Then you have to believe in what we just confessed in the words of the Athanasian Creed. The beginning of the Creed is this, ***“Whoever desires to be saved must, above all, hold the catholic faith. Whoever does not keep it whole and undefiled will without doubt perish eternally. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the persons nor dividing the substance.”***

You might think that the Athanasian Creed is long and I might agree with you. You might think that the Athanasian Creed is confusing; but it really isn't. Because your salvation is at stake, we can never take enough time. For you see, the focus of the Athanasian Creed is upon the *“Who”* and the who, is the Holy Trinity. We must not just understand, or just believe that there is a Trinity, as the Creed says, we must worship the Blessed Holy Trinity. We must give the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all thanks, praise, service and obedience. We must fear, love and trust in the Holy Trinity above all things. This alone is the catholic faith. He alone can save you. He alone is the One True God. His name, is the only name under heaven, by which we can be saved. That is why we baptized all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The catholic faith is not the need to pledge our allegiance to the pope, he has nothing to do with the one true faith. By catholic faith we mean what has been believed and confessed by all Christians, at all times, and in all places. The catholic faith is this: ***“We worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confusing the Persons nor dividing the Substance. For the Father is one Person, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit is another. The Godhead of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one: the glory equal, the majesty coeternal.”***

To understand the Holy Trinity, let us consider prayer and the act of worship. We pray, “Our Father”, and that is an act of worship. But we also believe that the Holy Spirit prays for us and with

us, “In our weaknesses, we know not what we should pray for, but the Holy Spirit Himself makes intercessions for us with groans too deep for words.” The Holy Spirit is the one who guides us in our prayer, praise and thanksgiving to the Father and to the Son. As the stained glass window depicts, Jesus lives to pray for us. We end our prayers in Jesus’ name. He is the Great High Priest, the Mediator, the One because of whom the Father answers our prayers. But the Father, He does not pray, He is the source and the object of our prayer, praise and thanksgiving. All three persons of the Trinity work together in a perfect relationship and they are the focus of our worship and praise. You can’t have one without the other two.

The object of our worship and glory is the Holy Trinity. On this father’s day we need to remember that we can’t be fathers unless we have a son or a daughter, and we can’t be sons and daughters without a father. The same is true in heaven. Jesus is Son, because of the Father; and God is Father because of His Son. How do we know the Father and His grace, mercy and peace toward us except by His Son? For God the Father so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. We know Jesus because the Holy Spirit, who was sent by Jesus at Pentecost, comes to point us to Jesus; and Jesus, the Son of God, reveals the Father to us. The three Persons of the Trinity cannot be separated, they are coequal and coeternal. The Trinity joined together in a loving relationship with themselves and they have no beginning and no end. They are the source and the focus of our fear, love and trust.

Consider this, the Father sends His Son Jesus, into the world to be born of the Virgin, to die, to rise again from the dead and to ascend into heaven; where He sits at the right hand of the Father. The Son then sends the Holy Spirit to grab hold of us, by the very Word of God and His Sacraments, and bring us to the Son, who in turn brings us to the Father. The Trinity has the desire of bringing us into a loving relationship with them; this is why the Father created us, the Son redeemed us and

the Holy Spirit makes us holy, that we can be in communion with God the Holy Trinity forever and ever.

If you get rid of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you get rid of salvation. All the other major religions of the world: Judaism, Islam, Buddhism; the major sects: Environmentalism, Mormonism, Scientology, Jehovah's Witnesses; they all reject the Trinity. They may all believe in God the Father, but they all reject Jesus as the Son of God and Lord and Savior of the world. And without Jesus, you have no need for the Holy Spirit.

We all want everyone to be in heaven. The current and three previous U.S. presidents have said that Jews and Muslims and Buddhists and Christians alike will all be in heaven, that we all worship the same god. Don't believe it for a minute. Even the current and previous pope has put this idea forward; we call it universalism and it is a lie that the Church has fought since the time of Christ. Universalism says that everyone, no matter what they believe just as long as they believe something, will be in heaven. Universalism rejects sin and hell. It also rejects the grace of God found only in Christ Jesus.

How did we begin our worship service this morning? We began it in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. When we say those words, we are confessing to the truth of the catholic faith, that there is only one God and He is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We are confessing to the whole world who the true God is. We are confessing who we are as sons of God, children of the heavenly Father. We are brothers of Christ, members of the family of God, purchased and won from all sin, death and the power of the devil, by the holy precious blood of Jesus. We are temples of God, in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, we are heirs of heaven. We look forward to the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come, solely and completely because we worship the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; One God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity.

Consider the place of the Holy Trinity within the liturgy this morning: we say that our help is in the name of the Lord; the name of the Holy Trinity, the name given to us at our baptism. We sing the Gloria Patri: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost, and the Gloria in Excelsis: Glory be to God on High; both of which proclaim to whom all glory and majesty must be given. Before the reading of the Holy Gospel we sing Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. During the Sanctus we sing Holy, Holy, Holy. At the end of the service we sing Amen. Amen. Amen. Do you catch the repetition throughout the service, everything is in threes emphasizing the Holy worship of the Holy trinity? Throughout the Communion liturgy the focus is not upon God the Father or God the Son or God the Holy Ghost, not even completely upon Jesus Christ; the focus is upon the Blessed Holy Trinity.

In a moment, as we sing the Offertory, consider the words you are singing, they are giving glory and honor to the Holy Trinity: “Create in me a clean heart, O God”: there is God the Father who created you. “Renew a right Spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me”: there is God the Son, who died on the cross, shedding His blood, to forgive us our sins, that we would not be condemned to hell but given the gift of heaven. “Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation and uphold me with Thy free Spirit”: there is God the Holy Spirit, who by the means of grace, Jesus’ Holy Word and Blessed Sacraments, we are built up and strengthened as we fight the good fight, watching and praying, looking forward to Jesus’ coming, that we might win the victory.

Fellow witnesses in Christ, the Athanasian Creed is about the “Who”. The Athanasian Creed points us to the loving God that we worship. He alone is the God who brings us the gift of salvation, showering it upon us freely and bountifully. That is the God we have. That is the God we worship today. In the name of the Blessed Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.