

Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." [John 3.5-6; RSV]

**Today is Trinity Sunday, and so you confessed the reality of the Triune God in the words of the Athanasian Creed. It is a long and detailed creed. And all of these details come from one source: God Himself. He reveals Himself to be "Triune," Three-in-One, as taught by Christ, "who came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." The earthly man Christ Jesus, who is Himself God, is the starting point for understanding heavenly things, especially the things of God Himself. Therefore, to Christ you must turn to understand that which He reveals concerning the mystery of the Blessed Holy Trinity.**

### **I.**

**Christ, the ultimate Word from God, teaches you that there is only one God. He embraces and proclaims the Old Testament truth, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord!" In the midst of nations with their multiple so-called gods, Israel is taught the**

**truth that there is but one God, and He is Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Through His chosen apostles, Christ teaches this heavenly truth: "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." The essence of God is that He is described by the earthly real number, One!**

**Christ also reveals that there is a divine person in the mystery of the one God: the Father. Our Lord takes the earthly concept of "father," and by His divine authority He tells you that this term applies to God. There is in the Godhead a heavenly Father. Jesus teaches you to pray to God the Father, "When you pray, say, 'Our Father who art in heaven.'" He repeated refers to "My Father which is in heaven." He tells His disciples that, after accomplish the world's salvation, "I go to My Father." There is in this One Triune God the person of God the Father.**

**Christ also reveals to you that He is Himself God. He is not just a prophet of God, not just "a son of God" among others. He is THE**

**Son of God, the only-begotten Son of the Father. “I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me.” In saying this, Christ does not suggest that He is a god alongside God the Father, but rather that He is God the Son within the One God: “I and My Father are One.”**

**When St. Thomas confesses Christ in these words, “My Lord and My God,” Christ does not reject this confession as wrong, but rather blesses this confession: “Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” To all the apostles, He says, “For the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came OUT FROM God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world and go to the Father.”**

**So you see, the man Christ Jesus is God the Son, a second person, distinct from the person of the Father, within the divine Godhead.**

**Finally, Christ also reveals that there is a third person in this Blessed Godhead, the Holy Spirit. He, too, is a person within the divine mystery of the Godhead. He is distinguished from the Father and the Son, by virtue of the way in which His personhood is described. The Father “Is.” The Son is the “only-begotten.” The Holy Spirit “proceeds” from the Father and the Son. The term “proceeds” does not mean “sent.” It is an eternal existence, a heavenly existence pictured for you with this earthly term, “proceeds.”**

**“Jesus says, “When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me.” The Holy Spirit, distinct from the Father and the Son, is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. Three persons, one Godhead: this is what Christ, the ultimate Word of God, reveals to you of God.**

## **II.**

**How does this glorious doctrine from your Lord**

**Jesus Christ apply to your life? First, the doctrine of the Blessed Holy Trinity teaches you humility. While your life is, as Scripture declares, “hidden with Christ in God,” it is lived in the earthly realm. You have not yet ascended into the heavenly realm, and for this reason, you cannot grasp and comprehend heavenly things. Earthlings cannot even grasp many earthly things; so, heavenly things are clearly out-of-bounds. As Jesus says to Nicodemus in the sermon text, “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you heavenly things?” The King James text uses the word, “ye,” the plural form of “you.” Jesus is not just speaking to Nicodemus alone; He is speaking to us all.**

**But there is this temptation into which Nicodemus falls, into which all of us fall. It is the temptation to ascend in the mind to heaven, there to grasp heavenly things. The devil fell from grace because He wanted to be equal with God. Mankind fell from grace by the**

**devil’s temptation that we be “as gods, knowing good and evil.” The sinful nature continues to corrupt us by the constant temptation to grasp God, comprehend God, and judge God from what we think we know of Him.**

**The doctrine of the Holy Trinity stops this human desire to have a grip on who God is and what He ought to do. That’s heavenly stuff; you and I are earthly. The doctrine of the Trinity stands as a call to humility. You cannot fully grasp God’s essence. Therefore, how can you possibly presume to judge this mysterious God?**

**Jesus teaches the doctrine of the Holy Trinity that you might humble yourself before God. Let Him be to you who He reveals Himself to be on earth, in the person of Jesus Christ. It is enough to know that God cares to reveal Himself to you in your earthly and sinful existence.**

**Secondly, the doctrine of the Blessed Holy Trinity teaches you salvation. God the Father, the First Person of the Trinity, has out of His Fatherly love chosen to save**

**lost humanity. God the Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, has chosen to come into the realm of the earthly, here to reveal the One God to you, here to save you, here to choose you as His own. God the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, has been sent to the earthly realm, through Christ's authorized earthly means of His words, His water, His bread and wine, to reveal God's saving acts in Him, for you, to convert you from unbelief to the status as God's child, and to keep you in this faith, now and forever.**

**Finally, the doctrine of the Blessed Holy Trinity teaches you assurance and comfort. Regardless of what father you have in your earthly life, you have the ultimate, perfect Father in heaven. He loves you, forgives you, is ever focused on your life, and is desirous to speak to you through His Word and to hear from you when you pray, which He tenderly invites you to do!**

**Regardless of what kind of son or daughter you have been, to this heavenly**

**Father you are the perfect child in Christ – you are the apple of His eye. You are covered with Christ's righteousness, and your status as God's child can no more be taken away from you than it can be taken away from God's only-begotten Son.**

**Regardless of what you think, say, and do—and in these things we all continually fall short—you have within you the Holy Spirit, who guides your life, who prays for you, and who strengthens your faith.**

**Your earthly life has been caught up by the Blessed Holy Trinity, the true and living God. To know who this is who has you in His hand is not a matter of searching, contemplating, or guessing. The mystery of God is beyond you; it is heavenly. Yet, by the wonder of God's grace, enough of the mystery is revealed to you in Christ, the Son of man who came down from heaven, that you may rest in Him, knowing you are embraced by the entirety of the true and living Go: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever!**