

POSSIBLE Prayer of the Church △ Feast of Holy Trinity May 31st 2026

Let us pray for the whole Church of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Blessed Father, we worship You not as we ought but as we are able, within the frailty of our minds and hearts that still struggle against sin and unbelief. Guard us by Your Spirit, that we may not grow weary nor lose sight of the goal before us. Work in us to display the good works of Him who has called us from darkness into His marvelous light. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Blessed Father, You have revealed Yourself to us in Christ, that we may know You by faith and confess You before the world. Give us Your Spirit, that all churches may confess truly and faithfully Your Word and live in harmony of doctrine and life, in anticipation of that day when we shall kneel together at Your altar. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Blessed Father, You gave Your only Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. Bless the work of missionaries as they carry this Gospel to the ends of the earth, that many may hear of Your love in Your Son and be saved through Him. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Blessed Father, You sit enthroned as King forever. Bless all who rule us in Your stead with wisdom and understanding, that truth and justice may prevail in our land and lawlessness may be kept at bay. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Blessed Father, uphold [Faith & Our Savior Prayers and all those we each name and keep in our hearts in personal prayer] and all who suffer in our midst by the truth, that since You are at their right hand, they cannot be shaken. Gladden their hearts, cause their tongues to rejoice and make their flesh dwell in hope. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Heavenly Father, from whom all fatherhood is named, we give You thanks for earthly fathers. Give them confidence in their station and zeal for their task to care for their families faithfully. Make them examples to their children of godly life and love of Your Word. Bless their work of bringing up children in the fear and instruction of the Lord, and give them the comfort of Your absolution over all their shortcomings. *LORD, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.*

Gather us together with all our fathers to Your eternal household; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our LORD, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

TRINITY SUNDAY Matthew 28:18-20 GREAT COMMISSION 5.31.26 F.OS.L

IT'S TRINITY SUNDAY. THE FESTIVAL OF THE HOLY TRINITY. "*Whosoever will be saved shall, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith. Which faith, except everyone keeps whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish eternally. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in Trinity and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons nor dividing the Substance.*"

CRYSTAL CLEAR[?]
Now I hope that's "**perfectly clear**" to everyone. Every time we confess the Athanasian Creed together on Trinity Sunday, I always feel like asking at the end, "*Are there any questions?*" [I'm sure there are.] Just look at those words **Trinity in Unity. Person. Substance. Incomprehensible. Coeternal. Coequal. Begotten. Proceeding.** You need a dictionary just to get through it. And then there's that **dire threat of hell fire** hanging over our heads unless we believe it "firmly and faithfully". [It's maybe] No wonder we say it only **once a year!**

LET GOD BE GOD
Now please don't get me wrong here. **The Athanasian Creed** is important because it says just about everything a person could possibly say about who the True God is. He is, whether we understand it or not, the Triune God – one God in three Persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – three distinct persons yet one undivided God. A Trinity of Persons. A Unity of substance or being. This God is revealed to us in the **pages of Holy Scripture** as the Lord who alone is God. **Unique. One-of-a-kind.** No other god like Him. But now that we've confessed the Athanasian Creed, are we in fact any closer to really **understanding** God than before? Not really. Saying the Athanasian Creed is not like comprehending a mathematical formula. Instead, it's like sitting on a lofty mountaintop, or walking along an awesome stretch of coastline, or gazing into the heavens on a clear night. It's the point at which we realise how **small WE are** and how **awesome and wonderful, mysterious and unfathomable GOD is**. And that point is a good place to be. For only then will we "let God be God," and we'll stop all the trying to "be god ourselves."

WHAT'S THE POINT[?]
This, then, is the point of this Sunday - the Feast of the Holy Trinity. Not to try to **understand** the Trinity better - as if that were possible – but to **stand in adoration** of the **Mystery**, to bow before the God who reveals Himself as a God who is beyond our comprehension, beyond our reason, beyond our powers to perceive or touch or know and yet who has made Himself known to us in the Person of His Son, and who, mystery of all mysteries, we can and do know as the God of all mercy and grace.

FAMILIARITY LEADS TO... **Which brings us to our text [READ: Matthew 28:18-20].** Now there's a problem with this text. Not in what it says, or what it is telling us about God – it's more a problem of **our familiarity with it**. Familiarity can tend to lead to [contempt?...] **a lack of interest**. And since we've heard these words so many times before, we can be fooled into thinking we really understand what they are saying, and so don't really listen to them. Don't switch off then and go to sleep. These words are **an invitation to us to become participants** in the **Divine Mystery**. The Triune God invites us to be part of the Mystery. There are no spectators in the kingdom of God.

MATTHEW 28:18

“And Jesus came and said to [the disciples], ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me.’”

God begins by introducing Himself. Of course, we already knew it was Jesus – we just confessed it in the **Athanasian Creed**. But the disciples were still dazed by the resurrection. There was still some doubt. So Jesus **spells it out clearly** – “I am the Almighty God with unlimited authority, in heaven and on earth. I am in control of all things and my will is supreme. When you have seen Me, you have seen My Father, for what belongs to Him belongs also to Me. And so that you might know and believe Me, I have made this known to you by the Counsellor, the Holy Spirit, who you have by my Word. But don’t worry if you don’t understand it all. Just open your eyes & keep them focused on the view. It’s *breath-taking*.

MATTHEW 28:19

Jesus’ authority is also His Commission for His disciples to go and take His salvation to the nations. **“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”** [v.19] His disciples – **YOU & I** – are God’s **instruments**. He works His magic through us. He’s behind the scenes, but we’re on-stage. Now making disciples is not like baking biscuits (or making magic) – it’s not like we mix up a batch of disciples, put them in the oven for 20 minutes on a moderate heat, and presto, instant disciples. No, it’s a **far deeper mystery**. **God alone** is the disciple-Maker, but He is present in the world **in and through us**. All our prayers and praises have a common source and goal in the Holy Trinity. Every word and every action of every Christian is carried out by the Holy Trinity for the Holy Trinity. We are **part of the Mystery**. Christ is **present** in the world through us.

AMAZING MATTHEW 28:19b Which is pretty amazing, after all. We are the last people you would expect God to use. We who are still so skeptical, so blind to the wonder of God, so easily distracted, so obtuse to the mystery. God uses us, with all our faults and failings, and makes us what He wants us to be – His disciple-makers. And what does He give us to use? The seemingly unmagical washing called “Baptism”. **“Make disciples...Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.”** The beauty of baptism lies precisely in its **lack** of appearance. A few drops of H₂O on a forehead. Surely there must be more to the trick than that. But **there isn’t**. It’s all God needs. No bright lights, no voices from heaven, no emotional experience. Just a simple washing in the name of the Triune God. That’s all that’s necessary.

“IN THE NAME OF ___”

In that washing with the Word God Himself is present – the Son with the Father and the Holy Spirit – one eternal, incomprehensible, uncreated God. The person baptized “in the Name of the **Father**” has God as **their Father**; “in the Name of the **Son**” **receives all the benefits** of the Son’s **redeeming** act; “in the Name of the **Spirit**” receives the life-giving, life-sustaining **power** and **presence** of the Spirit. To be baptised in the Name of Triune God is to be brought to a new beginning, to become a **new creation**. It is to be brought from darkness into light, to have the blindfold removed so that one’s eyes are opened to the mystery of God in the person of Jesus. It is to be given a gift and open it and find inside the **greatest** treasure, the most precious pearl of all: **True Peace with God**.

MATTHEW 28:20a

Now “discipling” is not only about giving the gift, it is also about teaching others to treasure it. **“...and teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”** To observe the commandments of God means much more than “to obey” them. It means to keep them, to ponder them, to revel in them as one revels in the letters received from a loved one. In Baptism we received everything that Jesus died to provide for us. The forgiveness of our sins. Membership in the holy Church, which is His body. Resurrection, eternal life, salvation. The presence of Christ and the Father both in us and among us in the congregation. It is all in place for us, so near and close to us, to draw upon and be part of each and every day. That is what Jesus wants us to keep, to observe and to treasure.

CATECHESIS

That takes a **lifetime of learning**. We can so easily be tempted to replace this priceless treasure for any “shiny trinket” we are offered. Such teaching is known in Lutheran circles as *Catechesis*. It is **not** being taught what we should do, but **who we are**. It is being taught to pray and live as baptized children of God, to confess our sins and receive absolution from the mouth of our pastor as from God Himself, to eat and drink the body and blood of our Lord in the bread and wine of the *Eucharist*. Catechesis is the **life-long journey** to the summit of **Mount Zion**, where the “air is thinner,” the view more breath-taking, and the light more and more blinding. The more we come to know, the more wondrous is the mystery of God. And the more we realize that in this baptizing and teaching, Jesus is present and active in our lives. He is making you new, and keeping you in the Name of God – forgiving you, cleansing you, feeding you, bringing you order and peace, until that day you rise from the dead and God once again says “very good”. This is the mystery of God’s presence in our lives, as he promised: **“Behold I am with you always to the end of the age.”**

LIFE, PEACE, JOY, HOPE... God is **with us**, and **we are with Him**. He is not with us **“IF** we observe everything that He commands,” but rather **“in everything** He commands”. He is present in His Word. Jesus is the Word of God. Where the Word is, there is Jesus Himself. And where Jesus is, there also is the Father and the Spirit, inseparable, undivided. And where God is, there is **life** and **salvation**, **freedom** and **peace**, **joy** and **hope**. Jesus is ever our Emmanuel, **“God with us”**. He is with us in the Church, which is His Body. He is with us in the called servant who He sent hereto be His mouth publicly. He is with us in those he places to speak His forgiveness privately, when we confess and absolve each other. He is with us in the **Sacraments** He instituted and commanded to be continued. And He is with us **in His Word**, which we **share!**

MATTHEW 28:20b

This is His promise: “I will never be absent from you a single day but I will remain with you, with My Church, until the last day when you will see Me again in all my glory.” Don’t worry ‘*how*’ this can be. Instead, just keep your eyes focused on the view. Keep hold of the treasure which was placed in your hearts in Holy Baptism. Let God teach you who you are, as He makes you into His disciple for your neighbor. Embrace the mystery, and let God open your lips, so that your mouth may forever declare His praise.

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. SDG