

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

In our confession of faith, we say “I believe in God the Father Almighty”, “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son, our Lord”, and “I believe in the Holy Spirit”. We confess our faith in our Triune God, especially appropriate today on Holy Trinity Sunday, we will do so shortly in the words of the Apostles’ Creed. So what is a creed? A creed is a statement of belief; to recite, read, say the Apostles’ Creed necessarily starts with the words “I believe”. So what do I believe? I believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit. One God. Three persons. Three persons. One God.

So explain that please. How can you say you believe in One God, yet three persons? Good question! Have you ever tried to explain what you believe, who you profess faith in, to someone of a different faith? Or to a child? Or to another adult? I’ve had these conversations with people of different faith, e.g., Islam, Buddhism, Mormon, and I’ve had these conversations with children. And with people who just don’t know anything about Christianity.

People who aren’t Christian often assume we worship three Gods; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But the truth is that we worship One God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Now I’ve used different analogies over the years to describe the Trinity in some way that might be helpful to someone trying to understand our faith. I’ve described water as liquid, solid and vapor. I’ve described trees as trunk, branches, leaves. I’ve described eggs as shell, yolk, white stuff. These analogies are kind of helpful, but only to a point.

So have you ever looked up the definition of a tornado? I looked it up just this past week. So here’s the “official meteorological” definition of a tornado, as used by scientists:

*A violently rotating column of air, usually pendant to a cumulonimbus, with circulation reaching the ground. It nearly always starts as a funnel cloud and may be accompanied by a loud roaring noise. On a local scale, it is the most destructive of all atmospheric phenomena.*

We have a violently rotating column of air also known as wind, pendant to a cumulonimbus or hanging from a cloud, and circulation reaching the ground that is the funnel reaching down to the ground. Cloud, wind, funnel. One thing or three? Can it be a tornado without a cloud producing it? Can you have a funnel without wind? You can think of all sorts of variations to the questions you can ask. But it’s only a tornado when a cloud and wind produce a funnel.

We have the Holy Trinity, Father, Spirit, Son; cloud, wind and funnel. The wind of course has to be Holy Spirit, the funnel reaches the ground so it must be the Son, it all stems from the Father or the cloud.

An interesting analogy, the forces of a tornado aren't independent of each other but function together, as does the Trinity. The Son of God was on earth incarnate. Now that's about as far as I want to go with this analogy because unlike the destructive power of a tornado, the Holy Trinity cleanses the destructive power of sin, death and the devil.

Now we have Jesus talking with Nicodemus in our gospel this morning, a fellow Jew, a Pharisee, a teacher of Israel, a man who knows at least that Jesus is a teacher come from God because of the signs (miracles) that Jesus does, and no one could do these things apart from the presence of God. Nicodemus sees these things, he knows he is seeing something special, but he doesn't know what he is seeing. The blind see, the lame walk, water is changed to wine, but what Nicodemus doesn't quite grasp is that these signs point to Jesus and to the Father, the source of Jesus himself.

Jesus talks of water and the Spirit, that what is born of the Spirit is Spirit. Jesus talks of baptism, being born from above into the life of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Baptized with water and the Spirit, claimed by God, a child of God as Paul tells us in his letter to the Romans, a heir of God. We no longer live according to the flesh for if we do, we will die, instead led by the Spirit of God, we are children of God.

We belong to God, we are Christians, little Christs, led by the Spirit of God, used by God as his hands, feet and voice in this world, blessed by God to be a blessing. Born from above, believers in Jesus and so promised eternal life, as we tell the story, as we share our gifts with others, as we pray even as we may suffer, living our lives that others including those who know nothing of our faith, will want to find out more, as they see our lives swept up in the Spirit of the Father living as the Body of Christ, that all may see the works of God and give glory to the Father.

AMEN