

# **The Festival of the Holy Trinity**

## **30 May 2010**

“But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.”

- Jesus in his Farewell Conversation [John 15.26]

### **The Festival's Origins**

This day marks one of the six major festivals in the Church's year. It emerged in France during the 900s. Its observance spread into England, Germany and the Netherlands through the activities of monasteries. The Roman Catholic Church officially approved it in 1334. The Holy Trinity Festival sums up the entire teaching of the Scriptures as the revelation of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

In his catechisms, Martin Luther did not go into detail on the mystery of the Holy Trinity. Instead, like the biblical writers, he focused more on the Trinity's actions for the rescue of creation and the making holy of God's people.

Within the Lutheran tradition of observing this festival is the custom of reading the Athanasian Creed. It is not possible to pin down its precise date, author and place of origin. It may have originated in France during the late 400s or the early 500s. Like the Te Deum it put into verbal form what were held as central convictions and was widely employed in public worship. The creed is quite different in style from the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds, but its teachings are not, even though the phrases and thoughts are more repetitive.

The Athanasian Creed is named for an early church bishop, Athanasius, who served in Alexandria, Egypt. He was born there around 295. At the Council of Nicaea in 325, while still a deacon, he defended the divinity of Christ. From that time on he spoke strongly for Christian orthodoxy against Arianism. The Arian teachings maintained that God's Son is not of the same substance as the Father. They believed that the Son was created as an agent by the Father so the world could be created by the Son. The teachings had surfaced in the early 300s and were confronted by the Nicene Creed in 325. Athanasius was consecrated Bishop of Alexandria in 328 and served 45 years in that office. It was a time of continual turmoil caused by civil authorities and heretical clergy. Because of his relentless defense of the faith, Athanasius earned the title, “Father of Orthodoxy.”

### **Requesting your Prayers and Gifts**

The Society of the Holy Trinity (described on the reverse side) invites your prayers for our life and work together. We also invite your contributions on a continual or one-time basis. These gifts build up an Endowment Fund and maintain a Travel Fund. These contributions can be made out to The Society of the Holy Trinity and sent to the Society's secretary: Pr. John E. Priest, Immanuel Lutheran Church, 17 High Street, Delhi, NY 13753.



# The Society of the Holy Trinity

[Founded September, 1997]

The Society is a ministerium (order) of pastors who have been ordained in Lutheran churches throughout North America and Australia. In a time of doctrinal confusion and moral uncertainty, we support one another in remaining faithful to the promises spoken at ordination into the Church's ministry.

The Lutheran ordination rites are imbedded in these realities:

- ✦ In Baptism we are plunged into the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ
- ✦ Baptism draws us into the Life of the Holy Trinity
- ✦ Baptism rescues us from the realities of sin, Satan and death

The ordination promises confess that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God and the norm (or rule) for the church's faith and practice. Lutheran pastors accept, teach and confess the three ecumenical creeds: Apostles', Nicene and Athanasian. They also believe the Lutheran Confessions (**The Book of Concord**) to be a true witness to and a faithful unpacking of the Holy Scriptures.

Immersed in the Lord's Scriptures and Sacraments, the ordained pastor carries and reflects the Lord's Life to an absorbed, afflicted and agonized world. The Society assists that carrying and reflecting by encouraging obedience to Jesus Christ, by using the daily prayer offices and the daily lectionary of the Church, and by studying the Scriptures, the Confessions, the church fathers and the church's tradition.

The Society reminds its members that through the Lord's Word and the Son's Cross we are stirred and sustained to be faithful carriers and reflectors of the Lord's Life. The Lord's Word comes to us through the Scriptures and impacts us at Baptism. It continues to stream into our lives through the Lord's Supper and Forgiveness. Through the practice of prayer and worship on a daily and weekly basis, the Word continues to make its way into the church's life and for the sake of the world's people. The Word is most visibly expressed in the Son's Cross which breaks the world's life apart and sets people within the Life bursting from his Resurrection. This is why, in a time of doctrinal confusion and moral uncertainty, we encourage and support one another in remaining faithful to the promises spoken at ordination into the church's ministry.

## **Society Officers**

Senior: Pr. Frank C. Senn, Evanston, IL

Vicar: Pr. Carl A. Voges, Columbia, SC

Secretary: Pr. John E. Priest, Delhi, NY

Bursar: Pr. Mark A. Hoffman, Millersburg, PA

Web Site: [www.societyholyltrinity.org](http://www.societyholyltrinity.org)