

**This We Believe**  
**June 7, 2009 – Holy Trinity**  
**Rev. Paul Johns**

Isaiah 6:1-8  
John 3:1-17

Certainly one of the biggest words at this time of year is the word “Graduation.” Graduation is a mark of having successfully completed a step in the educational process.

One time when I was in college a professor said he wanted to talk with me. We respected and enjoyed each other, so this was not intimidating. He said, “Paul, I am concerned about you. You have a good mind, but I worry that your Christian faith is holding you back from developing that mind. For example, your faith is based on something called the Trinity, One God, but reveals himself in three persons. That is an outright contradiction.”

I can’t remember that conversation from over fifty years ago, but, for this morning, on this Holy Trinity Sunday, I would like to begin with the last command of Jesus which was to baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Ultimate truth is not something found in the Aristotelian Square of Logic, but it is something found in the revelation of God to us. And how does God reveal himself to us?

We open the Bible and the first story is that of creation. It is only one page long. It simply tells us that God did it. It does not say how. It is almost like saying, “One thing for sure, we did not make this world.” Martin Luther explains the first article of the Creed by simply saying, “I believe that God created.” Only God could bring something into being starting from nothing.

But then Luther sharpens this up a little by calling attention to Psalm 24. The earth is the Lord’s. Luther and Katie were outdoor people who believed that we treat carefully and with respect the wonderful world that God made.

But something else. The earth is the Lord’s and all who dwell therein. One of our persons in the Tuesday morning class said, “The Lord’s Prayer begins, ‘Our Father,’ because we have the same Father. I am a brother or sister of that person sitting in church with me this morning.” What a difference that makes to how we think about other people.

Then the second part of the Creed is, “I believe in Jesus Christ.”

The key role of Christ is stated in the Gospel for this morning. It is the second most memorized passage in the Bible, second only to the Lord’s Prayer. For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son that, whoever believes in Him, might not perish but have eternal life.

Luther puts it this way. I believe that Jesus Christ, true God and true man, is able to save us. He came into the world not to condemn us but to save us.

Then the third part of the Creed is, "I believe in the Holy Spirit."

A famous archaeologist by the name of C. S. Mann has done a word study on the Hebrew Shema. The Shema in Deuteronomy says, "Hear, O Israel, behold our God is one Lord." Says C. S. Mann, "This is not just a statement of doctrine; it is a statement of life. It is like saying, 'When I receive God, the Holy Spirit into my life, I am saying, God, your will, not mine, be done.'" We are not perfect, but our desire is. One Lord for all times.

She was described as Chicago's Legendary "Queen of the Blues." Koko Taylor died this past Wednesday less than four weeks after performing for the Blues Awards. She was devout but gritty, knew extreme poverty and great success.

The Holy Trinity covers it all, but let me try this, "God, the Father/Creator, God, the Son/ Savior, and God the Holy Spirit/Guide. Amen.