

THE TRIUNE ELOHIM!  
TRINITY SUNDAY  
(19 June Anno Domini 2011)

*In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen!*

Today we rejoice in the mystery of that invocation and the mystery of our faith - the “tri-unity” of God - that God is three Persons in one divine Being and one divine Being in three distinct Persons, neither confusing the Persons nor dividing the Being.

That mystery is already revealed in the very first sentence of the Bible in the book of Genesis. **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”**. The word for “God” is Elohim – it is plural and yet there is but one God. The Jewish people learned a very important saying in their youth, the Shema Yisrael Deuteronomy 6:4 **“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God (Elohim, Plural), the LORD is one!** The Spirit of God, whom we know as the Holy Spirit, is there in the beginning, hovering like a smoke over the face of the waters. And the Word is there too, as God speaks and it is so, for God Words it into being.

John identifies this Word as the eternal, only-begotten Son of the Father. And so you might say that the entire work of creation is from the Father through the Son (the Word) by the Holy Spirit. John 1:1: **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”**. And Colossians 1:16 **“For by Him (that is Jesus) all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him”**.

Each creative day gives us a daily liturgy for prayer and praise, reminding us that no matter where we look in this awe-inspiring and complex creation, we are seeing the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The creative days also give a liturgical structure and rhythm for our own work week. You might say that Genesis chapter 1 is the rhythm of the symphony of creation, the drumbeat of the cosmic order, under the creative direction of the Divine Conductor.

Listen to the rhythm:

Day one (Sunday): **Light**. “Let there be light,” and light there is. The work week begins with light. And it was good.

Day two (Monday): **Sky**. Our earth’s unique atmosphere makes our planet a rare treasure among the planets - oxygen and water, dancing clouds that produce rain and let in sunshine. Clear yet protective. And it was good.

Day three (Tuesday): **Sea and dry land**, sea and dry land with their playful interface of beach and tide pools, shoreline and water. How we love looking over the water and sitting on the shore, the place where sea and dry land kiss. And it was good.

And more: Plants springing up from the dry land in all their wonderful diversity, marigolds and poppies, fir and oak trees along with tasty apple, cherry, orange, lemon and almond trees. And it was good.

Day four (Wednesday): **Sun, moon, and stars**, a magnificent cosmic light show for signs and seasons. Sun and moon - the right size, the right distance, the right relationship to each

other. The next time there is a total eclipse of the sun (which will be November 13, 2012 in Australia, in case you want to see it), notice how the moon perfectly covers the sun like a lens cap. And it was good.

Day five (Thursday): **Fish in the sea; birds in the air** - showing the artistry of the triune God. The fish, the birds displayed in all their glorious shapes and sizes and colors. But at the same time I think it shows the humor of the triune God. How else would you describe all their wonderfully peculiar and humorous mating and nesting rituals? Just by looking at them, you know that fish and birds belong to the same liturgical choir. And it was good.

Day six (Friday): **The animals - domestic, wild, creeping** - in all their diversity from aardvark to zebra, from the ant to the zorilla.

And more: last of all in the grand hierarchy, Man uniquely in the image of God. If God is the conductor of creation's symphony, then Man is the concert master. Again the triune Mystery as God speaks to Himself - ***"Let us make man in our image."*** Like the Persons of the Trinity, man is made for relationship. Male and female He created them. And God blessed them to be fruitful. And it was very good.

Day seven (Saturday): **Rest**, the endless day and the day with no morning or evening. It's God's reminder that we live by faith and not by our works. Faith rests in God and enjoys the fruits of our labors and of God's labor. We rest by faith in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. St. Augustine said it this way, ***"Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."***

Each creative day reflects the creative work of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each work reflects the love of the Father, the wisdom of the Son, the life of the Spirit. Everywhere you look and listen there is worship of the triune God, the liturgy of the creation. The heavens declare it to the glory of God, the skies proclaim the works of His hands, as do sea and dry land, plants, sun, moon, and stars, fish and birds, animals and man - a chorus of praise.

Our sin destroys the harmony and the rhythm of creation. It is a sour note, a arbitrary chaotic and clattering noise, disturbing the order. The whole creation feels it and groans down to the smallest living creature. It's that foreign, alien word - that lie to Eve and to Adam - God is not true; you can be like God. We see the effects - destruction, devastation, decay and death. The earthquakes, the eruptions, the tornados and hurricanes are the groanings of the creation waiting for our redemption, for the new creation, for our resurrection. We see the effects in our own lives - the brokenness, the hurt, the diseases, the suffering and the killing. Maybe not with hands but with our eyes and with our words, a bitter and hateful look a sharp tongue with words designed to destroy.

The Father loves the world. He hates nothing He created. He shows His love for the world by sending His eternal Son, the Word, in our flesh. Jesus came to embrace the world, to shed His blood on a cross, to die and rise, and in dying and rising to rescue all that He had made from decay and destruction. This is the triune God's second great work: redemption. He redeems what He created.

We talk about "saving the earth." We didn't create it, and we can't save it. We can take care of it and be good stewards of its resources but we can't save it. Jesus has, by His dying and rising. He has brought the new creation, by water and Spirit, in Baptism. He has poured

out His Spirit on the face of this dying earth by the preaching of the Gospel, the good news of His atoning death and life in His resurrection.

Jesus holds **“all authority in heaven and on earth”** (Matthew 28:18). He received it from the Father from all eternity. The Son of God in human flesh reigns over His creation, having redeemed it by His blood. He’s “the man in charge.” With His authority, He authorizes His Church to make disciples of all the nations, as many as He died for, everyone without exception. Disciples are made by baptizing and teaching. Baptizing in the triune Name - the fullness God’s self-revelation, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching the fullness of what Jesus entrusted to His Church. In this disciple-making, Jesus is present - **“Lo, I am with you always”** (Matthew 28:20)

This is the third work of the triune God: sanctification - to make holy by water and the Word.

The new creation has already come in Jesus, a new first day, a day of light and of life. The resurrection of Jesus and the outpouring of the Spirit tell us that even as the old is passing away, even as the grand diversity of species go extinct and the very life of the earth is threatened with mutation and decay, even as we ourselves die, a new creation has already dawned with the open, empty tomb of Jesus and the outpouring of the Spirit.

That’s why the Church worships on Sunday - it’s a new creation day, the first day of an eternity in Christ of which you already participate through your Baptism. Your life is already hidden with Christ in God. You already live in the Trinitarian love of God as a sinner justified for Jesus’ sake, baptized into the most Holy Name.

The small catechism teaches us to invoke the Triune Name every morning when we arise and every evening before we go to sleep. *“In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”* Every morning we consecrate our work day in the Name of God who made the heavens and the earth. And every evening we offer up that day’s work as a living sacrifice to the God who redeemed us and all creation with the blood of His Son, Jesus Christ.

**“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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”** And here at Messiah – for more that 34 years there has been a discipling of the nations, of baptizing and teaching under the grace of God. Such a privilege it is to confess the Name, to worship the Name, to glorify the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Elohim the Triune God. For the Lord our God is One and He sent His Son so that through Him we have forgiveness and life ever lasting. You have His (†) Word on it. In Jesus name, amen and amen!

The peace of the Triune God which passes all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. AMEN