

In the Name of the Father, and of the ✠ Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The tripartite acclamation, the Three-In-One doxology, the thrice proclaimed Sanctus of the celestial Seraphim that Isaiah witnessed is the revelation by created, sinless creatures of the Nature of God. They surround Him for eternity, they see Him as He is, their kerygmatic cry reveals Him to you. Through their words you peer into the very being of God, and see a heavenly Truth that surpasses all understanding.

More mysterious than the heavenly Seraphim is the Truth of the God who created them. His is an unfathomable Multiplicity, and yet an inseparable Unity. God the Father is Holy. God the Son is Holy. God the Spirit is Holy. And yet they are not three holies, but One Holy. Our understanding of God is limited by our minds and our vocabulary. A plural subject requires a plural verb, and yet in truth the Great I AM are Three, and at the same time the Thrice Holy Ones is One.

At His baptism, as the Son came up out of the water, the Father spoke audibly, and the Spirit descended visibly. As Nicodemus receives the salvific teaching of God the Son, it is that same Son who speaks of the Father and the Spirit. The Son does so in the plural: “We speak of what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness.” On the mount of His Transfiguration, the Son was glorified, the Father spoke audibly, and a bright cloud enveloped Him.

And as men came to Philip, asking to see Jesus, the same Incarnate Son who would send the Holy Spirit asked that the Name of God be glorified, and the Father proclaimed audibly “I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.” So exclaim with the Apostle, you who are given to ponder such mysteries: “Oh, the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

It is no wonder that the things of God pass our understanding. Our minds are finite, He is infinite. Our understanding is clouded by the fall, our thoughts infected by the sin it brought. God is omniscient, our thoughts limited by our errant preconceptions. But these wrong opinions are not mere sophistry.

They lead us to believe wrongly about God. They lead us to self-aggrandize. They lead us to minimize our sins, to explain them away, to find excuses for the very behaviors that God clearly teaches separate us from Him, harmful thoughts and acts that we can't seem to give up. That which is born of flesh is flesh.

So let your lament be the cry of the Prophet: “Woe is me for I am undone! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips...!” Wonder with Nicodemus “How can these things be?” And ponder the Lord's Words to him, for they are Words for all fallen men, Words for you: “If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things?”

God's ontology, His being, His nature, while beyond our comprehension, is our confession. And as mysterious as His Triune Nature is, so too is His mercy beyond our comprehension. For the God that no man could understand became Man to redeem you, that you be reconciled to Him:

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was the Son of Man lifted up. He was lifted up on the cross, suspended between God and man, sacrificing Himself for your sins.

No one has ascended into heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. He is risen. He is ascended. The Son has taken His rightful place at the Right Hand, giving the heavenly throne room its center, with the Father and the Holy Spirit. The Father is Spirit only. The Spirit is Spirit only. But God the Son took on your flesh, that you be redeemed. And with His Body, fully God and fully Man, He ascended into heaven.

In that there is great comfort for you, dear Christian. For the One who saves you lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, One God, having won heaven for you. And His salvation He makes yours in time and space – here, this day, from this pulpit, from this font, from this altar, God comes to you.

Holy Baptism is the new birth, the birth from above, of which the Lord taught Nicodemus. It brings God to you. It brings you to God. It gives you new life. Holy Baptism is the birth of water and the Spirit. It is the birth by which you enter the Kingdom of God. For that which is born of Spirit is spirit. You have been washed, you have been justified, you have been and are being sanctified, that the Spirit of God lead you to whom He has granted new birth where He wishes.

Not by a Seraphim, but by the one called, ordained and sent by Christ, not by celestial tongs, but by Paten, not by a coal, but by the Body and Blood of Christ, is what the Seraphim proclaimed to the Prophet true of you: this has touched your lips, your iniquity is taken away, and your sin purged.

The Lord tells you heavenly things and by the Spirit you believe. The Lord brings you heavenly Gifts, and by the Spirit you receive. You receive Christ. And receiving Christ, you have Communion with God, Communion with the Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

Shaking doorposts and smoke-filled temples are done away with. For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest...

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament.

The God that transcends your understanding, the Thrice-Holy Triune God, the Three in One and One in Three, loves you. He who is Three in One makes you One with Him. He who created you has redeemed you and sanctifies you. The whole earth is full of His glory. Heaven is full of His glory. He is the King, the Lord of hosts. Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever.

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