

# The Festival of the Holy Trinity

Hymns: 244, 237, 245, 246

[ use **The Athanasian Creed** ]

The INTROIT

(Liturgical text; Ps.8:1)

*P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity and the undivided Unity;*

**C: let us give glory to Him because He hath shown His mercy to us.**

*P: O Lord, our Lord;*

**C: how excellent is Thy name in all the earth!**

The COLLECT

Almighty and everlasting God, who has given unto us, Thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity and in the power of the Divine Majesty to worship the Unity, we beseech Thee that Thou would keep us steadfast in this faith and evermore defend us from all adversities; who liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end.

The **FIRST LESSON**

**Ezekiel 18:30-32 (NKJV)**

“Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways,” says the Lord GOD. “Repent, and turn from all your transgressions, so that iniquity will not be your ruin. Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel? For I have no pleasure in the death of one who dies,” says the Lord GOD. “Therefore turn and live!”

THE GRADUAL

(Song of the Three 29,32-34)

*P: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who beholdest the deep:*

**C: and who dwellest between the cherubim.**

*P: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven:*

**C: and greatly to be praised forever. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

*P: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers:*

**C: and greatly to be praised and glorified forever. Hallelujah!**

The **EPISTLE**

**Romans 11:33-36 (NKJV)**

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

The SENTENCE for the Season

(Ps. 119:124)

*P: Hallelujah! O Lord, deal with Thy servant according unto Thy mercy and teach me Thy statutes. I am Thy servant, give me understanding:*

**C: that I may know Thy testimonies. Hallelujah!**

There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, “Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?”

Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’ The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

Nicodemus answered and said to Him, “How can these things be?”

Jesus answered and said to him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

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## Romans 11:33-36 — “Oh, the Depth!”

### INTRODUCTION

I. OH, THE DEPTH!

II. FOR WHO HAS KNOWN . . . ?

III. FOR OF HIM AND THROUGH HIM AND TO HIM ARE ALL THINGS

### CONCLUSION

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Romans 11:33-36 — “Oh, the Depth!”

Grace, mercy, and peace to you all from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.  
Amen.

The sermon text is the Epistle Reading for the Festival of the Holy Trinity, Romans 11:33-36:

**Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!  
How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For  
who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?  
Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him? For of Him and  
through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.**

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

## INTRODUCTION

Today is the Festival of the Holy Trinity. On this day the appointed readings direct our hearts to what God has revealed to us concerning His wondrous will concerning us. The will of God is beyond our comprehension apart from what He has revealed to us. The rich wonder is that He has revealed it to us and He has made Himself known to us in Christ Jesus our Lord. In the body of Jesus the fullness of God dwells. Into the body of Jesus God incorporates us through Baptism so that all that is of God is made to be ours in Christ. Truly the depth of this is beyond what we can properly explain or understand, nevertheless we do enjoy God’s riches purely by His grace through His means of grace in His Church.

### I. OH, THE DEPTH!

**“Oh the depth of riches and of wisdom and of knowledge of God!”** This is the actual flow of the text. The dear apostle does not speak merely of the depth of the riches of both the wisdom and knowledge of God, but of the depth of riches and of wisdom and of knowledge. He speaks of the depth of a holy trinity. Moreover, these deep things of God are not divided by definite articles but are listed as what is revealed to us by God Himself concerning Himself in His holy Communion. These are descriptive terms for the persons of the Trinity. Riches describes the Father from whom all good is given. Wisdom describes the Son who is the power and wisdom of God. Knowledge describes the Holy Spirit who is the Paraclete or Counselor who teaches us all things concerning Christ and the Holy Communion of God. Truly St. Paul is urging us to stand back and observe the depth of what God has revealed to us concerning Himself and His merciful nature and love.

**“Oh the depth!”** Who can argue with that? We are but tiny specks floating on the sea of riches and wisdom and knowledge. But when we plunge beneath the surface we can see that the depth is far beyond what we are capable of comprehending. Nevertheless, by God’s grace we are immersed in the depth of God’s Holy Communion. All that is of God is ours in Christ Jesus, into whom we have been incorporated through faith. God has poured out His Spirit of knowledge

into our hearts so that know God. Our ability to comprehend this depth of knowledge is far beyond us, but with God Himself dwelling in us and with His wondrous incorporation of us into His body through Baptism, we do enjoy the benefits of this knowledge. Day by day we experience it in various degrees, as the Holy Spirit works in us to make us aware of the blessing and joy that Christ has purchased for us and that are ours through the communion of the saints.

This knowledge is made ours in connection with the goodness of our heavenly Father. His goodness is everywhere. He continually pours out His immeasurable blessings, even upon those who wickedly deny Him. Such is the vastness or depth of God's riches. He gives and gives and gives, even to those who choose to be His enemies. He gives life and preserves life. He keeps the universe ordered and functioning. His sun rises and powers the world and His rain falls and refreshes the earth. All of this continues for each of us for as long as we have been appointed to live in this world. Our heavenly Father continues to bless us, both with what we perceive as good things, and with what we perceive to be bad things. But in all things our heavenly Father seeks good for us. In what we perceive as good things He gives happiness and peace and security. With what we perceive as bad things He calls us to acknowledge our great need for His salvation. With what we perceive as bad things He makes us to realize that we cannot exist for even one moment without His mercy and love. These things show us that by our own choices we separate ourselves from His Holy Communion in which life and every blessing are ours. He wants us to realize our dependence upon Him so that we will not choose the ways that destroy us.

All of this is in connection with the wisdom of Christ Jesus. For in the depth of God's wisdom God established our salvation in Christ Jesus even from eternity. God's eternal will is our salvation. Thus the entire universe is established toward this desire of God for us. Jesus is the wisdom by which God overthrows all that would keep us from living in His kingdom of grace and blessing. Jesus is the wisdom by which the emptiness of our foolishness is filled up. What is impossible for us to understand according to our own reason and strength, God fills up in us through Jesus.

**“Oh the depth!”** Truly this is the response that our hearts declare as we begin to realize what God works for us in His Holy Communion. How wondrous His judgments are! Surely we cannot search them out. Yet He declares them to us in His Holy Scriptures. Surely His ways are beyond our finding out, yet He declares them to us in His Holy Scriptures and makes His ways our ways through His means of grace.

## II. FOR WHO HAS KNOWN . . . ?

**“For who has known the mind of the LORD?”** Truly, who has known? There is one! Jesus! Jesus is the one man who knows the mind of the LORD, for He is the LORD. Now here is what is truly amazing. When we receive the pure administration of the Gospel and the Sacraments, we are made to be of the same mind as Jesus. Do you realize the depth of this? Jesus is the LORD! Through the means of grace in the body of Christ we are made to know the mind of the LORD!

**“For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?”** Who on earth has become the LORD's counselor? Yet in the Holy Communion we have direct access to the LORD and He hears us! Yes, as we receive the pure means of grace we are made to have the same mind and will as God so that God empowers us to speak in accord with His good and gracious will and He listens to us! He willingly receives our counsel as a true Father listens

to His beloved children. Is this not deep?! Is this not cause to marvel?

**“For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?”** Truly all things that we have we have because the LORD gives them to us. Whatever we give to one another or to the work that God has established, we give from the riches of what He has given to us. Nevertheless, God counts these as true gifts which He receives from us and credits to us for Jesus’ sake. Moreover, God responds as though we did Him some great service and He pours out even greater gifts as rewards for what we have done in Him. Is this not deep? God works His wondrous love in us so that we respond with the Love that He gives us and He counts this as a work worthy of everlasting rewards! Oh the depth! Such is the way of the LORD our God!

### III. FOR OF HIM AND THROUGH HIM AND TO HIM ARE ALL THINGS

**“For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”** God does it all! All that we have and are is from Him. All things are from Him and return to Him to accomplish what He has ordained. In all things He continually works good, and He works His good for us. He established the universe for us. He sent Jesus into the world for us. He sacrificed Jesus for us. He took life back into the body of Jesus for us. He received Jesus into the heavens again for us. He maintains the body of Jesus with all power and glory for us so that we may receive His power and glory as members of His body. He has poured out His Holy Spirit for us.

**“For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”** This is much more than an ascription of praise. This is a declaration of fact. This is how things are by God’s grace. This is the depth of riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! This is the depth of what God reveals to us and gives to us in His Church!

### CONCLUSION

**“Oh the depth!”** When the Gospel is administered without compromise, this is what we receive! It is beyond our understanding, yet from the moment that God’s grace is poured out to us in Baptism to the moment that we draw our last breath, this is the depth of what we receive from our gracious God. Though the little baby does not understand what is received in Baptism, nevertheless that baby is established in God’s Holy Communion and is a full communicant of all that is in Christ Jesus. All of our lives this is what God causes us to receive as members of His Communion of Saints. We receive from Him the depth of riches and of wisdom and of knowledge of God, and we communicate this to the world with our lives, lives that God Himself has established. His love is made to be our love. His mercy is made to be our mercy. His peace is made to be our peace. These are ours as He gives us His life in which to live. Even the angels long to look into the depths. Even the angels stand in awe of the mystery. Such things are fully ours in Christ Jesus. In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus forever. Amen.