

Faith in Five – Adults
The Holy Trinity
June 10, 2022

1. **What is Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity?** The feast honors the three Persons of God: The Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is celebrated the Sunday after Pentecost. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (261) says the Trinity is the central Mystery of the Christian Faith and of Christian Life. God alone can make it known to us by revealing himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. **How is the Trinity explained?** The Trinity is God as one Being, existing as three persons. This teaching of the Catholic church is foundational to our faith: We must believe in no one but God: The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (CCC, 178).

Catholic beliefs are founded in three creeds: Apostolic, Nicene and Athanasian (CCC,192). While the Apostolic and Nicene creeds are still used today, the [Athanasian creed](#) is an ancient profession of faith that describes profound truths about the Trinity. Here is an excerpt:

“Now this is the Catholic faith: We worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons or dividing the substance; for the person of the Father is one, the Son's is another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is one, their glory equal, their majesty coeternal” (Athanasian Creed; DS 75; ND 16).

It is important to understand that God did not appear first, the Son second and the Holy Spirit third. They all existed; they were all there from the beginning of time. The Catechism (253) states that the Trinity is One, “We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the “consubstantial Trinity.” The divine Persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of them is God whole and entire: “The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e., by nature one God”.

3. Images of the Holy Trinity in early church history depict the Trinity as three identical looking men; by the 6th century, God the Father and Jesus the Son appeared as humans, with the Holy Spirit appearing as a dove.
4. **What does the Bible say about the Trinity?** The word trinity does not exist in the Bible, but the New Testament supports the doctrine of the Trinity:
“ Just as Jesus was coming up out of the water, he saw heaven being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven: “You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.” (Mark 1:10-11).
“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” (Matthew 28:19).
“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (John 14:26).
“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all” (2 Corinthians 13:13).

5. Describe the Trinity, One God in three Persons:

God (the Father) - God is infinite, He made the world, and all that is in it! He is all powerful, all-knowing and is everywhere. God is the origin of everything and is the divine authority over all. He is God Almighty (El Shaddai); Yahweh (Lord Jehovah), El Olam (the Everlasting God), Creator, Lord of salvation, Father and Judge. God is Love (1 John 4:16). For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him (Colossians 1:16).

Jesus (the Son)— God incarnate, the Word made Flesh. Jesus is our great God and Savior, the Lamb of God, Son of the Living God, the Only begotten Son, the Bread of Life. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Great High Priest, King of Kings, Lord of Lords. Jesus is Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and Prince of Peace.

Jesus was not created because God was not created. When the Son came to earth, He took on human nature and a human body. Jesus said when He came into the world that the body was prepared for Him (Hebrews 10:5). The Son is "consubstantial" with the Father, that is, one only God with him (CCC,242).

Holy Spirit – the Third Person in the Trinity, is God the Advocate, Helper, Counselor, Comforter. The Holy Spirit is the Lord and giver of life, who proceeds from the Father. As outlined in the Catechism (245), The Holy Spirit is one and equal with the Father and the Son, of the same substance and also of the same nature... Yet he is not called the Spirit of the Father alone, . . . but the Spirit of both the Father and the Son." The Creed of the Church from the Council of Constantinople confesses: "With the Father and the Son, he is worshiped and glorified."

6. **Our Profession of Faith** expresses our belief in the Holy Trinity in both the Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed. The Creed is divided into three parts: "the first part speaks of the first divine Person and the wonderful work of creation; the next speaks of the second divine Person and the mystery of his redemption of men; the final part speaks of the third divine Person, the origin and source of our sanctification."(CCC 190:90)

Both creeds are similar and are used in Catholic liturgy, [with some slight differences](#). The Apostles Creed is used at Baptism and is the first prayer of the rosary. This version is easiest for children to learn. It is the oldest of the two creeds and was adopted by the early church before the middle of the 2nd century. It is attributed to the teachings of the Apostles.

The Nicene Creed is recited at every Sunday Mass. Since it is associated with the death of Jesus, it is said during Lent and Easter. It was created by the Council of Nicea in 325 to combat the heresy of Arius, who denied the divinity of Christ. Both of these creeds are approved professions of our faith and are printed in the church missals.

7. Understanding the Trinity

Our human nature seeks to understand in order to bring meaning to our life and our world. There are analogies out there: water (liquid, steam, ice); an egg (egg white, yolk, shell) and a shamrock, to explain the Trinity. Unfortunately, these are ineffectual attempts to explain God's Divine Being.

We accept by faith this mystery which we do not fully understand until it is revealed completely to us by God. God says, "For as heaven is higher than earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9). In another verse we are told, "Trust in the Lord with your whole heart and lean not unto your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5).

The Glory Be (Doxology) - an expression of praise

Glory be to the Father, to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be world without end, Amen!

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