

CCC 194 *The Apostles' Creed* is so called because it is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the apostles' faith. It is the ancient baptismal symbol of the Church of Rome. Its great authority arises from this fact: it is "the Creed of the Roman Church, the See of Peter the first of the apostles, to which he brought the common faith".¹³

CCC 195 *The Niceno-Constantinopolitan or Nicene Creed* draws its great authority from the fact that it stems from the first two ecumenical Councils (in 325 and 381). It remains common to all the great Churches of both East and West to this day.

The First Vatican Council taught: "The divine mysteries by their nature transcend the created intellect in such a way that, while made known by revelation and accepted by faith, they remain however covered by the veil of the same faith and wrapped in a kind of obscurity as long as in this mortal life 'we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight' (2 Cor 5:6)" (Const. Dei Filius. IV).

This affirmation is especially valid for the mystery of the Most Holy Trinity. Even after being revealed, it remains the most profound mystery of faith. The intellect by itself can neither comprehend nor penetrate it. But in a certain way the intellect enlightened by faith can grasp and explain the meaning of the dogma. Thus, it can bring the mystery of the inmost life of the Triune God close to man.

- General Audience *Pope John Paul II, November 27, 1985*

CCC 230 Even when he reveals himself, God remains a mystery beyond words: "If you understood him, it would not be God" (St. Augustine, *Sermo* 52)

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD; and you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might." (Dt 6:4-5)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches ...

CCC 233 Christians are baptized in the *name* of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: not in their *names*,⁵⁵ for there is only one God, the almighty Father, his only Son and the Holy Spirit: the Most Holy Trinity.

CCC 234 The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself. It is therefore the source of all the other mysteries of faith, the light that enlightens them. It is the most fundamental and essential teaching in the "hierarchy of the truths of faith".⁵⁶ The whole history of salvation is identical with the history of the way and the means by which the one true God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, reveals himself to men "and reconciles and unites with himself those who turn away from sin".

CCC 242 Following this apostolic tradition, the Church confessed at the first ecumenical council at Nicaea (325) that the Son is "consubstantial" with the Father, that is, one only God with him.⁶⁶ The second ecumenical council, held at Constantinople in 381, kept this expression in its formulation of the Nicene Creed and confessed "the only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father"

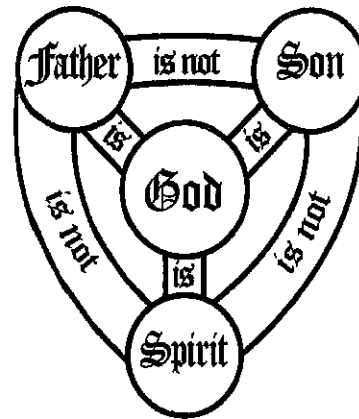
CCC 243 Before his Passover, Jesus announced the sending of "another Paraclete" (Advocate), the Holy Spirit. At work since creation, having previously "spoken through the prophets", the Spirit will now be with and in the disciples, to teach them and guide them "into all the truth".⁶⁸ The Holy Spirit is thus revealed as another divine person with Jesus and the Father.

CCC 252 The Church uses (I) the term "substance" (rendered also at times by "essence" or "nature") to designate the divine being in its unity, (II) the term "person" or "hypostasis" to designate the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the real distinction among them, and (III) the term "relation" to designate the fact that their distinction lies in the relationship of each to the others.

The Dogma of the Holy Trinity

CCC 253 *The Trinity is One.* We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the "consubstantial Trinity".⁸³ 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."⁸⁴ In the words of the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), "Each of the persons is that supreme reality, viz., the divine substance, essence or nature."⁸⁵

CCC 254 *The divine persons are really distinct from one another.* "God is one but not solitary."⁸⁶ "Father", "Son", "Holy Spirit" are not simply names designating modalities of the divine being, for they are really distinct from one another: "He is not the Father who is the Son, nor is the Son he who is the Father, nor is the Holy Spirit he who is the Father or the Son."⁸⁷ They are distinct from one another in their relations of origin: "It is the Father who generates, the Son who is begotten, and the Holy Spirit who proceeds."⁸⁸ The divine Unity is Triune.



CCC 255 *The divine persons are relative to one another.* Because it does not divide the divine unity, the real distinction of the persons from one another resides solely in the relationships which relate them to one another: "In the relational names of the persons the Father is related to the Son, the Son to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to both. While they are called three persons in view of their relations, we believe in one nature or substance."⁸⁹ Indeed "everything (in them) is one where there is no opposition of relationship."⁹⁰ "Because of that unity the Father is wholly in the Son and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Son is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is wholly in the Father and wholly in the Son."⁹¹

CCC 259 Being a work at once common and personal, the whole divine economy makes known both what is proper to the divine persons, and their one divine nature. Hence the whole Christian life is a communion with each of the divine persons, without in any way separating them. Everyone who glorifies the Father does so through the Son in the Holy Spirit; everyone who follows Christ does so because the Father draws him and the Spirit moves him.⁹⁹

CCC 266 "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).

The Trinity Revealed

At the Annunciation – The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, "The Son of God." (LK 1:35)

At Christ's Baptism - ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved,^[a] with whom I am well pleased." (Mt 3:16-17)

In Christ's Promise of the Holy Spirit - And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate,^[a] to be with you forever. ¹⁷ This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in^[a] you... But the Advocate,^[i] the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you. (Jn 14:16-17, 26)

In Christ's instructions to his Apostles - ¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ 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, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Nature of God

God is One – God is perfect unity with no division. His essence is his existence. His nature is simplicity.

God is True – There is no deception in God.

God is Love – God possesses the perfection of love, thus he is Love itself.

God is Pure Spirit – His nature transcends the attributes of matter.

God is Immutable – All material beings change over time but God does not Change.

God is Eternal – God always was, always is, and always will be.

God is Beauty – God possesses all perfections in perfect harmony. The beauty of creation is a reflection of his Divine Beauty.

God is Omnibenevolent – God is all good.

God is Omniscient – God knows all things.

God is Omnipotent – God is all powerful.

God is Omnipresent – Not confined by Space and time. God's time is same moment of existence. (Fr James Socias, *Introduction to Catholicism for Adults P 86-90*)

Knowing God by Analogy – Because God is incomprehensible, we can know him only by analogy. We also realize that finite words cannot fully express our infinite God. We realize there is greater dissimilarity in every similarity.

St. Irenaeus states, Two hands of Father. "For with Him were always present the Word and Wisdom, the Son and Spirit, by whom and in whom, freely and spontaneously, He made all

things.”¹ He goes on to describe the Word as ‘making all things’ while the Wisdom ‘adorned creation’. Irenaeus made the point that God and his hands are connected and eternal.

St. Augustine – Analogy of lover/beloved/love. Or Memory/Understanding/Will

St. Patrick – 3 leaf clover, Is it one leaf or three?

St Thomas Aquinas – Relationally

What we don't believe – Trinitarian and Christological Heresies

Arianism – A third and fourth century heresy formulated by Arius that denied Jesus' divinity, claiming he was not equal to the Father but an exceptional creature raised to the level of the Son of God because of his heroic fidelity to the Father's will and great holiness.

Modalism (Sabellianism) – An ancient heresy associated with Sabellius, which claimed that the distinctions between Divine Persons were not really “in” God but were only how the one God appears to us as he acts in the world.

Polytheism or Tri-theism – The idea that there are THREE GODS.

Partialism – The idea that the Father Son and Holy Spirit together are components of one God, none are fully God on their own.

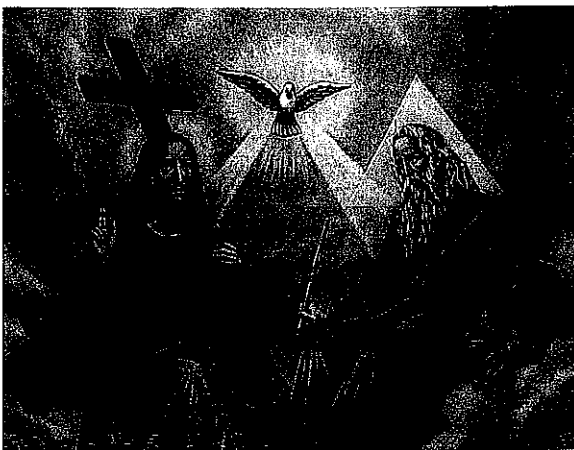
Vocabulary

Divine Person – The Term used to describe Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in their real relation to and distinction from one another within the unity of the blessed Trinity. Each of the three Divine Persons is fully God and is absolutely equal to the other two. The “WHO” of the Trinity

Divine Nature – The divinity or divine essence. The one Divine substance. The “What” of the Trinity

Consubstantial – Of the very same substance or being. The term is used in the Nicene Creed in order to emphasize that the Divine Persons are of the very same, single divine substance or being.

Heresy – The obstinate denial by a baptized person of some truth that must be believed with divine faith.



¹ Irenaeus of Lyon. Against Heresies, 4.20.1