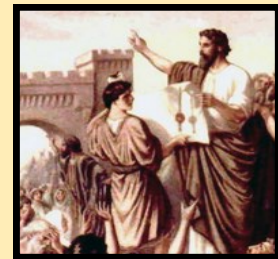


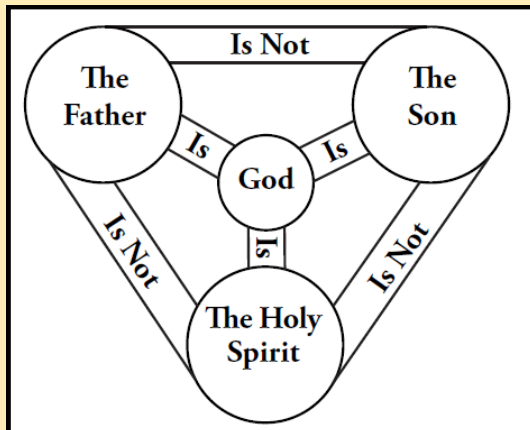


Divine Revelation— Scripture and Tradition

The Nicene Creed



The Origin of Divine Revelation—The Trinity



As Christians we worship one God. We also know that God is three Persons in one God. Likely you have seen most of the traditional examples that are used to help the human mind grasp this concept—an egg (the shell, the yolk, and the white all make up one egg), the shamrock (three leaves, one plant), and water (ice, liquid and vapor—one substance). The Blessed Trinity however, is impossible to understand by reason alone. It is our Faith that affirms to us the truths of the Trinity.

Where did the doctrine of the Trinity come from? You certainly won't find the word "Trinity" in the Bible after all. You will find however, many explanations of it, and verification of the truth of the Trinity. Here are some examples:

*"And God said, Let **us** make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness..." -Genesis 1:26*

"And the Lord appeared unto him (Abraham) in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him.." -Genesis 18:1-2

"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." - 1 John 5:7

"I and my Father are one." - John 10:30

The Trinity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, have always existed. They have no beginning and no end. In Genesis 1:1 we see that "the Spirit was moving over the waters." We see many references to "God made" and "God said." In these different phrases we see references to all three Persons of the Trinity working at Creation, and we will continue to see references to God as three Persons all the way through the Bible, often from Jesus Himself. God, all three Persons, has worked throughout salvation history to give us the Divine Revelation we have today.

Both Scripture and Tradition?

In the Catholic Church we read Scripture in light of Sacred Tradition (the teachings handed down by the Apostles) and we listen to Sacred Tradition in light of the Scriptures. Let's look in detail at both of these aspects of Revelation.

Sacred Scripture

Origin of the Bible – Where did the Bible as we know it come from? The Canon of Scripture was set by the Catholic Church at the Council of Hippo (393) and the Council of Carthage (397). These were councils of the early Church – the Catholic Church. The original Canon of Scripture was never questioned until the Reformation in 1517.

What do Catholics Believe about Scripture? We believe that Sacred Scripture is the inspired and unerring word of God, the collection of sacred books that hand on the truth of Revelation in written form. The Bible reveals that God fulfilled his saving plan of love to free us from sin. The culmination of the entire Bible are the words and deeds of Jesus, in particular his Passion, death and glorious Resurrection. As Catholics, we are 100 percent Bible Christians—that is to say, the Catholic Church believes that the Bible is the inspired word of God and, as such, according to the Second Vatican Council, the Bible “stands as the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her sons, the food of the soul, the pure and everlasting source of spiritual life” (*Dei Verbum* 21). This is particularly evident in the Mass, where the majority of the prayers, rituals, and responses come straight from Scripture.

“The New Testament lies hidden in the Old and the Old Testament is unveiled in the New.” -Saint Augustine

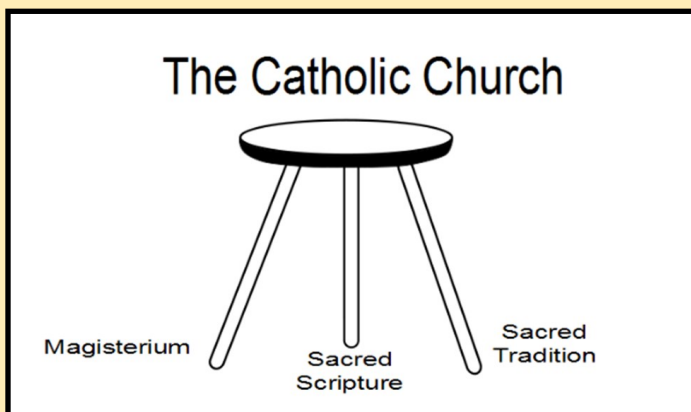
Sacred Tradition

The Tradition referred to here is often referenced by Catholics as Tradition with a capital “T.” This refers not to man made traditions (which is what Jesus was condemning in Mark 7:7-9), but to the teachings handed on from the Apostles themselves – before there was a written Bible (see 2 Thessalonians 2:15). Jesus didn’t write a book, He preached a Gospel. He sent the Apostles to *preach* the Good News. Books were hard to come by in the time of Jesus and the Apostles, and for quite some times after them. Also, many people were illiterate and couldn't have picked up a Bible and read it the way we do, even if they had the opportunity. The Tradition of the Church has been handed down, protected by the Holy Spirit through Apostolic Succession, and the teachings have never changed with the times because, as Scripture tells us, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8.)

The Magisterium

This is the name for the teaching office of the Catholic Church, and consists of the Pope and Bishops of the Church. Every Bishop of the Church can trace the line of who ordained him, and those before him, right back to the twelve Apostles themselves, and the lineage of Pope’s in the Church can be traced back to Saint Peter Himself, who was appointed by Jesus. This unbroken line back to Christ is called “Apostolic

Succession” and refers to the power given by Christ to the Apostles being handed on, through the laying on of hands (ordination), right down to the very bishops that govern us today. This gives the Church the power to be the guardian of Scripture, and, through the Pope, protects her from error *in the matters of faith and morals*. These three parts—Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium, make up the “three legged stool” of the Church’s authority.



The Nicene Creed

Nicene Creed

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and
became man.
For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

The official title is the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed—but we refer to it as the Nicene Creed. This Creed is professed every Sunday at Mass in the Catholic Church, and is often used by other Christian churches as well.

The Nicene Creed arose from the first two ecumenical councils of the Church. The first ecumenical council is the First Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. and the second is the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D. which is why the Creed's technical name includes both councils. The Creed is ancient and it has preserved the faithful from a variety of heresies for over 1,600 years. To understand it is to understand what we believe as Catholics. Here we will take a quick look at the statements of the Creed, and how they explain what we believe.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible - We believe in the Trinity—3 persons in one God, and that the Person of God the Father created and rules over all of the things we can see, and that we can't see.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, - This professes our belief in the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ, who has existed for all of eternity and came to earth as a man for our sake. He is the Word of God, through whom all things were made.

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. - We bow at this part of the Creed in recognition of the fact that Jesus became man to take away our sins.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. - We believe that Jesus was died, was buried and rose again, just as Scripture tells us. He has ascended to Heaven and take his seat with the Father as our eternal King, and will return as our just judge.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. -

Here we are speaking of the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the real and living love between the Father and the Son—the Holy Spirit, who has inspired, guided, led, and protected all of God's followers for all of history and continues to do so today.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. - Here we see the four marks of the church: one (united in beliefs) holy (protected by God) catholic (universal) and apostolic (leadership descended from the apostles.) We also acknowledge our belief in the promise of the Resurrection.

Amen. - This little word packs a big punch. It is our acknowledgment that we believe and accept all that we have just stated in the recitation of the creed. It shows our confidence and faith in the loving Lord who has revealed all of these things to us.

The Nicene Creed was formulated and put into practice even before the Canon of Scripture was officially set by the Church. When we recite these words, we are upholding thousands of years of consistent Scriptural teaching and Tradition.

A Little More About the Four Marks of the Church

The four marks of the Church are not characteristics that the Church creates or develops or learns. They are qualities that Jesus Christ shares with his Church through the Holy Spirit. The four marks of the Church are that it is one, holy, catholic, and apostolic.

The Church Is One

Just as God is one in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, so also is the Church one. The founder of the Church is Jesus Christ. The Church is one in the Holy Spirit, who dwells in those who believe.

The Church Is Holy

The Church is holy because the Church lives in union with Jesus Christ, the source of holiness. Through the Holy Spirit the Church leads others to holiness. Yes, her members are sinners, but the holiness of the Church is seen in the love that they have toward one another and toward Christ, and the many sacrifices they make for the sake of the world.

The Church Is Catholic

Catholic means “universal.” The Church is universal in two ways. First, the Church is catholic because all baptized people are part of the Church and the Church possesses the means of salvation. Second, the mission of the Church is universal because the Church has been sent to proclaim Christ to the entire human race. Only in the Catholic Church can you go to Mass anywhere in the world, any language and be right at home in the universal liturgy.

The Church Is Apostolic

The Church traces its tradition directly from the apostles; therefore, the Church is apostolic. With the Holy Spirit the Church preserves and continues the teaching of the apostles. The pope and bishops are the successors of the apostles.

