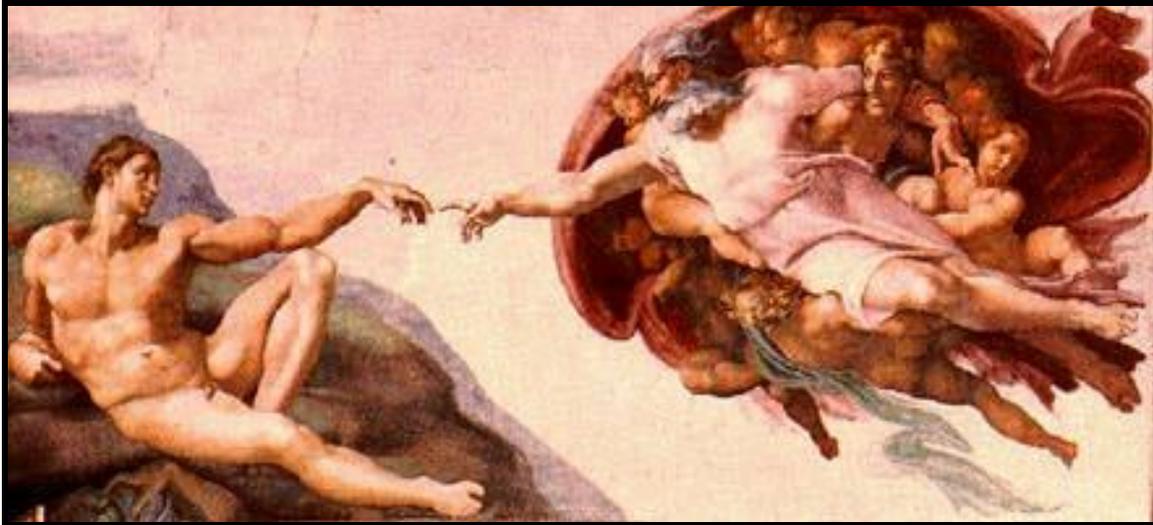


Catholics and God



Introduction

How do we see God? Who is he?

Ideas? Suggestions?

Let us look at the Nicene Creed:

I believe in one God...

Exodus 3:13-15

¹³ Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.

 = the Hebrew letters for the name given by God for himself to Moses. These letters = YHWH or JHVH from which we get Yahweh or Jehovah.

"I AM THAT I AM" contains each tense of the verb "to be." We can translate it "I was, I am, I shall always continue to be." He is the eternal "I AM." He is the same yesterday, today and forever.

At the time God uttered this description of himself to Moses God's Chosen people – the Israelites - were living with Egyptians who were the most polytheistic race of antiquity. There are records containing the names of more than 2200 different Egyptian gods and goddesses whom they worshipped.

Exodus 20:1-7 (*The First Two Commandments*)

¹ And God spoke all these words:

² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing love to a thousand {generations} of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

So the beginning of the Nicene Creed re-iterates as we have read, what God revealed to his Chosen People, the Israelites. God is the only god in which we believe and follow as Christians. There is no other god besides God. As it pertains to the faith we only worship the one God, not anyone or anything else. God is at the center of our faith and lives.

the Father, the Almighty...

Luke 11:1-4

¹One day Jesus was praying in a certain place. When he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his disciples."

²He said to them, "When you pray, say:

"Father,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come.

³Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴Forgive us our sins,
for we also forgive everyone who sins against us.
And lead us not into temptation."

maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible...

So from where did God come? Well, we believe that God always existed and, in fact, God did not come from anything! Everything came from God.

Genesis 1:26-27

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, [a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created man in his own image,
in the image of God he created him;
male and female he created them.

God is the divine being from which all things come – even the things we cannot see or do not know. God made heaven, earth, angels, saints, our bodies, our souls, everything!

This part of the Creed also tells us that there is a physical realm that we can see and that there is a spiritual realm that we cannot see. God created it all. So, who is God? He is our Heavenly Father who formed us and everything else. We share in all both parts of this creation because we have both a body and a soul.

What is the Nature of God?

The Good, True, and Beautiful

God is absolute Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. We live in a finite World. It is extremely difficult to start even imagining what are absolute goodness, beauty, and truth.

Our Faith is about submitting to Someone infinitely greater than ourselves. It is about knowing that we are connected to Someone who is fully holy, true, good, and beautiful. Connected to someone outside of our own selves, our current time period and culture, in fact outside of what we understand as time and space.

The Holy Trinity

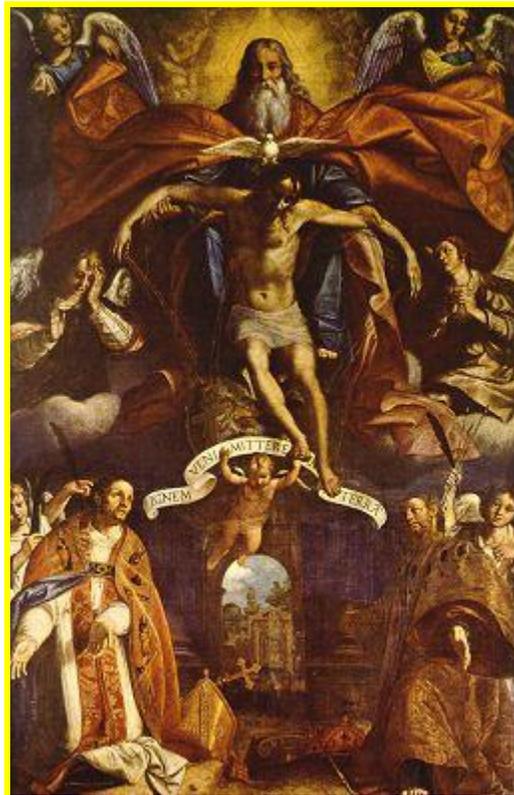
We believe that there is one God, but is manifested in three persons. We call this the Mystery of the Trinity. In short, there is God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, each having distinct personalities.

Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

The Christian doctrine of the Trinity states that God is a single being who exists, simultaneously and eternally, as a communion of three Persons: the Father, the Son (the eternal Logos [Word], incarnate as Jesus of Nazareth), and the Holy Spirit.

Traditionally, in both Eastern and Western Christianity, this doctrine has been stated as "One God in Three Persons," all of whom share the one Divine essence (or nature) but yet are distinct Persons.



*Durante Alberti's "Martyrs' Picture", 1583,
which hangs over the high altar in the
Venerable English College in Rome.
This painting contains a powerful depiction of the Holy Trinity*

Revelation

So where does our knowledge about who is God come from? It has come from **Revelation**...

Taken from the Catechism of the Catholic Church:

In Brief:

⁶⁸ By love, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. He has thus provided the definitive, superabundant answer to the questions that man asks himself about the meaning and purpose of his life.

⁶⁹ God has revealed himself to man by gradually communicating his own mystery in deeds and in words.

⁷⁰ Beyond the witness to himself that God gives in created things, he manifested himself to our first parents, spoke to them and, after the fall, promised them salvation (cf. Gen 3:15) and offered them his covenant.

⁷¹ God made an everlasting covenant with Noah and with all living beings (cf. Gen 9:16). It will remain in force as long as the world lasts.

⁷² God chose Abraham and made a covenant with him and his descendants. By the covenant God formed his people and revealed his law to them through Moses. Through the prophets, he prepared them to accept the salvation destined for all humanity.

⁷³ God has revealed himself fully by sending his own Son, in whom he has established his covenant forever. The Son is his Father's definitive Word; so there will be no further Revelation after him.

There will be no further Revelation:

⁶⁶ "The Christian economy, therefore, since it is the new and definitive Covenant, will never pass away; and no new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ."²⁸ Yet even if Revelation is already complete, it has not been made completely explicit; it remains for Christian faith gradually to grasp its full significance over the course of the centuries.

Questions and Answers

Q. Who is God?

A. God is the Supreme Being, the only being who exists of himself, the uncreated Creator. He is all-good, all-powerful, all-knowing and perfect in every way. He is a spiritual being, free from the limitations of a material body.

Q. Where is God?

A. God is everywhere in all that he creates, but is not limited to his Creation.

Q. Did God have a beginning?

A. No, God had no beginning; he always was, he is, and he always will be.

Q. Does God know and see all things?

A. God does know and see all things - even our secret thoughts and actions.

Q. Is there only one God?

A. There is only one God from whom everything else comes.

Q. Are there three persons in God?

A. There are three persons in the one God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Q. Are these three persons three Gods?

A. These three persons are NOT three Gods; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all one and the same God.

Q. What is the mystery of three persons in One God called?

A. The Mystery of three persons in One God is called the Mystery of the Holy Trinity, and is the central Mystery of Faith.

Q. What do we mean by a 'Mystery of Faith'?

A. By a 'Mystery of Faith' we mean a Truth which we cannot fully understand on our own, but which is revealed to us by God.

Concluding Thoughts and Prayer

Belief in God is necessary for salvation. However, no one can essentially prove that God exists by using methods of science or any other means. So, at the end of the day believing in God is an act of faith.

Segment of a Litany to the Trinity:

God the Father of Heaven, Have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the world, Have mercy on us.
God the Holy Ghost, Have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, One God, Have mercy on us.
Father from Whom are all things, Have mercy on us.
Son through Whom are all things, Have mercy on us.
Holy Ghost in Whom are all things, Have mercy on us.
Holy and undivided Trinity, Have mercy on us.
Father everlasting, Have mercy on us.
Only-begotten Son of the Father, Spirit Who preceedeth from the Father and the Son,
Have mercy on us.
Co-eternal Majesty of Three Divine Persons, Have mercy on us.
Father, the Creator, Have mercy on us.
Son, the Redeemer, Have mercy on us.
Holy Ghost, the Comforter, Have mercy on us.
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, Have mercy on us.
Who art, Who was, and Who art to come, Have mercy on us.
God Most High, Who inhabits eternity, Have mercy on us.
To Whom alone are due all honor and glory, Have mercy on us.
Who alone doest great wonders, Have mercy on us.
Power infinite, Have mercy on us.
Wisdom, incomprehensible, Have mercy on us.
Love unspeakable, Have mercy on us.

Be merciful, Spare us, O Holy Trinity.
Be merciful, Graciously hear us, O Holy Trinity.

O Blessed Trinity, We beseech Thee, deliver us.
O Blessed Trinity, We beseech Thee, save us.
O Blessed Trinity, Have mercy on us.