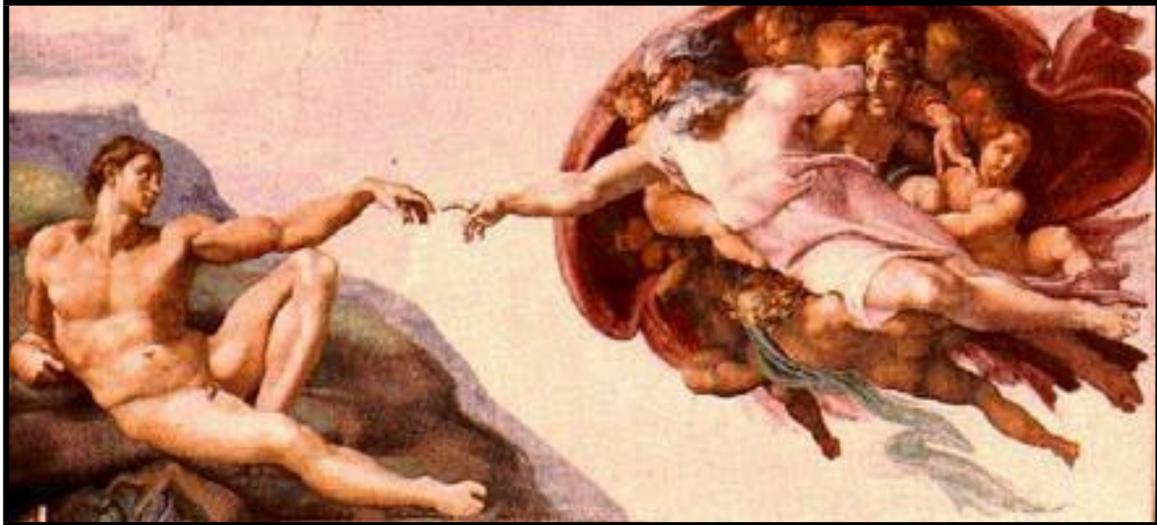


God the Father:



Who He is and What it reveals about your faith

God Reveals Himself to us:

50 By natural reason man can know God with certainty, on the basis of his works. But there is another order of knowledge, which man cannot possibly arrive at by his own powers: the order of divine Revelation.¹ Through an utterly free decision, God has revealed himself and given himself to man. This he does by revealing the mystery, his plan of loving goodness, formed from all eternity in Christ, for the benefit of all men. God has fully revealed this plan by sending us his beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

I. GOD REVEALS HIS "PLAN OF LOVING GOODNESS"

51 "It pleased God, in his goodness and wisdom, to reveal himself and to make known the mystery of his will. His will was that men should have access to the Father, through Christ, the Word made flesh, in the Holy Spirit, and thus become sharers in the divine nature."²

52 God, who "dwells in unapproachable light", wants to communicate his own divine life to the men he freely created, in order to adopt them as his sons in his only-begotten Son.³ By revealing himself God wishes to make them capable of responding to him, and of knowing him and of loving him far beyond their own natural capacity.

53 The divine plan of Revelation is realized simultaneously "by deeds and words which are intrinsically bound up with each other"⁴ and shed light on each another. It involves a specific divine pedagogy: God communicates himself to man gradually. He prepares him to welcome by stages the supernatural Revelation that is to culminate in the person and mission of the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons repeatedly speaks of this divine pedagogy using the image of God and man becoming accustomed to one another: The Word of God dwelt in man and became the Son of man in order to accustom man to perceive God and to accustom God to dwell in man, according to the Father's pleasure.⁵

Revelation of God 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 for ever. The Son is his Father's definitive Word; so there will be no further Revelation after him.

The Creed:

185 **Whoever says "I believe" says "I pledge myself to what we believe." Communion in faith needs a common language of faith, normative for all and uniting all in the same confession of faith.**

186 From the beginning, the apostolic Church expressed and handed on her faith in brief formula normative for all.¹ But already very early on, the Church also wanted to gather the essential elements of her faith into organic and articulated summaries, intended especially for candidates for Baptism:

This synthesis of faith was not made to accord with human opinions, but rather what was of the greatest importance was gathered from all the Scriptures, to present the one teaching of the faith in its entirety. And just as the mustard seed contains a great number of branches in a tiny grain, so too this summary of faith encompassed in a few words the whole knowledge of the true religion contained in the Old and the New Testaments.²

187 Such syntheses are called "professions of faith" since they summarize the faith that Christians profess. They are called "creeds" on account of what is usually their first word in Latin: *credo* ("I believe"). They are also called "symbols of faith".

188 The Greek word *symbolon* meant half of a broken object, for example, a seal presented as a token of recognition. The broken parts were placed together to verify the bearer's identity. The symbol of faith, then, is a sign of recognition and communion between believers. *Symbolon* also means a gathering, collection or summary. A symbol of faith is a summary of the principal truths of the faith and therefore serves as the first and fundamental point of reference for catechesis.

189 The first "profession of faith" is made during Baptism. The symbol of faith is first and foremost the *baptismal* creed. Since Baptism is given "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit",³ the truths of faith professed during Baptism are articulated in terms of their reference to the three persons of the Holy Trinity.

190 And so 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."⁴ These are "the three chapters of our [baptismal] seal".⁵

191 "These three parts are distinct although connected with one another. According to a comparison often used by the Fathers, we call them *articles*. Indeed, just as in our bodily members there are certain articulations which distinguish and separate them, so too in this profession of faith, the name *articles* has justly and rightly been given to the truths we must believe particularly and distinctly."⁶ In accordance with an ancient tradition, already attested to by St. Ambrose, it is also customary to reckon the articles of the Creed as *twelve*, thus symbolizing the fullness of the apostolic faith by the number of the apostles.⁷

192 Through the centuries many professions or symbols of faith have been articulated in response to the needs of the different eras: the creeds of the different apostolic and ancient Churches,⁸ e.g., the *Quicumque*, also called the Athanasian Creed;⁹ the professions of faith of certain Councils, such as Toledo, Lateran, Lyons, Trent;¹⁰ or the symbols of certain popes, e.g., the *Fides Damasi*¹¹ or the *Credo of the People of God* of Paul VI.¹²

193 None of the creeds from the different stages in the Church's life can be considered superseded or irrelevant. They help us today to attain and deepen the faith of all times by means of the different summaries made of it.

Among all the creeds, two occupy a special place in the Church's life:

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

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.

196 Our presentation of the faith will follow the Apostles' Creed, which constitutes, as it were, "the oldest Roman catechism". The presentation will be completed however by constant references to the Nicene Creed, which is often more explicit and more detailed.

197 As on the day of our Baptism, when our whole life was entrusted to the "standard of teaching",¹⁴ let us embrace the Creed of our life-giving faith. To say the Credo with faith is to enter into communion with God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and also with the whole Church which transmits the faith to us and in whose midst we believe:

This Creed is the spiritual seal, our heart's meditation and an ever-present guardian; it is, unquestionably, the treasure of our soul.¹⁵

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ,
his only Son, our Lord.

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
and of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,

	<p>eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation, he came down from heaven:</p>
<p>He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.</p>	<p>by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.</p>
<p>He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell.</p>	<p>For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered died and was buried.</p>
<p>On the third day he rose again.</p>	<p>On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures;</p>
<p>He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.</p>	<p>We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.</p>

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.



Elohim - Creator and Judge

“The word **Elohim** is the plural of *El* (or possibly *Eloah*) and is the first name of God given in the Old Testament: “In the beginning, God (*Elohim*) created the heavens and the earth, (Gen. 1:1).

This reveals several important concepts about the Nature of God according Ratzinger’s Introduction to Christianity:

1. derived from *El*, its original meaning would be "the strong one"
2. Belief in Elohim pushes belief toward a personal God, not a locational god, like those worshipped in polytheistic religions.
3. He is a near at hand God who can be the God of each and every Man.
4. Not being limited to a single location moves toward the limitless or the “All Powerful”.
5. Thus he becomes a God of Promise and Hope, directed toward a future.
6. Elohim is plural, hinting at the Trinitarian nature of God to be revealed.

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

¹ One 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."

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

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

³ Give us each day our daily bread.

⁴ Forgive 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

²⁶ Then 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.

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 proceedeth 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.