

From the beginning of time, people have searched to know who God is. We can know God through his creation. Creation points back to God, the Creator. But to help us know him more fully, God revealed himself to us in Sacred Scripture. He revealed himself to be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God also reveals himself in the teachings and the life of the Church, particularly the sacraments. God reveals himself most fully through his Son, Jesus Christ.



Go to the digital portal for a prayer of praise.

"God's very being is love. By sending his only Son and the Spirit of Love in the fullness of time, God has revealed his innermost secret: God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange."

Catechism of the Catholic Church, 221



Faith Word

sanctified see p. 259

God can be known through creation.

God knows that the deepest desire of the human heart is to seek and find him. In his goodness, God has given us ways of coming to know him. One amazing way is through creation. Creation was God's first witness to us of his almighty love and wisdom. In creation, God took the first step toward us. Freely and without any help, God laid the foundation of his loving goodness.

God created us to be open to truth and beauty. When we use this gift of openness, we can look at God's creation and see all that it has to teach us about who God is. A sunset on an autumn horizon might leave us amazed by its beauty. From this experience, we know that God is beauty. When we witness the miracle of new life, such as when a baby bird hatches from its egg or a butterfly emerges from its cocoon, we know that God is life-giving.

The high point of God's act of creation was the creation of man and woman. God created man and woman in his image and likeness. He created

us to know what is good and right, and with a longing for happiness. God gave us freedom and a conscience and the ability to reason. We can use these gifts to know that God exists.

The Church uses the gifts of creation in her celebration of the sacraments. These gifts, such as water, oil, bread, and wine, are **sanctified**, or made holy, in the sacraments. By their use in the sacraments, these gifts of creation become sacred. They become physical signs that point to the invisible grace of God. In the sacraments, we encounter Jesus and receive God's grace.

Activity

Think about something that has amazed you about God's creation. What is it? Write about it and why it amazed you. Share your thoughts with a partner or with the group.

Did You Know?



There are many ways to bless with holy water.

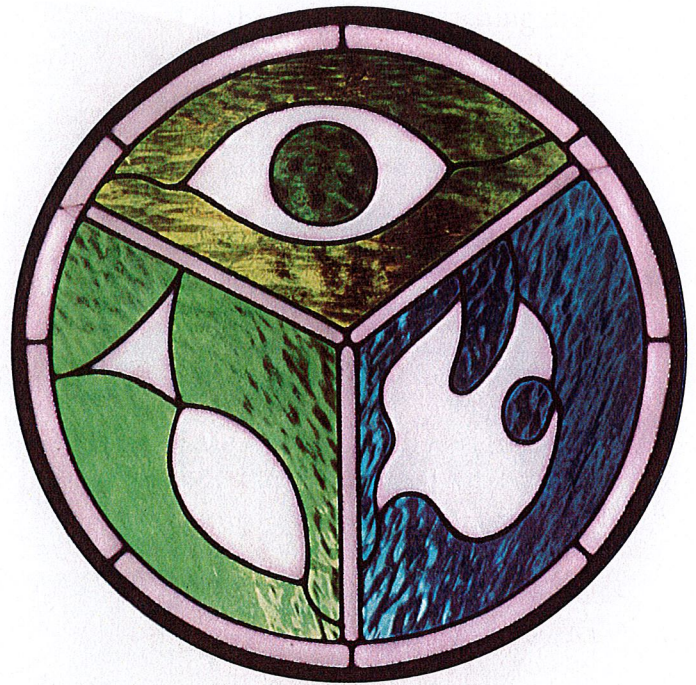
The Blessed Trinity is a mystery of faith, in which God is revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

“In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” With water and these words, we are baptized into the faith of the Church. These words and the Sign of the Cross marked on the forehead of those celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism signify the central mystery of the Christian faith: the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. Whenever we pray the Sign of the Cross, we profess an essential belief of the Church.

Through Divine Revelation, God revealed himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. God is the Father, the Trinity’s first Person and first principle, and the origin of all creation. Together with the creative action of the eternal Word (the Son) and his Wisdom (the Holy Spirit), God the Father is the Creator, the author of life. Creation is a work of the Blessed Trinity.

The Church teaches these truths about the Blessed Trinity:

- The Trinity is One God in Three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each Person of the Trinity is God.
- God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit are distinct from one another. They are not different ways of being God. They are three identifiable Persons.



Glory Be

- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are in a relationship of perfect unity and love. They are inseparable in what they are and in what they do.

The Blessed Trinity is always present in the Church. Most especially, the Trinity is at work in the sacraments where we share in God’s life. In the sacraments, we encounter Jesus. The Gift of the Holy Spirit draws us closer to Christ.



What Makes Us Catholic?

The Blessed Trinity is the central truth of our faith. In the fourth century A.D., the Nicene Creed affirmed that the Holy Spirit “proceeds from the Father and the Son,” not just from the Father. This change helped the Church better understand that the Blessed Trinity is One God in Three Persons. We understand that Saint Patrick used the three leaves of a shamrock to explain the Blessed Trinity to his listeners. Today, we can use others symbols to help us understand the Blessed Trinity, such as the Trinity Knot, a triangle, or the *fleur-de-lis*. Which symbol would help you explain the Blessed Trinity?





In the sacraments, we share in the life of the Blessed Trinity.

Think about your best friend's name. What thoughts come to mind when you say it aloud? Just as when you think of your relationship with your friend, you see that person's face in your mind or hear his or her voice. Your friend's name, which is a series of letters, becomes more important than the word itself. Names are like that. They are much more than what they appear to be, particularly when we know the person.

What thoughts come to mind when you say the name *Jesus*? In the Bible, names often took on importance beyond the actual word. They often described a role a person played in God's plan of salvation.

The name *Jesus* means "God saves." Jesus, in whom God fully reveals himself, is the fulfillment of God's plan of salvation. In order for us to participate fully in God's life, Jesus gave the Church the sacraments. The Holy Spirit makes present the mystery of Christ. Every time we gather for the liturgy, the Holy Spirit brings us into communion with Christ (see *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1108). The sacraments, through the power of the Holy Spirit, make Jesus' saving work present. Through the sacraments, we share in the life of the Blessed Trinity.

The Church shares her beliefs through Scripture, Tradition, and the sacraments.

From the beginning of time, the Holy Spirit had been preparing his people for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus began his ministry by proclaiming: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me” (Luke 4:18). These words were originally spoken by the prophet Isaiah. When Jesus proclaimed them in a synagogue, they meant something important to the people who were gathered in the synagogue listening to Jesus. Through these words, Jesus revealed that his mission and the mission of the Holy Spirit were the same.

The relationship between Jesus and the Holy Spirit is so close that, before he died, Jesus promised his disciples that he would send the Holy Spirit upon them. The Spirit would be their helper. He would reveal the truth about God to the disciples.

Then Jesus gave the disciples these instructions: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of

Saint Teresa of Calcutta founded the the Missionaries of Charity to help the poor, the sick, and the disabled. Here they carry out their mission in Brazil.

the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19–20). At that moment, the mission of Christ and the Spirit became the mission of the Church.

One Church, Many Cultures



The Church’s mission to “make disciples of all nations” does not mean that Catholics should force people everywhere to accept our faith. God invites people to share in his love. He does not force them. Catholic missionaries share God’s Word all over the world. We do the same in our own communities. In fact, the Church tells us that we are all called to be “missionary disciples.” God wants us to show our faith by the way we live so that people will see his goodness in everything we say and do.



Jesus, more than anyone or anything else, helps us see God's presence in the world. Through the sacraments, we encounter Jesus and receive his grace. The Church is a sign of the unity of the Blessed Trinity and all people. The Church is Christ's instrument for the salvation of all people.

The Holy Spirit works in the Church to bring her members to Christ and to show us who Christ is. The Spirit opens our minds and hearts to the mystery of Christ's saving love. The Holy Spirit makes present the mystery of the Blessed Trinity through the sacraments. We are drawn into communion with God, especially in the Eucharist. The Spirit is always at work in the Church, building her up, bringing her life, and sanctifying her, or making her holy.



Partners in Faith

Juan de Zumárraga

Juan de Zumárraga was a Franciscan priest in Spain. As a priest, Zumárraga was known for leading a very religious, poor, and humble life. With the Spanish king's help, Zumárraga became the first bishop of Mexico in 1530. He was given the title "Protector of the Indians." Zumárraga believed his role was to make sure natives in New Spain were not treated poorly. Under his spiritual leadership, he fought for the rights of the people and built the first school, hospital, and printing press in Mexico. It was Archbishop Zumárraga who received Saint Juan Diego's cloak with the miraculous image of the Virgin of Guadalupe on December 12, 1531. Zumárraga's fight for the dignity of native peoples helped grow the Church in the New World.



Learn more about the life of
Juan de Zumárraga.



Show What You Know

Complete the sentences.

1. When something is made holy, we say that it is _____.
2. Water, oil, bread, and wine are made holy in the _____.
3. The Blessed Trinity is a _____ of faith.
4. The _____ is a sacrament that reveals the Blessed Trinity to God's people.

Live Your Faith

- What is a way you can describe the Blessed Trinity to a friend who does not know God?

- In what way can spending time in God's creation help you know him better?
