



A little girl in kindergarten is drawing a picture with great earnestness. The teachers ask her what she is drawing. She responds, I am drawing a picture of God. The teacher smiles and gently says, but no one has ever seen God and so we do not know what he looks like. The child confidently responds, They will now.

Today feast is Trinity Sunday, and we are invited to celebrate the wonder and mystery of the Blessed Trinity. Although there are centuries of books and art work, movies and songs, that have sought to describe God, we know there is no language that can in any way capture the divine. As Catholics, we believe that God is one God in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Every time we bless ourselves we are recognizing the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

Through the centuries, the most brilliant theologians and saints have sought to give us language that might help us some insight into the idea of the God as Blessed Trinity. In the year 325, just about 300 years after the death, resurrection, and Ascension, the Bishops of the Church gathered in a town called Nicaea in Turkey. The Catholic Church was growing and spreading, but some people were introducing teachings that were not faithful to what Jesus had given to the apostles. Some were denying that

Jesus was the son of God. Others said that Holy Spirit and Jesus were created by the Father. From this first ever Council of the Church, the Bishops gave us what we now call the *Nicene Creed* (after the town where they met), and it has stood the test of time over 1700 years, and it is so important to us that we recite it at every Mass.

At many civic gatherings, we pledge our allegiance to the flag and sing the *Star-Spangled Banner*. We are familiar with the opening words of the Declaration of Independence that helps define us as Americans. The pledge, the song, the Declaration all help us know who we are as Americans and what stand. *The Nicene Creed* helps us as Catholics know who we are before God and what we hold most precious and sacred.

Every word in the creed is significant but I will focus on some aspects of it that helps us know what we as Catholics believe about the Trinity.

I believe in one God, the Father almighty. We believe in one God. That is the key opening sentence of our creed. There is one God. We go on to say: ***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.***

Now that we have proclaimed there is one God, we speak about Jesus. To say that Jesus is born of the Father before all ages means that Jesus has no beginning. He has always been. Jesus was not created. Now, for that three-dollar word *consubstantial*; the Father and Jesus are one in substance; they are God.

Now, we move the humanity of Jesus: ***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.*** Having already professed Jesus is God, one with the Father, we speak to his full humanity: he becomes fully human, was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man. He died which is the most human thing of all, but then rose from the dead. The Creed denounces all who would deny either the full divinity or humanity of Jesus. He is the Son of God and fully human.

Finally, the creed proclaims the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit: ***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.*** The Holy Spirit is adored and glorified. Only God is adored and glorified so the Holy Spirit is God. The Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. The word *proceeds* means that the Spirit is sent to us by the Father and the Son.

Although even the creed assigns certain missions to the three Divine Persons, the Father as Creator, the Son as Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit as Lord and giver of life, whatever is said about one person of the Trinity can be said about all. In truth, when we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we are also in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was dying on the cross, the Holy Spirit and Father were also in union with the dying Jesus. I will stop before you rush out for aspirins. If you understood all that I have said, please come and explain it to me since I do not get it all. I believe in the Holy Trinity because Jesus revealed it to us, but I will not say I have a deep understanding of this awesome mystery.

As we kids in Brooklyn we use to say, *Well, so what. That and 15 cents will get you of the subway.* What does the Trinity mean to my daily life? God is a community of community, Father, Son and Spirit. God is a God of unity: one God. We are made in the image of God. God made us to enter into communion with Him. The Trinity is Love and created the angels and the we humans to enter into the love of the Trinity. We are made for love and we are made for community. We are most complete and happy when we are loving others and when we loving God since the mark of the Trinity is in our very spiritual essence. Our DNA is to be in community with others and with God. That is why we marry, have children, seek friends, join societies and commit to parishioners. We long to be connected to God and to one another.

The 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.
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.
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.
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. Amen*