

Catholic Christianity: One God as a Trinity of Persons

Cheatsheet

Key Quote

'Christians are baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.... The faith of all Christians rests on the Trinity.' [CCC 232]
(CCC = Catechism of the Catholic Church, a summary of Catholic beliefs and teachings).

One God as a Trinity of Persons

Catholics are monotheistic, meaning that they believe there's only one God. This one God is believed to have revealed himself as three persons (the Trinity): the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

God in people's lives

- Belief in the Trinity helps Catholics to understand the ways in which God is present in their lives:
- God the Father is also often called the Creator.
- God the Son took human form as Jesus, who is divine and human.
- God the Holy Spirit inspired the apostles at Pentecost and is believed to be the active presence of God in the world today.

The Trinity as one?

- For some Christians, belief in the Trinity is confusing because it appears to contradict belief in one God.
- If there were many gods, God could not be allpowerful.
- In fact, Christians believe that God is three persons, but just one God.
- Some have described the persons of the Trinity as being three persons with one shared 'substance', meaning that they are three persons with one shared divine nature.

Analogies

- Some Christian writers have tried to describe the Trinity using analogy (by comparing it to something else).
- St Patrick said that the Trinity is like a shamrock, which has three clear parts to it, but is only one leaf.
- Others have pointed to the three forms of H₂O ice, water and steam.

Key Questions

Name the three persons of the Trinity	God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit
Which person of the trinity took the human form of Jesus?	God the Son
What is the belief in one God called?	Monotheism



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