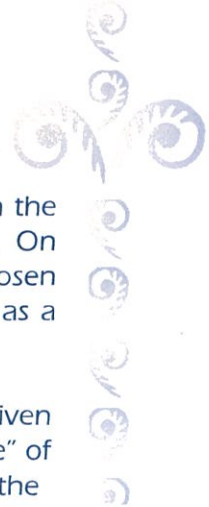


THEOLOGICAL FOCUS

GOD – TE ATUA – IO MATUA KORE “the Father almighty”

The Theological Focus brings together and explains the theology which is included in the Achievement Aims and Objectives. It is referenced to the Catechism of the Catholic Church and is included in Teacher material at all levels. It is to be read and reflected on by teachers prior to teaching the lessons.

Reference to
Paragraph numbers
in the Catechism of the
Catholic Church (CCC)



- 261** There is a paradox at the heart of Catholic belief about God. On the one hand God is viewed as a mystery – the central mystery of life. On the other hand Catholics believe that this God of mystery has chosen to come among them and calls them into a loving relationship as a people – the people of God.
- 36-38** Catholic teaching is that, by the unaided light of their God-given reason, human beings can come to “a true and certain knowledge” of God. The God worshipped by Catholics, however, is not simply the God of the philosophers. Human reason could never have revealed the true nature of God. In order for this to be known God had to take the initiative. So God lifted the veil of mystery, and made known through divine *Revelation* what otherwise would never have been guessed at, let alone reasoned out, God as the Holy Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- 456-483** The high point of this divine *Revelation* is the Incarnation, God with us as a human being, Jesus Christ. Through the life, death and resurrection of Christ we can be sure that we know with certainty the truth about God. (‘To have seen me is to have seen the Father’ – John 14:9.) And the God revealed to us by Jesus through the Scriptures, and through worship and prayer, is the God he called ‘Abba’ or ‘loving Father’.
- 39-43** In the Creed the first person of the Trinity is referred to as ‘God the Father almighty’. To be almighty means to have no limits or restrictions, not even the limits we place upon God in the way we speak of him. So even to refer to God as “him” could be misleading if we take it to mean that God is male. For, as the Catechism of the Catholic Church puts it, “By calling God ‘Father’, the language of *faith* indicates two main things: that God is the first origin of everything and transcendent authority; and that he is at the same time goodness and loving care for all his children. God’s parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of motherhood, which emphasises God’s immanence, the intimacy between Creator and creature. The language of *faith* thus draws on the human experience of parents, who are in a way the first representatives of God for man. But this experience also tells us that human parents are fallible and can disfigure the face of fatherhood and motherhood. We ought, therefore, to recall that God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman: he is God. He also transcends human fatherhood and motherhood, although he is their origin and standard: no one is father as God is Father” (CCC 239).

232-267

Thus the doctrine of God developed and handed on in the Christian Scriptures and Tradition, especially from the early Councils of the Church, is essentially and distinctively Trinitarian – God whom we know as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The same Scriptures and Tradition also contain many other images which help our understanding of God. Images such as potter, or shepherd are metaphors or analogies which, through their appeal to our imaginations, help us to comprehend more of the truth about God, even though all of our human ways of picturing God are bound to be, to some degree, inadequate.

290-354

One of the most important doctrines about God revealed in the *Old Testament* is that of God as Creator.

Children possess a natural awe and wonder which disposes them to learning about God as Creator.

62-64

The God revealed in the *Old Testament* is not only a Creator but is possessed of many attributes, the chief of which is, perhaps, faithfulness. The God of the Covenant with Israel remains faithful to the Covenant no matter how often Israel strays.

32

The *Old Testament* also reveals a God who is present to people in many ways – in nature and events as well as in people.

218-221

Most of all, though, the God revealed in Scripture is a God of Love. In fact St John writes that God is Love. (1 John 4:8)

Faced with this paradoxically absent – yet – present God who is almighty and creator of all, and at the same time a community of love that loves us individually and as a people with an ever-faithful love, how are we to respond?

145-149

Our great model in this is Jesus who was faithful to God his Father even though this led to his death. Many other figures in our tradition like Abraham, 'our father in *faith*', who set out on a journey into the unknown in response to God's call, and Mary whose response was, 'let what you have said be done to me', also point to what our response should be.

153-165

It is this response to God's will that we call *faith*. This *faith* is both the gift of a gracious God and an act of human free will. It is, like God, a paradox and a mystery.

