

Reflections While Walking
The Trinity
- Deacon Bob Salvestrini -



This weekend the Church celebrates one of the great mysteries of our faith. Many of the beliefs we ascribe to as Catholic Christians can be arrived at with thoughtful, disciplined, and rational reasoning. The belief in the Trinity is not one of them. The doctrine of the Trinity is an absolute mystery beyond human understanding; it requires the grace of faith to be believed.

The leaders of the early Church were faced with the problem of reconciling the Old Testament monotheistic belief with the implications of a resurrected Jesus Christ and the Spirit of God that moved within them since the events of Pentecost. Although the word Trinity does not appear in scripture the concept of a trinitarian God is found in the New Testament. New Testament passages such as Jesus' post resurrection commission to His disciples instructing them to, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (Matthew 28:19) and, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:13) are some that formed the basis for the doctrine of the Trinity.

However, the development of the doctrine did not come easy. Over the course of four centuries attempts were made to formulate an understanding of God that combined the revelations in both the Hebrew Scripture and the New Testament. Several of these early interpretations of God were deemed to be heretical and dismissed as not true understandings of what scripture revealed about the nature of God. In the fourth century the Church Fathers addressed the heresies in the Council of Nicaea (325) and later the Council of Constantinople (381). Together these two Councils arrived at the concept of God as three distinct persons in one divine being and gave us the Nicene Creed, the prayer that reflects what our faith tells us about the mysterious nature of God. Prayerfully reciting the Creed at Mass strengthens and renews our faith in the unknowable mystery of God that is celebrated this weekend.