

- God", Encyclopedia of Catholicism  
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GOD

God is the supreme and supremely personal Source and Creator of the universe, revealed in creation and in the events of salvation history (covenant, prophecy, the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, and the ongoing presence of the Holy Spirit), and object of religious devotion and subject matter of theology.

The specifically Christian way of speaking of God is by means of the doctrine of the Trinity. The doctrine of the Trinity is not one doctrine among others but lies at the center of Christian faith. It affirms and summarizes the most profound convictions of Christian believers and also determines the systematic structure of the whole of Christian dogmatics. At its root, the doctrine of the Trinity expresses what Christians believe about who God is, namely, the eternal, loving, personal source of all of reality, who created the world and all in it for loving union with God through the person of Jesus Christ. In this respect the doctrine of the Trinity also expresses what Christians believe about the nature of the world and of the human person and so comprises a comprehensive theological perspective on all of reality. In short, the doctrine of the Trinity affirms, first, that it belongs to the nature of God to be in communion with all persons and all creatures of the earth, a communion that is brought about by redemption through Jesus Christ and the ongoing power and presence of the Holy Spirit; second, that all of reality is deeply personal since it is created by a personal God and that it is the destiny of human persons to live in authentic communion with God, with other human beings, and with all the creatures and goods of the earth.

Despite its centrality and indispensability, once the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated in the late fourth century and refined in the Middle Ages in both Eastern and Western Christianity, it largely passed to the margins of Christian consciousness, particularly in Latin Christianity. There are many reasons for this, explored below, but Catholic theologian Karl Rahner (d. 1984) has pointed out that for many Christians, were the doctrine of the Trinity to be removed or even proved false, little or nothing of their faith or piety would change. In effect, Rahner argued, many Christians are, practically speaking, unitarians, even though Christian faith is irreducibly trinitarian.

#### ORIGINS OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

It was common in neo-Scholastic manuals of dogmatic theology to cite texts such as Gen 1:26, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness" (see also Gen 3:22; 11:7; Isa 6:2-3), as proof of a plurality in God. Today, however, scholars generally agree that there is no doctrine of the Trinity as such in either the OT or the NT. However, the founda-

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The OT depicts God as the Father of Israel and personifies God with terms such as Word (Heb., *dabar*), Spirit (*ruah*), Wisdom (*hokmah*), and Presence (*shekinah*). While it would go far beyond the intention and thought-forms of the OT to suppose that a late-fourth-century or thirteenth-century Christian doctrine can be found there, still it is consistent with the general tradition of Christian interpretation of Scripture to see in the ancient texts of the OT precedents and foreshadowings of the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

Likewise, the NT does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity; however, later doctrinal formulations owe a more obvious debt to NT texts. In antiquity, God and Father were synonyms; God the Father is source of all of creation (Gk., *Pantokrator*). Early liturgical and creedal fragments refer to God as the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and Paul instructs his readers to offer all praise to God through Jesus Christ and indeed to do all things in the name of Jesus Christ. Some texts mention the names of both Father and Son, or God and Christ (Rom 4:24; 8:11; 2 Cor 4:14; Col 2:12; 1 Tim 2:5-6; 6:13; 2 Tim 4:1) and a few link the names of Father, Son, and Spirit (or God, Christ, and Spirit). The Roman Catholic eucharistic liturgy uses the text from 2 Cor 13:14 to open the celebration of the Mass: "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you." The baptismal formula of Matt 28:19 ("Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit") is an obvious trinitarian text, though many exegetes today suppose that this text did not originate with Jesus but was a later interpolation. There is the description of Jesus' baptism in Matt 3:16-17, during which God speaks from the heavens and the Spirit rests on Jesus. There are what appear to be prayer fragments in Gal 4:6 and Rom 8:15 (the Spirit praying in us calls God *Abba*). Other trinitarian texts include 1 Cor 6:11; 12:4-6; 2 Cor 1:21-22; 1 Thess 5:18-19; and Gal 3:11-14. The text from Eph 1:3-14 deserves special mention; it summarizes the basic providential plan of salvation initiated by God, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and consummated in the Holy Spirit. It describes this plan as an "economy" (Gk., *oikonomia*, providential plan or management) foreordained by God through which God destines all creatures for ultimate and eternal union with God. Jesus Christ is the revelation of God's economy, and the Spirit is the active power bringing God's providential plan to fruition and completion. Finally, the high-priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17 contains important ingredients of what later theology will develop as God the Father's special relationship with Jesus Christ.

In sum, a number of NT texts bear witness to Jesus Christ and the Spirit as essential to our salvation. The pattern of these texts is mediatory; God's salvation and revelation are made known through Jesus Christ and in or by the power of God's Holy Spirit. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that what the later doctrine of the Trinity attempts to express is the whole mystery of salvation through Christ. Thus, in order to avoid a "proof-text" approach, biblical texts regarded as

tain three divine names. Every shred of testimony to the saving power of God realized through Christ belongs to the fount of biblical witness to the mystery of the triune God.

It would be anachronistic to say that the NT necessarily implies what will later be expressed with metaphysical refinement as a Trinity of three coequal divine Persons who share the same substance. While it is entirely legitimate to see later dogmatic development as springing forth from the witness of the Scriptures, the language of the Bible remains economic, that is, rooted in the concrete history and stories of salvation and redemption. The vocabulary of metaphysics cannot be found in Scripture. Because of this, there are theologians who regard all postbiblical doctrinal developments as arbitrary or even aberrant. For them, one cannot go beyond the language and concepts of the Bible. The Catholic approach, however, has always been to see doctrinal developments as legitimate provided one can show the connection between the Scripture, which is normative, and doctrine, which is derivative. Doctrine can never replace Scripture; the Bible remains the authoritative witness to God's providential plan of salvation.

The early liturgical practice of Christians is another important source for the origins of trinitarian doctrine. Although Christian prayer is largely an adaptation of Jewish prayer, it was new to offer prayer to God through Jesus Christ, in his name, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The mediatory pattern of the new doxologies is well attested in the Letters of Paul and in those attributed to Paul (see Eph 5:20; 1 Cor 15:57; Col 3:17; Rom 1:8; 16:27; 7:25; 2 Cor 1:20; Heb 13:15; 1 Pet 4:11). The earliest liturgical texts do not refer to the Holy Spirit; however, the early Church was very much aware that the power for prayer came from the Spirit. Rom 8:15 and Gal 4:6 are evidence that Christians understood themselves to be called "in the Spirit" to new relationship to the God of Jesus Christ: "And because you are children, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" The eucharistic prayers (anaphorae) duplicate the mediatory pattern of prayer; all praise and thanksgiving were offered to God through Jesus Christ.

Christian Baptism was an exception. The text of Matt 28:19b to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is unusual because of the prepositions ("and . . . and"). Even if the command to baptize cannot be traced back to Jesus himself, it undoubtedly reflects the Church's early baptismal practice. The candidate was asked a triple set of questions: "Do you believe in God the Father the Almighty? Do you believe in Jesus Christ? Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?" The candidate "handed back" (Lat., *reddidit*) what had been "handed over" (*traditio*) by affirming each portion of the creed. The interrogation was followed by a triple immersion in water. Early Christian creeds were not the full-blown, antiheretical summaries of faith and doctrine that emerged in the fourth century and thereafter, but collections of biblical and apostolic teaching that were fashioned for baptismal practice. The I was a "symbol" (*symbolum*), a sign of the God into whose name

## DEVELOPMENT OF TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE

In the immediate post-NT period of the Apostolic Fathers, there were no attempts to speculate about the relationship between God and Christ, Father and Son. The second-century Apologists, however, identified the preexistent Christ mentioned in the prologue of John's Gospel with the Logos (Word) of Greek philosophy. Justin Martyr (d. ca. 165) used the Stoic distinction between the immanent word (Gk., *logos endiathetos*) and expressed word (*logos prophorikos*) to explain a two-stage theory of the Incarnate Word. In the third century, Monarchianism (*monē archē*, "one principle"), which upheld the absolute unity of God and the sole divinity of God the Father, arose in reaction to Logos Christology. Sabellius, whose name is linked with "Modalism," believed that God's being could manifest itself in different modalities in history, such as the person of Jesus Christ, but that these historical modes of existence did not affect God's being as such. The great Eastern theologian Origen (d. 254) was responsible for the idea of an eternal generation of the Son within the being of God; for him, the Son is a distinct *hypostasis* (person) who always resided with God. In the West, the lawyer and theologian Tertullian (d. ca. 225) conceived of the three divine Persons as a kind of plurality in God's being.

It was Arius, the priest from Alexandria, around whom the greatest controversies over the status of Christ took place. Around 320 Arius wrote a public letter claiming that Jesus Christ was not divine in the same sense that God (Father) was divine; Jesus Christ was the highest of creatures, but still a creature who had a beginning. Arius's argument was stunningly simple: God (Father) is absolutely transcendent; God's essence (Gk., *ousia*) cannot be shared by another; therefore, God and Christ cannot be "of the same substance." If they were of the same substance, there would be two gods. Therefore, Christ is subordinate to God. The slogan of Arianism, "there was when he [the Son] was not [in existence]," meant that Jesus Christ was begotten of God in time, not from all eternity. One of the factors that allowed Arianism to evolve into such a vital movement was the fact that the Church's mediatory prayer at this time, along with numerous biblical texts (e.g., Prov 8:22: "The Lord created me at the beginning. . .") seemed, at least on the face of it, to support Arius's position. Arius's views provoked Christian theologians to ask new questions about the status of Jesus Christ with respect to God. If Christ was God's mediator, was he then "less than" God? If he was less than God, could he be the Savior?

To refute Arius, the Council of Nicaea (325) taught that Christ is not created but is *homoousios* (Gk., "of the same substance") with God. Although from one perspective this word settled an immediate problem, few in the Church were happy with it. Greek theologians protested that the term *homoousios* was illegitimate because it was not biblical, and, moreover, it could be interpreted to mean that God and Christ are numerically identical (thus blurring any distinction between them) Some suggested that the word *homoousios* ("of similar substance") be

used instead, but this could be interpreted as subordinating Christ to God. In any case, Arius had pushed Christian theology in the direction of ontology: what would it mean to say that Christ is "same in being" with God?

Athanasius (d. 373), who is considered the great defender of Nicene orthodoxy, wrote several tracts against Arius basically arguing that since Christ is essential to our salvation, he must be divine. Athanasius had a limited philosophical vocabulary and made his arguments primarily on the basis of his reading of the Scriptures. Late in the fourth century the Cappadocians Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), Gregory of Nyssa (d. 394), and Gregory of Nazianzus (d. 390) formulated the classic expression of orthodox trinitarian doctrine: the one God exists in three equal persons. Their teaching made it possible for the Council of Constantinople (381) to affirm the divinity of the Holy Spirit, which up to that point had nowhere been clearly stated, not even in Scripture. The Cappadocians regularized the philosophical vocabulary of trinitarian doctrine by distinguishing clearly between *hypostasis* (Gk., "particular person") and *ousia* ("common substance or nature"). Further, they distinguished between being begotten (*genesis*) and being created (*genesis*). Jesus Christ the Son was begotten, not created, which placed him on the side of God, not of creatures. The Cappadocians also maintained the biblical and liturgical sense of God (Father) as the monarch, the sole originating principle and source of all that is, including source of Son and Spirit. Godhood is the same as God's fatherhood; everything originates with God the Father, is brought into being through the Son, and is perfected by the Holy Spirit.

The Arianism of the early fourth century had evolved into various forms by the time of Cappadocians, most notably, Eunomianism. Eunomius believed that he knew the definition of God's essence to be "Unbegottenness." Eunomius's argument about the inferiority of the Son was simple to state but enormously difficult to refute: The Father is Unbegotten; the Son is Begotten; therefore they do not share the same substance of divinity; and therefore the Son is less than God. Unlike Eunomius, who claimed to know the name of God's essence, the Cappadocians were filled with respect for the absolute unknowability of the inaccessible divine essence. In order to refute Eunomius, Gregory of Nazianzus argued that "Unbegottenness" cannot be the name of the divine essence. No one knows the definition of the divine essence. Not even the word "Father" names God's hidden essence. Indeed, Gregory argued, "Father" is the name of a relation, namely, the relation of God to Christ. In effect, the two Gregories and Basil argued (against Eunomius) that God and Christ, Father and Son, do share the same divine substance because what makes God to be God is not to be Unbegotten, but to be uniquely personal as Father, Son, and Spirit. This brilliant move made the first full-fledged trinitarian doctrine possible. The closest we can get to defining the divine Persons is indirect and oblique, depicting their origin: God the Father comes from no one; God the Son comes from the

The emergence of a trinitarian doctrine of God's fatherhood altered what it had meant up to that point. In the Bible and in early creeds and liturgical prayers, God and Father were synonyms. The Cappadocian teaching added the meaning that God is the eternal Father (Begetter) of the eternal Son. God the Father could still be thought of as the monarch, however, now that three persons shared the monarchy of divinity. The unity of God resided in part in the Father as the source of Godhood, but also in the "perichoretic" (Gk., *perichōrēsis*, "interdependence") relationship among the three persons. This "intra-trinitarian" sense of God's fatherhood and of Christ's sonship set Christian theology on a course toward further refinement of the intradivine relations among the divine Persons.

Western trinitarian theology followed a different course with Augustine (d. 430). He, too, was influenced by Neoplatonism, but instead of seeing the Father as the source of divinity, Augustine began with the unity of the divine substance common to all three Persons. Believing that the soul was a mirror of its Creator, Augustine held that contemplating the soul was a means of contemplating God. He sought images for the Trinity within the human soul and formulated several so-called psychological analogies (such as lover-beloved-love; memory-understanding-will) to explain how one substance could be internally differentiated without dividing the substance. Knowing and loving are distinct operations of the soul, but one would not say that there are two souls.

In the more philosophical part of Augustine's *On the Trinity*, he argued against Arian subordinationism by emphasizing that the three divine Persons are fully coequal sharers in the one divine substance. Each Person is the divine substance. While this approach was an effective way to circumvent Arianism, it also meant that the distinctiveness of each Person—whatever makes the Son or Spirit unique—became less pronounced. Augustine's idea that "all works of the Trinity *ad extra* are indivisible" highlighted the equality of the divine Persons, but made it difficult to see the unique roles of Son and Spirit in human salvation. This tension gave rise to the "doctrine of appropriations," according to which various roles and acts within salvation history, such as creation, redemption, and sanctification, are "appropriated" to one of the divine Persons.

The Cappadocians and Augustine followed fundamentally different routes in their trinitarian theologies. Although all generalizations have their exceptions, in general, Greek theology emphasizes the divine Persons, whereas Latin theology emphasizes the divine nature. In the Greek approach, all of reality emanates from its one source in God the Father, passes through the Son and to the Spirit who is the bridge to the world, whereas Latin theology tends to depict God as a self-enclosed Trinity of Persons. The Greek scheme can be represented as a point on a line moving outward; the Latin scheme can be represented by a circle or triangle. The danger in the Greek approach is subordinationism, in the Latin it is tritheism.

After Nicaea, and with the advent of trinitarian doctrine *per se*, both traditions, Eastern and Western, shifted from the earlier, more

soteriological questions (how Christ saves; what salvation means) to ontological questions (how Christ and God are of the same substance). This shift is sometimes described as the shift from the perspective of the "economic Trinity" to the "immanent Trinity," that is, from the works of God in the economy of redemption to the intradivine relations among the divine Persons. In recent Catholic theology Karl Rahner formulated the axiom that "the economic Trinity is the immanent Trinity, and vice versa" to indicate that there is a fundamental unity between what we know of God in God's self-revelation through Christ and the Spirit, and God's eternal, invisible being. While the essence of God can never be known as it is in itself, however, it is truly and fully given in the course of salvation history.

The Cappadocian and Augustinian approaches were refined throughout the medieval period in both traditions. In the East, John of Damascus (d. 749) summarized all patristic developments up to that point. Gregory Palamas (d. 1359), who stands at the summit of Orthodox theology, was embroiled in a controversy over hesychasm (Gk., *hesychia*, "silence"). The Hesychasts practiced a form of contemplation that they believed led to an inner vision of God's uncreated light, just like the light revealed on Mount Tabor during the Transfiguration of Christ. Palamas defended the Hesychast doctrine by distinguishing three aspects of God's being: the impalpable and unknowable divine essence; the three divine hypostases, Father, Son, and Spirit; and the uncreated divine "energies" (self-expressions). Although God's essence remains beyond the reach of the creature, even in Hesychastic prayer, the contemplative does enter into real union with God through the divine energies which are "God as such." Thus in prayer and mystical union one participates in the divine energies, not the divine essence. Although Palamism amounts to a very strong theology of grace, there is some concern that the divine essence and indeed the divine Persons are too distant from the creature. If this critique made by Western theologians is true (and the Orthodox deny it), then Palamas's doctrine of God would contribute to the sense that the Trinity is remote from Christian life.

In the West, Augustine's thought was extremely influential. Boethius (d. 524) formulated the classic definition of person, "individual substance of a rational nature." The main lines of Augustine's theology were given further elaboration in the medieval period by Anselm (d. 1109) and Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274). Thomas provided a sophisticated philosophical treatment of all of the themes of Christian faith using the principles of Aristotelian science and metaphysics. Thomas's theology in the *Summa Theologiae* is rich and profound and has served as a wellspring for Catholic theology ever since. Like Augustine, Thomas saw the human acts of knowing and loving as images of the divine acts of knowledge (through the Son) and love (through the Spirit). Thomas also greatly clarified the metaphysical vocabulary appropriate to this new science of divinity; he defined divine personhood as a "subsistent relation" (that is, a relation that is its own substance). He was original in writing two

God (*De Deo Trino*). This arrangement has been severely criticized in contemporary theology because it gives the impression (surely at odds with Thomas's own intention) that the philosophical unity of God is prior to God's Trinity. In its own way, perhaps, this structural arrangement contributed to the general irrelevance of the doctrine of the Trinity within Western theology. Insofar as personhood was seen as secondary to substance or nature, the Christian doctrine of God appeared to be unitarian rather than trinitarian. Trinitarian theology became abstract and speculative, divorced from other theological tracts (such as grace and the sacraments), from liturgy, and from the ordinary concerns of Christian life. Through Thomas's influence as mediated by the neo-Scholastic manuals of theology, most people today associate "Trinity" with the self-relatedness of God, rather than God's relationship to humans through the mysteries of creation, redemption, and sanctification. As Karl Rahner notes, "The treatise on the Trinity locks itself in even more splendid isolation, with the ensuing danger that the religious mind finds it devoid of interest" (*The Trinity* [New York: Herder & Herder, 1970], p. 17). In contemporary theology there are efforts to rehabilitate the positive aspects of Thomas's theology of God without adopting the whole of his method and procedure.

Also influenced by Augustine but focusing on person rather than nature, Richard of St. Victor (d. 1173) and Bonaventure (d. 1274) used a more "social" than "psychological" analogy for the Trinity. Richard taught that God is the supreme instance of charity. Perfect charity requires not just two, a lover and beloved, but a third who is loved without jealousy or competition. Bonaventure, much like the Cappadocians, emphasized the monarchy of the Father who is self-diffusive and fecund and who created the whole world full of trinitarian vestiges.

After the medieval period there was very little development concerning the Trinity. Although the Reformers, especially John Calvin, were keen on the trinitarian credal structure of Christian faith, they had no interest in furthering the medieval metaphysical project. In the nineteenth century, Friedrich Schliermacher relegated the doctrine of the Trinity to an appendix in his work *The Christian Faith*. Palamism was discovered by the West and reinvigorated by the East in the twentieth century. In the last thirty years, the *Church Dogmatics* of Reformed theologian Karl Barth (d. 1968) and the monograph by Karl Rahner entitled *The Trinity* inaugurated the current renewal of trinitarian theology.

#### FUTURE DIRECTIONS AND REMAINING PROBLEMS

As of this writing the renaissance of interest in trinitarian theology is only in its beginning stages. In several denominations, but particularly within Catholic theology, the doctrine of the Trinity is being used as the foundation to explore issues in diverse areas such as spirituality, ethics, and ecclesiology. Since the concept of personhood lies at the heart of every trinitarian theology of God, this teaching forms the basis for reflection on the nature of the human person, especially the relationship

between individual persons and communities or societies. For example, liberation and feminist theologians appeal to the trinitarian emphasis on the equality of persons to base their vision of egalitarian society. The "tract" approach to theology, according to which theological themes were treated separately as discrete topics with little bearing on each other, is gradually being overcome by a more unified vision of the theological enterprise. Amid these new developments, the following issues and questions will continue to require attention.

First, the classical approach to trinitarian doctrine was to treat the internal workings of the Trinity—how many divine Persons, how they were related to each other, how they were produced, what analogies might be found in the created order, and so forth. It has been amply shown in many current theological writings why this preoccupation with the so-called immanent Trinity is unsatisfactory. We live in an age that thinks in historical, personalist, and existential, rather than metaphysical and speculative terms. Thus the force of the doctrine of the Trinity must concern God's relationship with humankind not merely God's relationship with God. Questions of salvation are at the heart of every religion, and Christians believe that God is involved with humanity in a saving relationship that is transforming the face of the world. Contemporary theologians favor the "economic" approach to theological questions, which is a way of saying that because theological questions are inherently existential, they must be also treated in their practical and pastoral dimensions. This has required a fundamental reevaluation of the traditional framework of trinitarian theology, specifically, the relationship between "immanent" and "economic" Trinity, in such a way that the practical implications of the doctrine of the Trinity can be realized.

Second, the development of feminist theology over the last few decades has meant the reassessment of both the method and content of all areas of theology. The Christian tradition has presented God nearly exclusively in masculine concepts, images, metaphors, and stereotypes, even though it is one of the cardinal rules of theology that God exceeds all such depictions and can never be fully expressed in any one manner. The doctrine of the Trinity is particularly subject to the feminist critique because of the centrality of the metaphors of Father and Son. To meet feminist objections, contemporary theologians typically focus on the nonpatriarchal dimensions of these names for God or substitute nonsexual and/or feminine names for God (e.g., Eternal Source, Savior, Advocate), or emphasize the deeply egalitarian vision of human persons and human society implied by the doctrine of the Trinity. Liturgical experimentation is increasingly common, as the churches seek to overcome the oppressively patriarchal and one-sided image of God. In this instance the vast Christian tradition is both a rich resource and yet in other respects also needs to be overcome.

Third, some have called the modern period "the age of the Spirit," meaning a deemphasis on institutional religion and the crossing-over between and among disparate religious traditions. The Christian doctrine of God must be developed in light of the truth-claims of other

religions. This is not to compromise the uniqueness of the Christian tradition, but only to say that trinitarian doctrine need not be narrowly Christomonistic, in the sense that Jesus Christ is essential to every person's salvation, including the pious Hindu and Jew. Other paths to salvation cannot be denigrated but must be seen as part of God's universal plan of salvation. While Christians see this plan fully realized in Jesus Christ and must hold to this faith, it would be unrealistic to yearn for the days of a narrow-minded apologetics that saw all non-Christians as heathen.

Finally, theologians must continue to reflect on God within the context of the God-question of a particular age or race or nation. In an age where we are more aware of the global dimensions of human suffering, the classical depiction of God as immutable and passionless needs to be rethought from the perspective of trinitarian theology. Secular society brings its own unique questions and doubts about the God presented by traditional religion and classical theism. These challenges must be faced openly and honestly, bringing to bear the riches of the Christian tradition, where possible. Further, the current ecological crisis has generated fresh reflection on God's intent in making human beings stewards of creation. Science and religion must be seen as partners in search of the ultimate truth about the universe and all creatures in it.

Among the many resources that can enable trinitarian doctrine to once again stand at the center of Christian faith and to be a vital expression of that faith are: the voices and experience of those who have been on the margins of Christianity or of society but who testify nonetheless to the saving power of God; the insights of modern cultures, especially to the extent that cultural insights call the Church back to a more faithful witness to God's presence and mercy; the doubts and questions of unbelievers who continually press the Church toward greater truthfulness; the wisdom of other religious traditions; the collective wisdom of prayer and mystical experience, across religious traditions; and the liturgical and sacramental life of the churches.

See also creation; eternity; fatherhood of God; five ways of St. Thomas Aquinas; monotheism; providence; salvation; Trinity; doctrine of the

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