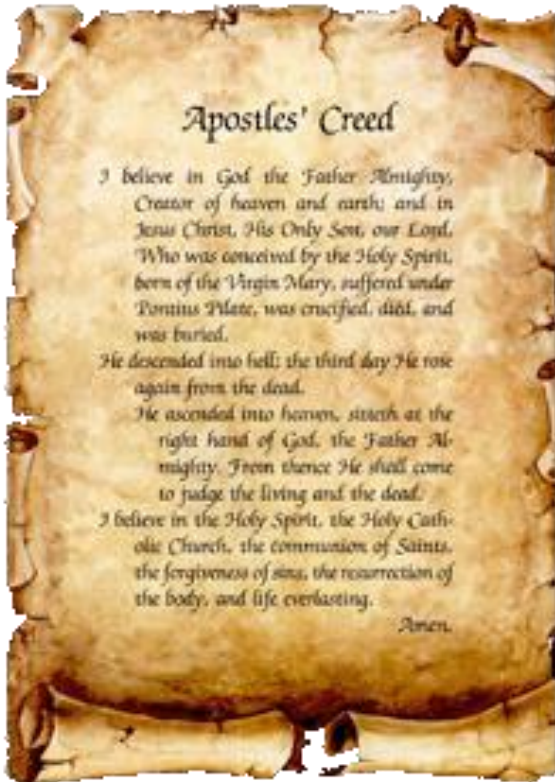


# The Creed & God the Trinity



Catholicism 101 (RCIA)

2011-12

# Creed

- Comes from the Latin word *Credo* which simply means “I believe”
  - In God
  - In all things he has revealed
- Belief or faith is our response to God who reveals himself
  - Surrendering and entrusting our self to God
  - Assenting to all the truths which God has revealed because they are guaranteed by God who neither deceives nor can be deceived
- Difference between “I *believe* that this is so” (opinion) and “I *believe* you” (trust)



# Faith

- There are many dimensions to supernatural faith
  - 1. necessary for salvation
  - 2. free gift of God
  - 3. human act
  - 4. certain
  - 5. works through charity
  - 6. continually grows
  - 7. foretaste of heaven

# Faith and Reason

- While faith is above reason there is not contradiction between the two
  - Because there is only one truth and the truth of faith and science both originate in God
- “I believe in order to understand; and I understand, the better o believe” (St. Augustine)
- “Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth” (Bl. John Paul II)



# The Power of Reason to Know God



- The Church holds and teaches that God can be known with certainty from the consideration of **created things**, by the natural power of human **reason**: ever since the creation of the world, his invisible nature has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. (Vatican I)
  - We can know God by reason through the consideration of created things

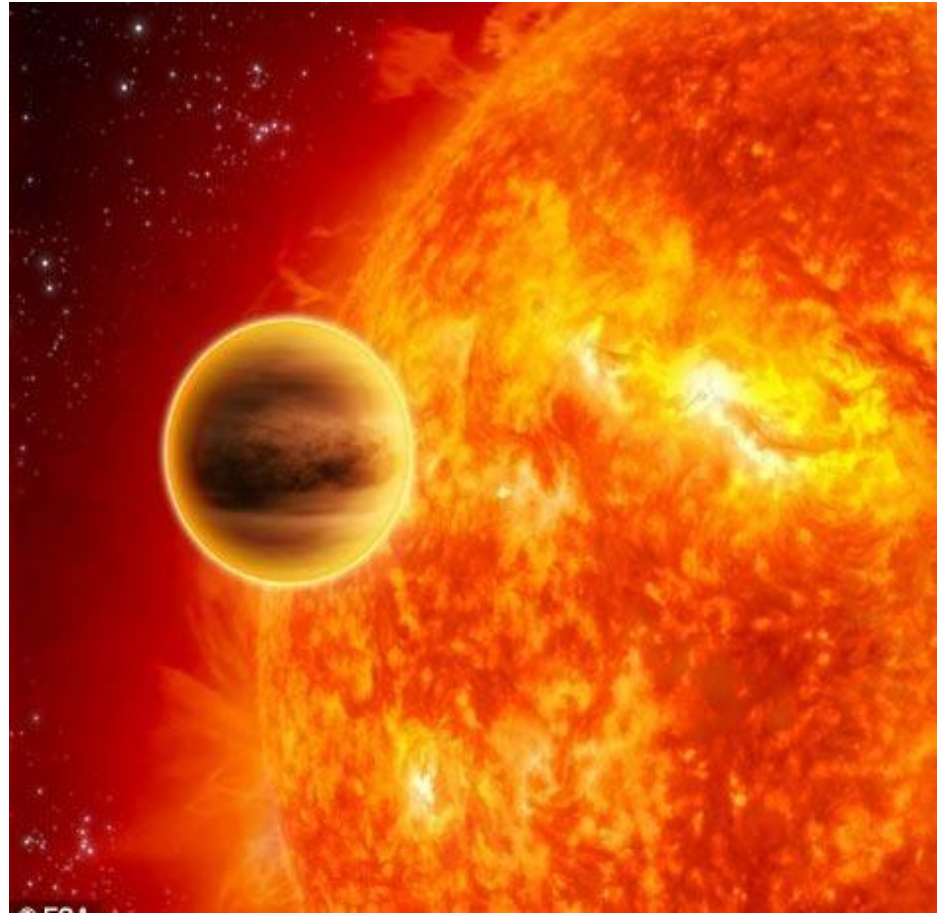
# Seeing God in the Universe

- **The Milky Way** – Our galaxy is a spiral of 2 to 3 billion stars like our sun (estimates of this number vary among experts). Our galaxy from edge to edge is approximately 100,000 light-years across. It would take a jumbo jet 100,000 million yrs to make the trip once around. The other star closest to us, Alpha Centauri, is four light-years away, and it would take a pilot about 5.5. million yrs to make a one-way trip to this star



# Providential Marvels

- “Our distance from the sun is almost unbelievable perfect for the exacting requirement of life. Life must have water in liquid form, a condition possible within extremely narrow temperature ranges. These temperature ranges are present in only the minutest fractions of universal space, yet they are present on earth because of our distance from the sun. This delicate balance is maintained so perfectly in the earth’s orbit that the most trivial deviation would destroy all life on the earth’s surface”

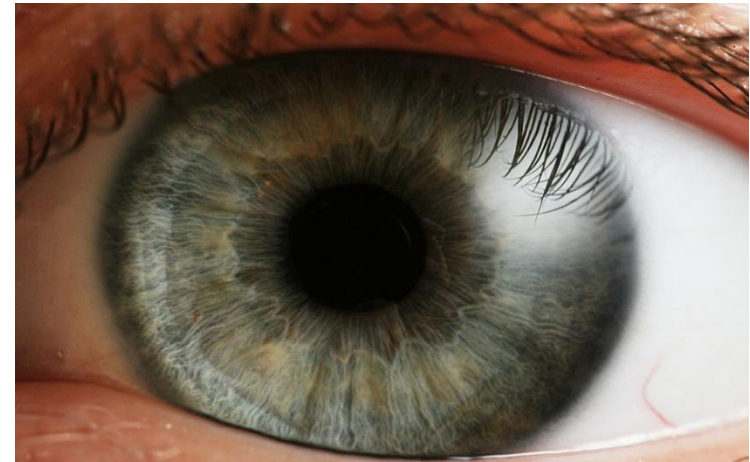
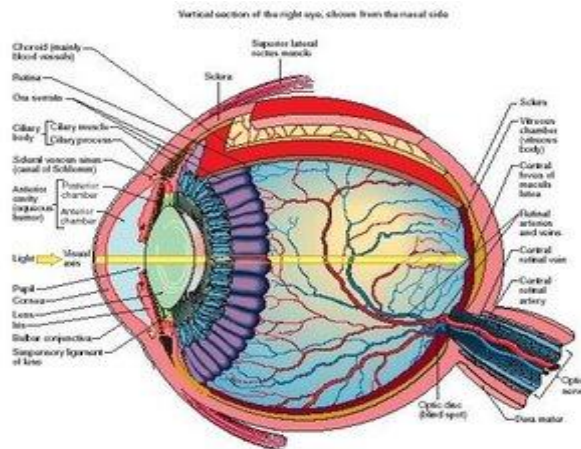


# Providential Marvels

- “Oxygen makes up 21 percent of the earth’s atmosphere, and being the highly reactive element that it is, if there were only a slight rise in atmospheric oxygen, the earth would be scorched by unstoppable fires, ... If the percentage were a little less we would suffocate.”



# Design not Chance



- The human brain consists of approximately 12 billion cells, forming 120 trillion interconnections. The light sensitive retina of the eye (which is really part of the brain) contains over 10 million photoreceptor cells. These cells capture the light pattern formed by the lens and converts it into complex electrical signals, which are then sent to a special area of the brain where they are transformed into the sensation we call vision.
- Based upon how old the universe is (approx 14 billion yrs) it is completely improbable that the human eye could have evolved in that time
- Something or **Someone** must have designed it

# Proving God through Reason

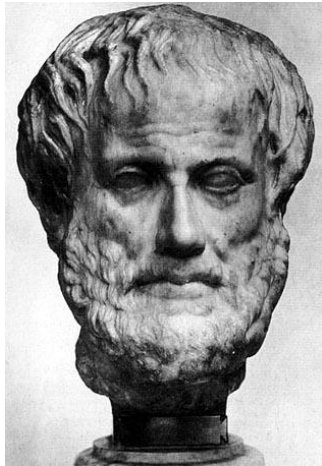


## 5 proofs of St. Thomas Aquinas

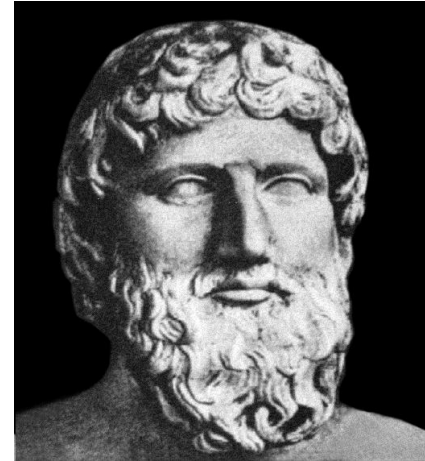
- (1) *motion*: there must be a first mover
- (2) *efficient causality*: there must be a first cause
- (3) *contingency and necessity*: a necessary being that depends on nothing else
- (4) *gradation*: the standard and highest level of all perfection
- (5) *finality*: we see that all things act purposefully, that is, they have a goal and an end, e.g. a seed becomes a tree



# The Reasons God Reveals Himself



*Aristotle*



*Plato*

- (1) We cannot know the highest truths by the power of reason alone, e.g. the Trinity
- (2) The truths we can know about God come only after great labor in reasoning, e.g. the endless work of Aristotle; so God wants all to know him with greater ease
- (3) Even very intelligent people can still error in their reasoning, e.g. Plato thought the body was a prison of the soul; so God wanted us to have the whole truth about him and ourselves without error

# Revelation, Faith, & Creed

- God reveals himself so that we can know the truth about himself and his plan
- and we respond to his revelation with belief or faith because what he reveals is above our capacity of reason
- A creed is a summary of the content of Revelation
  - Everything in the Catholic faith is succinctly brought together in a creed
  - Compare the Nicene Creed to the Catechism

# Creed—Symbol of Faith

- A creed is also called a symbol of faith
- The Greek word *symbolon* originally meant half of a broken object
  - Sign of recognition or identity
  - Collection or summary, all the main parts “symbolized” in one part
- When one has the creed or symbol of faith it shows that the other parts of the faith belong to him too
- The symbol of faith is a sign of recognition and communion among believers
- St. Irenaeus understood that when one had the creed/symbol of faith he could interpret the scriptures



# Symbols of faith

- Thought the centuries many symbols of faith have been articulated in response to different needs
  - Baptismal professions
  - Apostles creed
  - Nicene Creed
  - Athanasian Creed
  - Professions of faith from councils
  - Credo of the People of God
- Each one is a true symbol of faith but each one highlights certain articles more than others (p. 303)
  - Apostles Creed: “I believe I Jesus Christ, his only Son our, Lord.”
  - Nicene Creed: “I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God eternally begotten of the Father, God from God...



# *God the Trinity*

## First Part of the Creed

“I believe in God the Father  
Almighty...”

# I Believe in God

- This is the first and most fundamental article of faith
- Transforms our understanding of our selves, our world, and our destiny
  - Our existence is not by chance
  - There is someone who is present with us
  - My life has a purpose beyond this world alone
  - What I do here matters to God
  - My actions in this world affect my eternal destiny
- Illustration: Copernican revolution

# Attributes of God

- One
- Simple (no parts)
- All Good
- Justice
- Mercy
- Love
- Eternal
- Perfect
- Omniscient
- Omnipresent
- Omnipotent
- Unchangeable
- Wisdom
- Beauty
- Infinite
- Happiness

God *is* his attributes, e.g. he does not *have* wisdom he *is* wisdom



# God's Name



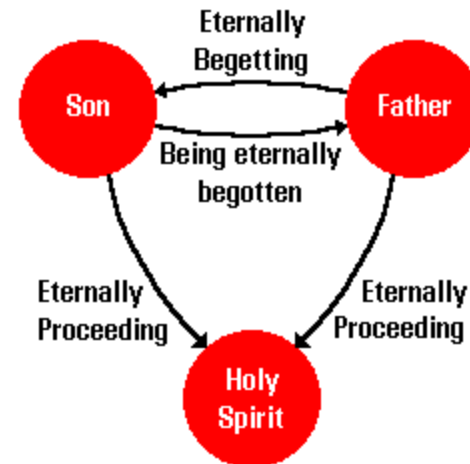
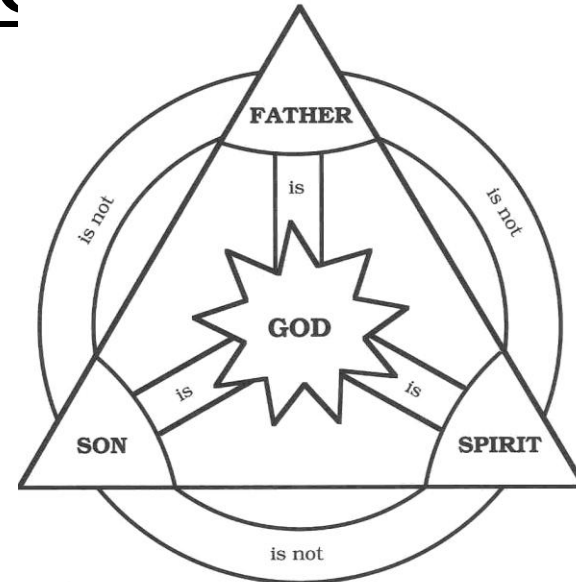
- God reveled himself to Moses as the living God
  - “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob”
  - Relational
- He also revealed his mysterious name YHWH
  - I Am Who I Am
  - I Am the one who is present
  - I Am who Am or I Am
- Philosophy
  - Essence = what it is
  - Existence = that it is
  - God is existence and the fullness of being
  - We are bound by what we are but God is bound by nothing
- Jesus takes this name to himself
  - “...before Abraham ever was I Am”

# The Holy Trinity

- The Trinity is the highest and most central mystery of our faith from which all other mysteries flow
- Trinitarian layout of the creed
  - **Father:** I believe in God, the *Father* almighty Creator of heaven and earth.
  - **Son:** And in *Jesus Christ*, his only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
  - **Holy Spirit:** I believe in the *Holy Spirit*, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

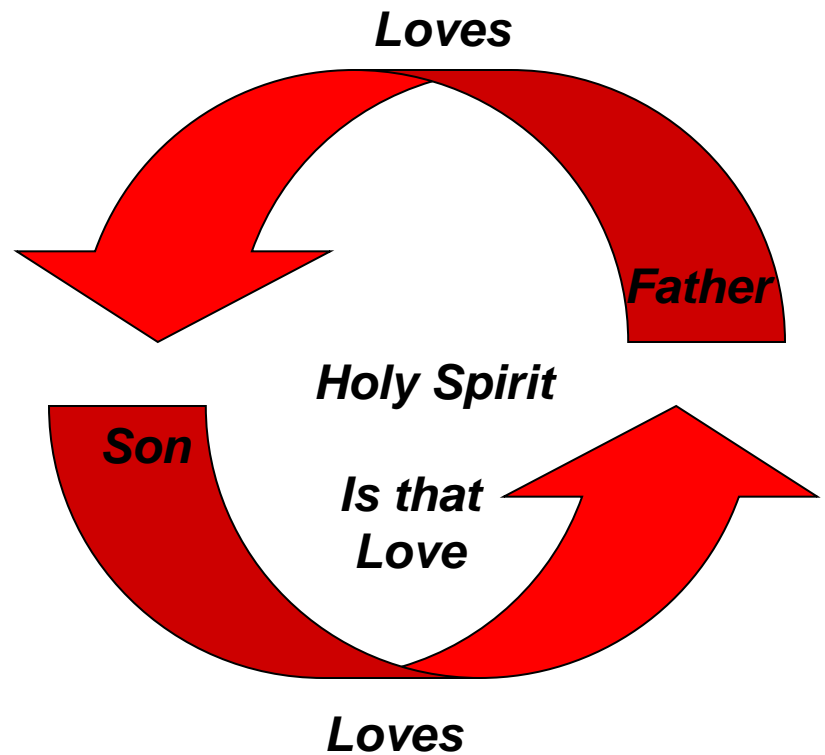
# Trinity – One God in Three Persons

- One God
  - One Divine Nature
    - (Deut 6:4; Jn 10:30)
- Two Processions
  - Generation
    - (Jn 5:19; 8:42)
  - Spiration
    - (Jn 15:26; 14:26)
- Three Persons
  - Father
  - Son
  - Holy Spirit
    - (Mt 3:16; 28:19)



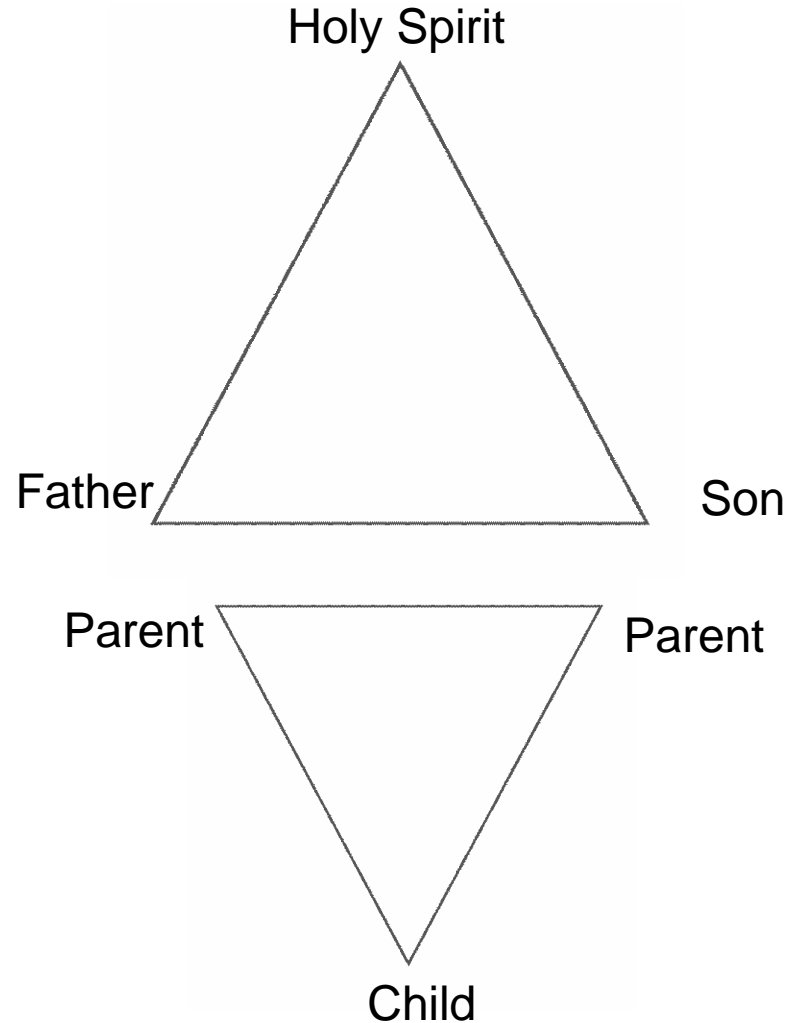
# Trinity

- “God is Love” 1 Jn 4:16
- The Father eternally loves and generates the Son
- The Son eternally loves and is generated by the Father
- The Holy Spirit *is* the Love between the Father and the Son and eternally proceeds from them
- God is an eternal exchange of Love



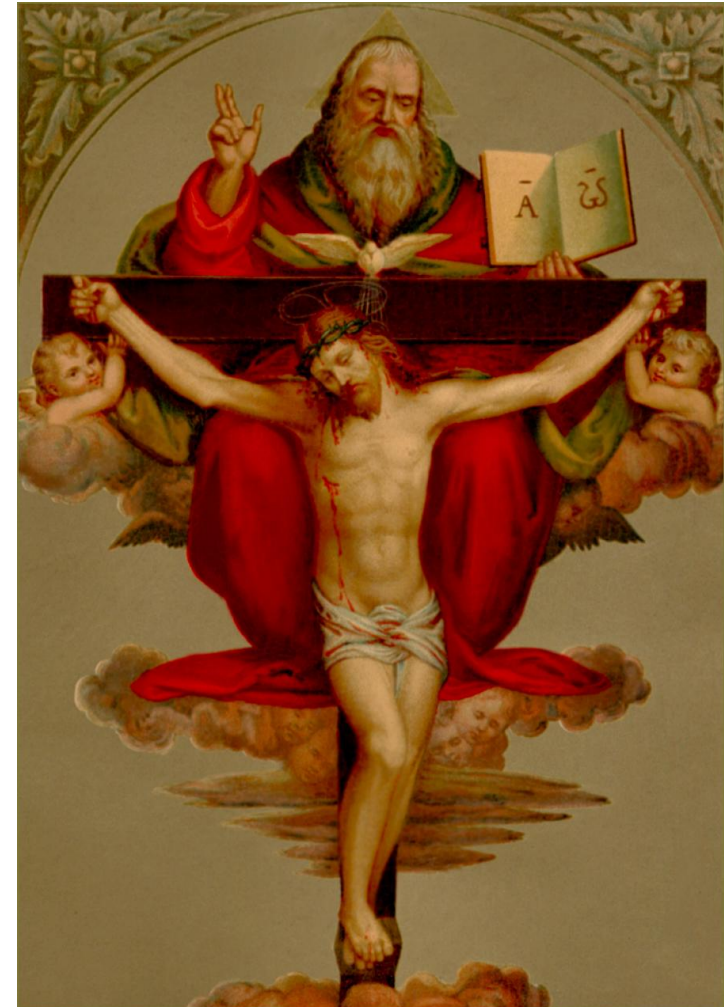
# Analogy of the Family

- The inner life of the Trinity is reflected in the human family
  - This is one way we are in God's image
- In marital union a husband and wife give themselves to each other in love so completely that they truly become one
- From their union of love proceeds another person, their child
- At its best moments a family is a community of love



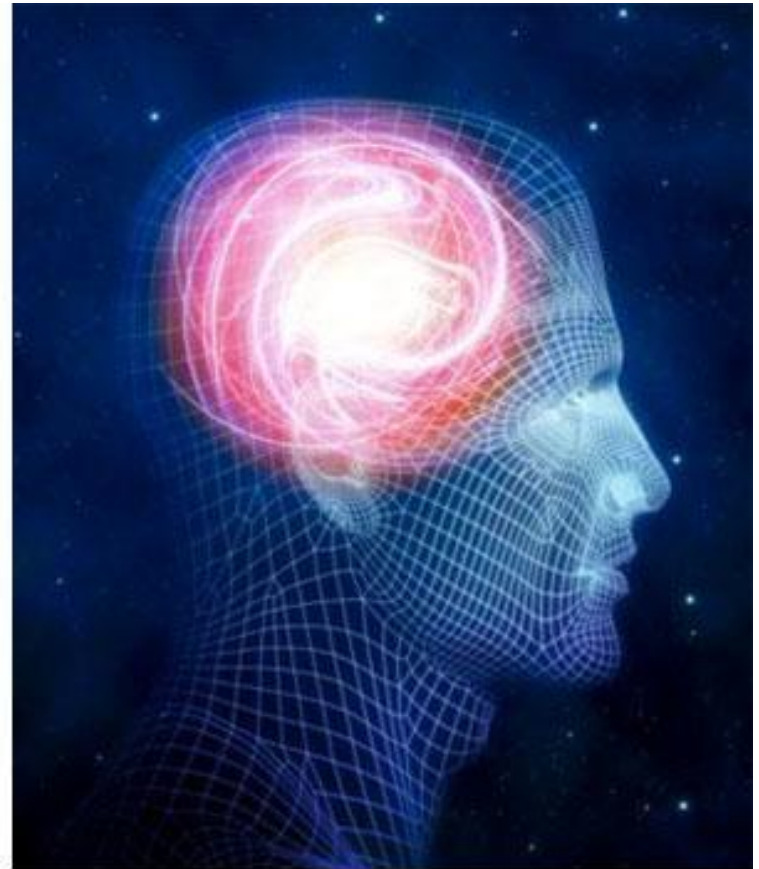
# Activity of the Trinity

- Just as the three persons are inseparable in their nature/substance so they are inseparable in their activity
- Yet each person has a special mode of divine action
  - God **Creates** → especially attributed to the Father
  - God **Redeems** → especially attributed to the Son
  - God **Sanctifies** → especially attributed to the Holy Spirit



# Analogy from Psychology

- St. Augustine perceived a reflection of God in our human faculties which is often called the Psychological Model
- God who is one is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
  - Mind – Father
  - Thought – Son
  - Love – Holy Spirit
- A person is one with many faculties
- Our mind generates thought and wisdom
- Our will loves wise thoughts and ideals



# The Ways We Can Talk about God

- 1. *Causality*** – a cause is indicated in an effect
- 2. *Eminence*** – the greatest degree of any good thing
- 3. *Via Negativa*** – What Something is not

# Causality

- We can come to know something about a cause in its effects
- For example we can come to know how big an animal is by its foot prints
- So by looking at creation and man we can come to know something about God, e.g. Goodness, Wisdom, Beauty



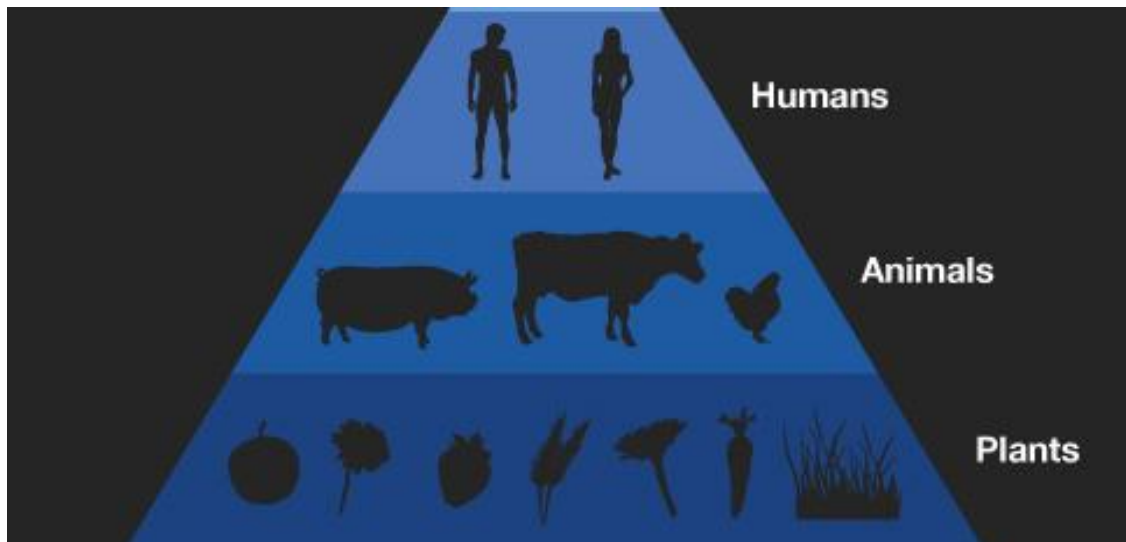
*effect*



*cause*

# Eminence

- We can see all kinds of goodness and perfection in God's creatures
- Whatever perfection we see in a creature, God has in the highest degree
- E.g. a beast may be strong but God is all powerful
- E.g. Man may know a lot but God is omniscient



# Via Negativa

- We can come to an understanding of God by understanding what he is not
  - He does not have a body – he is spiritual
  - He does not have a beginning or end – he is eternal
  - He is not bound by space – he is infinite
  - He can not be fully comprehended – he is incomprehensible