

Explain the attributes of God . . .

Could you please help me to answer these questions: What do the attributes “Father,” “Almighty,” and “Creator” suggest about our relationship with God? The Nicene Creed says that God created all things, “seen and unseen.” How does this statement reflect our life of Faith? The Nicene Creed begins with the words “We believe.” Is “believing” the same as “understanding”?

These are excellent questions. We will answer them briefly here, but will also provide links to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for more information.

The term “Father” refers both to God’s eternal relation with His Son as well as to our personal relationship with Him. Through our Baptism we are united with Christ, who is the firstborn of many brothers and sisters (Rom. 8:29). Through the restoration of divine life in us through the gift of sanctifying grace, we truly become children of God (1 Jn. 3:1). And so our faith opens us to life in the “family of God,” and we discover that God Himself is not some disinterested, impersonal force, nor a capricious tyrant, but our Father, who wants what is best for His children. See [Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 2779-93](#); see also [Hahn and Suprenant, eds., Catholic for a Reason: Scripture and the Mystery of the Family of God.](#)

As for “almighty,” God reveals Himself as “the strong One, the mighty One” (Ps. 24:8), as the One “to whom nothing is impossible” (Lk. 1:37). His omnipotence is universal, mysterious, and shows itself in the creation of the world out of nothing and humanity out of love; but above all it shows itself in the Incarnation and the Resurrection of His Son, in the gift of filial adoption and in the forgiveness of sins. For this reason, the Church frequently directs her prayers to the “almighty and eternal God.” See [Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 268-76.](#)

“Creator” is similar to “almighty,” as the ability to create the world, and even more to create men and women in His own image and likeness, presupposes His omnipotence. The fact of creation does teach us that God is in control; our world and our lives are not subject to evolutionary forces devoid of purpose or meaning. See [Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 279-301.](#)

“Seen and unseen” shows that God not only created the material world, but also the spiritual realm, including spiritual beings that are known as angels. He created our souls at the time of our conception. One thing we can say about this is that there is more to reality than what might meet the eye, but through the “eyes” of faith we have a greater awareness of the spiritual dimension. Even that is imperfect; only when we’re in heaven will we see God as He is, face to face, in what is known as the “beatific vision.” See [Catechism of the Catholic Church, nos. 325-36.](#)

No, believing is not the same as understanding. There are many ways of looking at faith, but at root it involves the acceptance of revealed truths on the authority of God. Yet while faith may be the size of a mustard seed at first, especially if we were baptized as infants, it is ordered toward growth so that it will bear much fruit. And so we pray with the apostles: “Lord, increase our faith” (Lk. 17:5). And so many great philosophers and theologians have noted that “faith seeks understanding,” or “I believe that I may understand.” So may the Holy Spirit continue to open

your mind to a deeper understanding of the truths of our holy faith! For more on this topic, see [*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, nos. 156-59.](#)

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