

... In no way is God in humanity's image. He is neither man nor woman. God is pure spirit in which there is no place for the difference between the sexes. But the respective "perfections" of man and woman reflect something of the infinite perfection of God: those of a mother and those of a father and husband. -CCC 239, 370

Yet it is kind of hard for us to conceive of a Being Who is both Father and Mother, since we are used to having two separate parents: a woman as a "mother" and a man as a "father". Also, the image of a Father/Mother deity is confusing, and not everyone is comfortable with that. So God has chosen to reveal Himself *primarily* as "Father" and to reveal the "divine maternity" *primarily* through Mother Church and the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Some Questions

Are there any problems associated with Fatherhood, when we call God Father?

How do we develop our relationship with God as Father?

How do we help children in our schools to understand God as a loving Father?

Can we use our experience of motherhood to develop our understanding of God and our relationship with God?



God is Father

If you want to know why we call our God Father, listen to Moses: 'Is he not your Father who created you, who made you and established you?' [Deut. 32:6]

The Fatherhood of God

The Catechism of the Catholic Church gives a good overview of the many meanings of God's Fatherhood in Scripture:

Many religions invoke God as "Father." The deity is often considered the "father of gods and men." In Israel, God is called "Father" inasmuch as he is Creator of the world. Even more, God is Father because of the covenant and the gift of the law to Israel, "his firstborn son." God is also called the Father of the king of Israel. Most especially he is "the Father of the poor," of the orphaned and the widowed, who are under his loving protection -CCC 238



These are the four basic aspects of God's Fatherhood as revealed in the Old Testament: God as Father of all creation (Deuteronomy 32:6; Malachi 2:10); Father of Israel (Exodus 4:22; Jeremiah 31:20); Father of the Davidic kings (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 89:27) and Father of the fatherless (Psalm 68:6). The first of these is the primarily basis of the last three.

The New Testament reveals two more aspects of the Fatherhood of God:

1. The First Person of the Trinity is the Eternal Father of Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God (Matthew 11:27).
2. God becomes the Father of all who are "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:5).

The first of these is, as we saw above, a literal, Eternal Fatherhood. The second is derived from the first, since Christians become children of God by sharing in the Sonship of Christ.

Contrary to popular opinion, the Fatherhood of God is not a mere metaphor, particularly in Christianity. God is the true Father of Jesus Christ and the adoptive Father of Christians. God is a *true* Father by nature; it's not just a title we give to our Maker.

In fact, *human fatherhood* is taken from Divine Fatherhood, not *visa versa*! Ephesians 3:14-15 states *"I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom all paternity in heaven and on earth is named"*. All paternity in heaven and on earth is merely a created image of the Divine Paternity.

Motherhood



God also possesses by nature all the perfections which we associate with motherhood. In Isaiah God says to Israel *"Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? If she should forget, yet I will not forget you"* (49:15) and again, *"As one who the mother caresses, so will I comfort you"* (66:13). The Catechism also speaks on this issue:

God's parental tenderness can also be expressed by the image of motherhood, which emphasizes God's immanence, the intimacy between Creator and creature...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