



Ask, Father James:

In the Nicene Creed, we pray; I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things *visible and invisible*. What is meant by "the invisibles"?

The "invisible things" does not refer to microscopic organisms or to planets that are yet to be discovered, but it refers to the existence of spiritual realities - the soul, angels, spirits, and other spiritual forces including the fallen angels that are out there battling the children of God. They are real entities that can never be seen by our naked eyes or by mere human senses, but were all created by God. St. Paul explains it thus: "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him" (Colossians 1:16).

St. Paul again warns that there is an invisible world of darkness and evil that exists and is determined to bring us down; He writes; "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armour of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:10-12). Here, he is talking about Heavenly hosts and the spiritual forces of evil. We must be aware of one and be prepared for the other.

One of the wonderful dimensions in our liturgy and faith is our belief in the existence of angels (Invisible creatures) who are there to help us. When at Mass we are called to join our voices with the angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven. . . And also, during the funeral liturgy, we pray... "May the angels lead you into Paradise..." We also call on them for assistance when we invoke our guardian angel or pray the prayer to St. Michael the Archangel. We know three archangels by name. However, Scripture reveals that only Gabriel and Raphael were made visible. Thus the Creed gives us a salutary reminder that the invisible world really exists, and that it often impinges upon our visible one.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains "...visible and invisible" in the Nicene Creed in this way: "The Apostles' Creed professes that God is "creator of heaven and earth." the Nicene Creed makes it explicit that this profession includes "all that is, seen and unseen" (CCC #325). (When the Roman Missal was revised, the old phrase "seen and unseen." which are still in many of our Prayer Books became rendered as "visible and invisible").

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