Nicene and Apostles Creed

St Teresa of Avila

RCIA

October 3, 2013
Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of Heaven and earth.

I believe 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 to the dead. On the third day, He rose again. He ascended to Heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.
Credo: I Believe

Statement of Christian belief and orthodoxy

Also known as Profession of Faith and Symbols of Faith

Initially used in relation to Baptism

Early in the Church many creeds

Became more detailed and elaborate in response to doctrinal challenge and heresy
Creed

Apostles Creed

Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed
Apostles Creed

Apostolic Origin

2nd - 4th Century

Faithful summary of Apostles Faith

Use at Baptism

Heresy of Gnosticism
Nicene Creed

Council of Nicaea 325 AD
1st Ecumenical Council

Heresy of Arianism
Jesus was created
Not co-eternal
Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed

AD 381 Council of Constantinople

Dispute over the divinity of the Holy Spirit
The former English translation of the creed began with "we" believe, the Greek and Latin translations begin with "I" believe.

Reciting the creed is ultimately an individual confession of belief, although the creed also expresses the collective beliefs of the Church.

“Whoever says ‘I believe’ says ‘I pledge myself to what we believe.’” (CCC)
Nicene Creed

Common ground to:
   East Orthodox
   Roman Catholics
   Anglicans
   Lutherans
   Calvinists
   Many other Christian groups

Many groups that do not have a tradition of using it in their services nevertheless are committed to the doctrines it teaches.
Nicene Creed

Three parts:

The first part speaks of the first divine Person, God the Father, and the wonderful work of creation.

The second speaks of the second divine Person, Jesus the Son of God, and the mystery of his redemption of men.

The final part speaks of the third divine Person, the Holy Spirit, the origin and source of our sanctification."
Holy Trinity
The Nicene Creed

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.
This first affirmation “I believe in God” is the most fundamental of the Creed.

In the midst of a polytheistic culture God revealed himself to Abraham and Moses as the One True God.

*Shema:* “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.”

"The Christian faith confesses that God is one in nature, substance and essence."
The Father Almighty

By calling God “Father,” the language of faith indicates two main things:

That God is the first origin of everything and transcendent authority

That he is at the same time is a God of goodness and of loving care for all his children.
The Father

God is Father not only in being Creator; he is eternally Father in relation to his only Son, who is eternally Son only in relation to his Father:

“No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.”
The Almighty

• We believe that his might is *universal*, for God who created everything also rules everything and can do everything.

• Nothing is impossible with God, who disposes his works according to his will. His creative power is unlimited.

• God is the *Father Almighty*, whose fatherhood and power shed light on one another: God reveals his fatherly omnipotence by the way he takes care of our needs; by the filial adoption that he gives us
Maker of Heaven and Earth

The Scriptural expression “heaven and earth” means all that exists, creation in its entirety.

It also indicates the bond, deep within creation, that both unites heaven and earth and distinguishes the one from the other.
Catholics believe that God created the visible world (created matter) and the invisible one (spiritual world of angels, etc).

Some early sects, the Gnostics and Marcionites, believed that God the Father created the spirit world, but that an "evil" god (called the demiurge) created the similarly evil material world.

Creation is the foundation of “all God’s saving plans,” the “beginning of the history of salvation” that culminates in Christ.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ

Jesus

The meaning of the name Jesus in Hebrew: “God saves”

At the annunciation, the angel Gabriel gave him the name Jesus as his proper name, which expresses both his identity and his mission.
"I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ"

**Christ**

The word “Christ” (Christos) comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, which means “anointed.”

It became the name proper to Jesus only because he accomplished perfectly the divine mission that “Christ” signifies.

He was the fulfillment of all the messianic prophecies.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ

Lord

The title Lord means that Jesus is master of all, with connotations of deity, where the Hebrew word adonai and Greek word kyrios (both meaning Lord) were applied to Yahweh in the Old Testament.
The Only Begotten Son of God

Jesus is in a unique relationship with God the Father.

While Hebrew kings were sons of God symbolically (Psalm 2), Jesus is the only Son of God by nature.
Born of the Father before all ages

Begotten has the meaning of born, generated, or produced.

God the Son is born out of the essence of God the Father.

Since God is eternal, the Son, being begotten of God, is also eternal.
The Church uses the language God from God, light from light to show that Jesus is the perfect image of the Father.

God the Son exists in relation to God the Father. Son is not the Father, they both are God.
True God from True God
True God from True God

God the Son is not a half-god or inferior to God the Father.

God the Son is fully and utterly God, distinct from the Father, yet not divided from the Father.

The ancient Arians believed that Jesus could be called "god" but not true God.

They believed the Logos was the first creation of God, necessary to mediate between the unknowable distant God and creation.
Begotten, not made

There is a very important difference between begotten and made

Begotten means bringing forth something of the same nature or substance

We use the term *Consubstantial* meaning of the same substance or essence

Jesus was not just similar to the Father, He was one in being with the Father
God the Father and God the Son are equally divine, united in substance and will.

Father and Son share the same substance or essence of divinity.

That is, the Father and Son both share the qualities and essential nature that make one in reality God.
The Bible tells us that through The Son, as Word of God, all things have been created. As Logos, the Son is the agent of creation.

Through him all things were made

Jesus existed from all eternity with the Father even though he had not become man (taken on flesh)

This emphasizes the point that God cannot be separated.
For us men and for our salvation, He came down from heaven...
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven

Incarnation was solely for our salvation. Man could not save himself

Jesus came from heaven, from a reality other than our own. While the creed says "down," it is important to remember that our language is limited by time and spatiality.

Heaven is not "up," just as God is not a biologically male father. However, due to the limits of language, we are forced to describe heaven symbolically and spatially
... and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.
Three important teachings in this line

1. The Son of God took flesh and was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary. This rejected the heresy that Jesus only appeared to be man (Docetism)

2. Conceived by the Holy Spirit - no sexual intercourse; no human father; action on the part of God that allowed Mary to conceive Jesus in her womb

3. Jesus though true God became man. This countered the belief that God dwelt in Jesus but that he did not actually become man
Jesus is fully divine and fully human. Not two persons but one person fully man and fully God.

God the Son became incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He was born of a virgin through the Holy Spirit. God truly became human in Jesus Christ.

Catholics believe that Jesus of Nazareth was and is a real human being, not simply a spirit or ghost.

The incarnation of God in Christ is the ultimate act of love, because rather than sending an angel or good human to accomplish the redemption and restoration of creation, God Himself became human.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried.

Jesus died on a cross, suffered as humans do, truly died, and was laid in a tomb.
• Jesus being “raised from the dead” presupposes that the crucified one travelled in the realm of the dead prior to his resurrection.

• Jesus, like all men, experienced death and his soul joined the others in the realm of the dead. But he descended there as Savior, proclaiming the Good News to the spirits imprisoned there.

• Jesus did not descend into hell to deliver the damned, nor to destroy the hell of damnation, but to free the just who had gone before him.

• “The gospel was preached even to the dead.” The descent into hell brings the Gospel message of salvation to complete fulfillment.
...and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.

Jesus was resurrected bodily as the Scriptures say. Just as Jesus truly died, he truly rose from the dead three days later.

The bodily resurrection is the keystone of Christian doctrine and experience.

However, Jesus was not just physically resuscitated (as was Lazarus), but rather his body was transformed at the resurrection.
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Again, we are limited by our language and experience of spatiality.

Jesus is said to "ascend" to heaven. Whatever happened that day, Luke had to render the event into his own scientific paradigm, so he said Jesus "went up" to heaven.

Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, i.e. sharing authority with the Father, and not literally sitting next to the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.

Jesus is coming again to judge the living and dead.

His kingdom cannot be destroyed, despite all of humanity's efforts.

The creed says Jesus is coming; it does not say when or how
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life

The Holy Spirit is also called "Lord."

The Holy Spirit is God, The Third Person of the Trinity

The Holy Spirit sustains our lives as Christians, illuminating us after the new birth.
Who proceeds from the Father and the Son

The Son is said to be begotten, while the Spirit is said to proceed.

Both words convey that the Son and Spirit are in special relationships to the Father, yet also fully divine.

“Filioque” … “and the Son”
Filioque

A major division between Eastern and Western Christianity

The Catholic Church acknowledges that the Father is the sole source within the Trinity, and admits that "proceeds from the Father and the Son" means "proceeds from the Father through the Son."

The Catholic Church acknowledges that the Father is the sole source within the Trinity, and admits that "proceeds from the Father and the Son" means "proceeds from the Father through the Son."
... who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified.

Since the Holy Spirit is fully God, like the Father and the Son, He is worthy of the same worship and adoration.
... who has spoken through the prophets

The Spirit inspired the prophets of old, and inspires the Church today.

This line was directed against the view that the Holy Spirit did not exist, or was not active, before Pentecost.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
• “...One Body, One Hope, One Lord, One faith, One Baptism, One God & Father of all. –Eph 4:4-6

• One church under leadership of Holy Father, the Pope, successor to Peter.
The Church is "holy" on account of Christ's holiness and grace, and not because its members or leaders are perfect.

Church’s purpose: To sanctify the people of God & the world.
The creed requires belief in the catholic (universal) Church, whose origins are ancient and historical, going back to the Apostles themselves.

A Church of diversity
Not an American Church
Our Church was built upon the faith and witness of the apostles.

• This witness survives through Apostolic Succession, wherein apostles appointed leaders, who themselves appointed leaders, a process continuing to this day.

• This Apostolic line survives today primarily in the Catholic and Orthodox Churches.
Communion of Saints
Communion of Saints

Found in Apostles Creed but not Nicene Creed

The spiritual union of all Christians, the living and the dead:

- On earth
- in heaven
- and in purgatory
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
Catholics believe that sacramentally, through the waters of baptism, God forgives us of our sins, and we are born again.

This belief in baptism's saving power is ancient and universally acknowledged in the early Christian writings.

If someone has been validly baptized in the name of the Trinity, then that baptism has definitely "taken" and re-baptism is unnecessary.
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead

and the life of the world to come. Amen.
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Christians always hope for the time when the universe is fully reconciled to God in Christ Jesus.

The Nicene Creed seems to affirm both the existence of a soul-filled heaven and the later resurrection of the dead when soul meets glorified body.
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

The last judgment will occur after the resurrection of the dead and the reuniting of a person's soul with own physical body.

The Catholic Church teaches that at the time of the last judgment Christ will come in His glory, and all the angels with him, and in his presence the truth of each man's relationship with God will be laid bare, and each person will be judged with perfect justice.
The New Testament and the Nicene Creed are deeply entangled with each other.

In addition to its basis in scripture it is also a product of worship and prayer.

Many of the concepts put forth in the creed are difficult to fully comprehend.

As such, while the creed is an authoritative framework, it is rooted in mystery.

Since the Nicene Creed is rooted in worship and prayer, besides being believed, it is to be lived out.