

Lesson 5: Creed

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Apostles and Nicene Creeds

Our Creed is a statement of what we believe as Catholics. The word creed comes from the Latin “credo” meaning I believe.

Each Sunday we begin our Creed with the words “I believe.”

From the beginning, the apostolic Church expressed and handed on her faith in brief formula that were to establish a standard of our faith for all.

Such formula or summaries are called creeds or "professions of faith" since they summarize the faith that Christians profess and believe.

In the early Church there were many different forms of the Christian confession of faith; many different “creeds.” These creeds were used originally in relation to baptism. As time passed different places had different creedal statements, all professing the identical faith, yet using different forms and expressions, with different degrees of detail and emphasis. These creedal forms usually became more detailed and elaborate in those areas where questions about the faith had arisen and heresies had developed.

In a way we need to be thankful for the early heresies for they forced the Church to define more precisely what she believed. Among all the creeds, two occupy a special place in the Church's life: Apostle's Creed and the Nicene Creed.

Apostles' Creed

Throughout the Middle Ages it was generally believed that the Apostles, on the day of Pentecost, while still under the direct inspiration of the Holy Spirit, composed our present Creed between them, each of the Apostles contributing one of the twelve articles.

The Apostles' Creed is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the apostles' faith.

Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed draws its great authority from the fact that it stems from the first two ecumenical Councils (in 325 and 381 AD). It remains common to all the great Churches of both East and West to this day. The Councils were bishops who gathered together to decide on a point of faith for the Church.

The Nicene Creed was formulated at the First Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in AD 325.

In the fourth century a great controversy developed in Christendom about the nature of the Son of God. Arius, a 4th century priest, believed that the Son of God didn't exist “before all ages”; Jesus was a created being, not divine. Others believed that the Son of God is eternal, divine, and

uncreated. This controversy was the topic of numerous councils before being resolved at the Council of Nicaea. The controversy raged throughout the entire Christian world. And is known as Arianism.

Following the controversy about the Son of God was the dispute about the Holy Spirit. The Nicene Creed was expanded at the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 381AD to balance its coverage of the Trinity by including the Holy Spirit

| Apostles' Creed | Nicene Creed |
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| <p>I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.</p> <p>I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.</p> <p>He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> | <p>I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p> |