

THE NICENE CREED

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THE NICENE CREED

The early Church wanted to gather the essential elements of its faith into organic and articulated summaries.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. 186

Our belief in God and all he has revealed to us through His Son and Holy Scripture is rooted in Faith.

Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. 1814

The Creed is divided into three distinct but connected parts: “the first part speaks of the first divine Person and the wonderful work of creation; the next speaks of the second divine Person and the mystery of his redemption of men; the final part speaks of the third divine Person, the origin and source of our sanctification.”

Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. 190

INTRODUCTION

- ◆ Through the centuries many professions or symbols of faith have been articulated in response to the needs of the different eras: the creeds of the different apostolic and ancient Churches, e.g., the Quicumque, also called the Athanasian Creed; the professions of faith of certain Councils, such as Toledo, Lateran, Lyons, Trent; or the symbols of certain popes, e.g., the Fides Damasi or the Credo of the People of God of Paul VI.¹ None of the creeds from the different stages in the Church's life can be considered superseded or irrelevant. They help us today to attain and deepen the faith of all times by means of the different summaries made of it.
- ◆ Belief in God and all he has revealed to us through His Son and Holy Scripture is rooted in Faith. Faith, the free gift that God makes to man, is the foundation upon which our belief and trust are slowly but firmly built.²
- ◆ The Church of the apostles expressed and handed on her faith in brief formulas or summaries. Essential elements of faith in Jesus Christ were summarized into Creeds, intended specially for candidates for baptism. They are called "Creeds" because their first word in Latin is usually credo ("I believe")³.
- ◆ The first profession of faith is made during baptism and renewed at Sunday Eucharist. Since baptism is given "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," the faith professed in baptism is articulated in terms of the three divine persons of the Trinity.⁴ Among all the creeds, two occupy a special place: The Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed.⁵
- ◆ The Apostles' Creed is so called because it is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the apostles' faith. It is the ancient baptismal symbol of the Church of Rome.⁶ It is accepted by some churches, including the Roman Catholic Church. It is divided into three interconnected parts representing the Holy Trinity,⁷ and there are twelve articles of the Apostles Creed symbolizing the fullness of the apostolic faith by the number of the apostles.⁸
- ◆ The Niceno-Constantinopolitan or Nicene Creed draws its great authority from the fact that it

¹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.192).

² Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.1814, 162). Print.

³ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.185-188). Print.

⁴ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.189-192). Print.

⁵ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.193-197).

⁶ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.194). Print.

⁷ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.190). Print.

⁸ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.191); Cf. St. Ambrose, Expl. symb. 8

stems from the first two ecumenical Councils (Nicaea in 325 and Constantinople 381)⁹ at which its present complete form was defined by Church bishops. It explains the church's teachings about the Trinity. The Nicene Creed is a "symbol" of belief for Christians in all regions and is accepted as authoritative by the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and major Protestant churches. The Nicene Creed will be used in this presentation as it is the one said at Mass on Sundays.

- ◆ The Nicene Creed is not stated in the Bible like the Ten Commandments but is a product of Christian worship and prayer. Being born from prayer and experience, the creed tries not to define God's nature exactly and precisely like a science textbook would describe something. God's exact nature and ways are something that we are able to begin to grasp, but never fully comprehend. As such, while the creed is an authoritative framework, it is rooted in the mystery of the Trinity.
- ◆ Catholics, Orthodox, and many Protestants accept the ancient Nicene Creed. Over 300 bishops from all over the world gathered to write the creed, in response to Arianism,¹⁰ a heresy¹¹ that denied Jesus was fully God. The Nicene Creed ultimately explains the Church's teachings about the Trinity, but it also affirms historical realities of Jesus' life. Even though the creed does not directly quote Scripture, it is based on biblical concepts and truths.
- ◆ The Church always has the duty to carry on the effort to study more deeply and to present, in a manner ever better adapted to successive generations, the unfathomable mysteries of God. But at the same time the greatest care must be taken to do no injury to the teachings of Christian doctrine. We are to try to understand and extract the sense conveyed by a text, and not to recreate, in some fashion, this sense in accordance with arbitrary hypotheses. We are to place our unshakable confidence in the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Church, and in theological faith upon which rests the life of the Mystical Body.¹²

THE NICENE CREED

This commentary of the Nicene Creed is referenced mainly from the Ancient and Future Catholics website.¹³ <http://www.ancient-future.net/index.html>

I Believe in One God

- a) Christians, like Jews and Muslims, believe that only one God exists. The creed states the assumption of the ancient *Shema*¹⁴: "*Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.*" The former English translation of the creed began with "we" believe, while the Greek, Latin,

⁹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.195). Print.

¹⁰ A heresy which arose in the fourth century after Emperor Constantine had recognized the Christian Church in A.D. 313, that denied the Divinity of Jesus Christ

¹¹ A theological doctrine or system rejected as false by ecclesiastical authority

¹² Pope Paul VI, (1968, June 30). Solemni Hac Liturgia (Credo Of The People Of God). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19680630_cred.html.

¹³ <http://www.ancient-future.net/index.html>

¹⁴ The Jewish confession of faith made up of three scriptural texts (Deut. 6:4–9, 11:13–21; Num. 15:37–41)

and current English translation begin with "I" believe. The latter is more accurate, because reciting the creed is ultimately an individual confession of belief, although the creed also expresses the collective beliefs of the Church. The first Commandment given by God to the Israelites after the Exodus is; *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall not have other gods beside me."*¹⁵. This Shema and the first commandment are given to the Israelites under the Old Covenant by God, and confirmed under the New Covenant by Jesus Christ; *"Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is Lord alone! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength."*¹⁶

- b) God revealed His name to Moses as being, *"I am who I am."*¹⁷ God also revealed Himself to the Israelites after the Exodus; *"Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God,"*¹⁸ God is love, as the apostle John teaches us:¹⁹ so that 'being' and 'love' express ineffably the same divine reality of Him who has wished to make Himself known to us, and who, "dwelling in light inaccessible"²⁰ is in Himself above every name, above every thing and above every created intellect.

The Father Almighty

- a) Christians are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; for there is only one God, the almighty Father, his only Son, and the Holy Spirit; the Most Holy Trinity.²¹ "The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e., by nature one God." We confess one God in three persons, which is the central mystery of Christian faith and life.²² Jesus frequently calls God "Father" in the Scriptures, and this usage tells us that God is a loving God active within His creation. God the Father is the first person, or distinction, within the Godhead. The Father is the "origin" or "source" of the Trinity. As such, God the Father is often called "God Unbegotten" in early Christian thought.
- b) We believe that this only God is absolutely one in His infinitely holy essence as also in all His perfections, in His omnipotence, His infinite knowledge, His providence, His will, His love and His mercy. We believe that His might is universal, for God who created everything also rules everything and can do everything.²³ God alone can give us right and full knowledge of His divine reality by revealing Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in whose eternal life we are by grace called to share. God reveals His fatherly omnipotence by the way He takes care of our needs; by the filial adoption that He gives

¹⁵ Deut. 5:6-7 (NABRE)

¹⁶ Deut. 6:4-5, Mk 12:28-30

¹⁷ Ex. 3:14

¹⁸ Ex 19:16-25

¹⁹ I Jn. 4:8

²⁰ I Tim. 6:16

²¹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.233). Print.

²² Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.253). Print; Council of Toledo XI (675): DS 530:26

²³ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.268). Print.

us “*I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.*”²⁴ Finally by his infinite mercy, he displays his power at its height by freely forgiving sins. We believe then in the Father who eternally begets the Son²⁵

Maker of Heaven and Earth of All Things Visible and Invisible

- a) The first verse in Genesis tells us, “*In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*”²⁶ God created the visible world (created matter) and the invisible one (spiritual world of angels, etc). Thus, God created everything. “*For in him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.*”²⁷

I Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ

- a) Jesus means in Hebrew “God saves.” The angel Gabriel, sent from God, gave him the name Jesus as his proper name, which expresses both his identity and his mission, and signifies that the very name of God is present in the person of his Son.²⁸ Jesus Christ is the Lord and Master of all and His name also has connotations of deity, since the Hebrew word *adonai* and Greek word *kyrios* (both meaning Lord) were applied to Yahweh in the Old Testament. We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word, begotten of the Father before time began.
- b) He was incarnate of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, and was made man. He was equal therefore to the Father according to His divinity, and inferior to the Father according to His humanity;²⁹ and Himself one, not by some impossible confusion of His natures, but by the unity of His person.³⁰ His human nature was assumed, not absorbed.³¹ He dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. He proclaimed and established the Kingdom of God and made us know in Himself the Father. He gave us His new commandment to love one another as He loved us. He taught us the way of the beatitudes of the Gospel; poverty in spirit, meekness, suffering borne with patience, thirst after justice, mercy,

²⁴ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.270). Print; 2 Cor. 6:18; Mt. 6:32

²⁵ Pope Paul VI, (1968, June 30). Solemni Hac Liturgia (Credo Of The People Of God). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19680630_cred.html.

²⁶ Gen. 1:1

²⁷ Col. 1:16-17

²⁸ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.430, 432). Print.

²⁹ Pope Paul VI, (1968, June 30). Solemni Hac Liturgia (Credo Of The People Of God). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19680630_cred.html.

³⁰ Pope Paul VI, (1968, June 30). Solemni Hac Liturgia (Credo Of The People Of God). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19680630_cred.html.

³¹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.470). Print.

purity of heart, will for peace, persecution suffered for justice sake.³²

The Only Begotten Son of God

- a) Jesus is the Son of God as attested to by God Himself when Jesus was baptized by John.³³ Jesus Christ was also identified by Peter as the Son of God; “*You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.*” Jesus said to him in reply, “*Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father.*”³⁴ Paul also confessed Jesus as the Son of God when describing his conversion on the road to Damascus.³⁵
- b) Jesus is in a unique relationship with God the Father. Jesus is the only Son of God by nature. The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is.³⁶ “*But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption.*”³⁷

Born of the Father Before All Ages

- a) Begotten has the meaning of born, generated, or produced. God the Son is born out of the essence of God the Father. He is the firstborn of all creation.³⁸ Just as a child shares the same humanness as his or her parents, the Son shares the essential nature of God with the Father. Since God is eternal, the Son, being begotten of God, is also eternal. The Son is often called the "Only-Begotten God" in early Christian literature, and also in the Gospel of John; “*No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God, who is at the Father’s side, has revealed him.*”³⁹

God from God, Light from Light

- a) “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*”⁴⁰ Jesus is “the image of the invisible God;” the “radiance of the glory of God and the very stamp of his nature.”⁴¹ God the Son exists in relation to God the Father. The Son is not the Father, but they both are God. Just as a torch is lit one to another, the Father and Son are distinct, but both light. The Scriptures have all three persons, Father, Son, and Holy

³² Pope Paul VI, (1968, June 30). Solemni Hac Liturgia (Credo Of The People Of God). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19680630_cred.html; Mt. 5:3-12

³³ Mt. 3:17

³⁴ Mt. 17:16-17

³⁵ Gal. 1:15-16

³⁶ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.253). Print.

³⁷ Gal. 4:4-5

³⁸ Col. 1:15

³⁹ Jn. 1:18

⁴⁰ Jn. 1:1

⁴¹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.241). Print; Jn. 1:1; Col. 1:15; Heb. 1:3

Spirit, interacting at the same time, as shown at Jesus' baptism.⁴² The language of Scripture also suggests that the Father and Son are two as well as one. In John's gospel, the Father and Son testify as two witnesses, not one.⁴³ Related to this, St. Athanasius, writing during the Nicene era, reportedly said that the Father and Son are one as "the sight of two eyes is one."

- b) Following apostolic tradition, the Church confessed at the first ecumenical council at Nicaea (325) that the Son is "consubstantial" with the Father, that is, two persons in one God. The second ecumenical council, held at Constantinople in 381, kept this expression in its formulation of the Nicene Creed and confessed "the only-begotten Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father."⁴⁴

True God from True God

- a) 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. He is the image of the invisible God.⁴⁵ The ancient Arians believed that Jesus could be called "god" but not true God. In other words, they believed the Logos (the "Word," a popular title for Jesus in early Christian literature) was the first creation of God, necessary to mediate between the unknowable distant God (a concept borrowed from Platonic thought) and creation. Because God knew that the Logos would be perfect, the title god could be bestowed upon the Son "by participation," but "true God" was a title reserved only for the unknowable Father. This is the Ante-Nicene "Logos Theology" of St. Justin and Athenagoras taken to an unintended extreme.

Begotten, Not Made

- a) Some Christians today (Jehovah's Witnesses) and in the past (Arians) have suggested that Jesus was a creation of God. Jesus Christ is Son of God by nature and not by adoption.⁴⁶ The creed tells us that just as when a woman gives birth she does not create a child out of nothing, being begotten of God, the Son is not created out of nothing. Since the Son's birth from the Father occurred before time was created, begotten refers to a permanent relationship as opposed to an event within time.

Consubstantial (Greek: homoousia) with the Father

- a) 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

⁴² Mt. 3:16-17

⁴³ Jn. 8:17-18

⁴⁴ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.242). Print.

⁴⁵ Col. 1:15

⁴⁶ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.465). Print.

share the qualities and essential nature that make one in being.⁴⁷ St. Paul tells us that God, “spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being.”⁴⁸ However, sharing the same substance does not mean they share identity of person. Jesus is equal to the Father according to His divinity, and inferior to the Father according to His humanity.⁴⁹

Through Him All Things Were Made

- a) The Bible tells us that through The Son, as Word of God, all things have been created. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be.”⁵⁰ The Word of God and his Breath, the Holy Spirit, are at the origin of the being and life of every creature.⁵¹ St. Paul said, “For in him were created all things in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things were created through him and for him.”⁵²

For Us Men and for Our Salvation, He Came Down from Heaven

- a) Heaven is the dwelling place of God the Father. Jesus, who is consubstantial with the Father and was with the Father when the world was created, came from heaven, a divine reality other than our own. In Christ, heaven and earth are reconciled, for the Son alone “descended from heaven” and causes us to ascend there with him, by his Cross, Resurrection, and Ascension.⁵³ The Gospel of John tells us, “No one has gone up to heaven except the one who has come down from heaven, the Son of Man.”⁵⁴ While the creed and Bible say “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

- a) God the Son became incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He was born of a

⁴⁷ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.242). Print.

⁴⁸ Heb. 1:2-3

⁴⁹ Pope Paul VI, (1968, June 30). Solemni Hac Liturgia (Credo Of The People Of God). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19680630_cred.html.

⁵⁰ Jn. 1:1-3; Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.291). Print.

⁵¹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.703). Print.

⁵² Col. 1:16

⁵³ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.2795). Print; Jn. 12:32, 16:28; Eph. 4:9-10

⁵⁴ Jn. 3:13

virgin through the “power” of the Holy Spirit.⁵⁵ 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. It is therefore both His divinity and His humanity that allowed Him to reconcile us with God.

- b) In addition to being "true God from true God," Jesus is fully human as well. The early Docetists, named from the Greek word *dokeo*, "to seem," believed Jesus only seemed to be human, but was not, and simply went through the motions of being human. Thus, when Jesus ate, they said, he only pretended to eat. Docetism was a very early heresy and one of the earliest Christian sectarian doctrines, affirming that Christ did not have a real or natural body during his life on earth but only an apparent or phantom one.⁵⁶ It was addressed by the Gospel and Letters of St. John, "*This is how you can know the Spirit of God: every spirit that acknowledges Jesus Christ come in the flesh belongs to God,*"⁵⁷ as well as in St. Ignatius' letters in AD 110.⁵⁸
- c) We believe that Mary is the Mother, who remained ever a Virgin, of the Incarnate Word, our God and Savior Jesus Christ,⁵⁹ and that by reason of this singular election, she was, in consideration of the merits of her Son, redeemed in a more eminent manner,⁶⁰ preserved from all stain of original sin⁶¹ and filled with the gift of grace more than all other creatures.⁶² The virgin birth seems to be the first doctrine many modern day skeptics reject. Even today, many who say the creed weekly do not believe Mary was a virgin. However, the Catholic Church teaches that the virgin birth is dogma, i.e. an essential belief.

For Our Sake He Was Crucified Under Pontius Pilate; He Suffered Death, and Was Buried

- a) Under Pontius Pilate, Jesus suffered as humans do, died on a cross, and was laid in a tomb. He suffered; the Lamb of God bearing on Himself the sins of the world,⁶³ and He died for us on the cross, saving us by His redeeming blood.⁶⁴ His redemptive passion

⁵⁵ Lk. 1:26-38

⁵⁶ Encyclopedia Britannica - Docetism

⁵⁷ 1 Jn. 4:2

⁵⁸ Pope Paul VI, (1968, June 30). Solemni Hac Liturgia (Credo Of The People Of God). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19680630_cred.html.

⁵⁹ Dz.-Sch. 251-252

⁶⁰ Pope Paul VI. (1964, November 21). Lumen Gentium. (Para. 53). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

⁶¹ Dz.-Sch. 2803

⁶² Pope Paul VI. (1964, November 21). Lumen Gentium. (Para. 53). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

⁶³ Jn. 1:29

⁶⁴ Col. 1:20

was the very reason for his Incarnation.⁶⁵ We believe that Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the sacrifice of the cross redeemed us from original sin and all the personal sins committed by each one of us, so that, in accordance with the word of the apostle, "where sin abounded grace did more abound."⁶⁶

And Rose Again On the Third Day in Accordance With the Scriptures

- a) Jesus was buried, and, of His own power, rose on the third day,⁶⁷ raising us by His resurrection to that sharing in the divine life which is the life of grace. Jesus was resurrected bodily as the Scriptures say.⁶⁸ Just as Jesus truly died, he truly rose from the dead three days later. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead.⁶⁹ The bodily resurrection is the keystone of Christian doctrine and experience. The Paschal mystery of Christ's cross and Resurrection stands at the center of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God's saving plan was accomplished "once for all" by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ.⁷⁰
- b) Jesus was not just physically resuscitated (as was Lazarus), but rather his body was transformed at the resurrection. Rejection of the bodily resurrection is a rejection of the foundation of Catholic Christianity. The word "again" is used because Jesus' first "rising" was his birth. To "rise again" is be alive again.

He Ascended Into Heaven and Is Seated at the Right Hand of the Father

- a) Jesus went up to heaven from whence he came.⁷¹ In ancient science, heaven was thought to be "up" so in the Scriptures, Jesus is said to "ascend" 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

- a) Jesus ascended to heaven, and He will come again, this time in glory, to righteously judge the living and the dead, each according to his merits⁷²--those who believe in Jesus and have responded to the love and piety of God going to eternal life,⁷³ those who have refused them to the end going to the fire that is not extinguished.⁷⁴ His kingdom cannot

⁶⁵ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.607). Print.

⁶⁶ Rom. 5:20

⁶⁷ Jn. 10:18

⁶⁸ Jn. 20:27

⁶⁹ Col. 1:18

⁷⁰ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.571). Print.

⁷¹ Jn. 3:13

⁷² Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.682). Print; Jn. 5:22

⁷³ Jn. 3:18; Mt. 25:31-34

⁷⁴ Mt. 3:7-12; Mt. 25:41

be destroyed, despite all of humanity's efforts. The creed says Jesus is coming; it does not say when or how, even Jesus said that only the Father knows when He will return.⁷⁵

I Believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life

- a) The Holy Spirit is also called "Lord." The Father is that which the Son is, the Son that which the Father is, the Father and the Son that which the Holy Spirit is, i.e., by nature one God.⁷⁶ God sends the Holy Spirit into our hearts to sustain our lives as Christians and the Holy Spirit is truly God.⁷⁷ No one can say "*Jesus is Lord*" except by the Holy Spirit.⁷⁸ When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that he might continually sanctify the Church.⁷⁹ He illuminates, vivifies, protects and guides the Church; He purifies the Church's members if they do not shun His grace. The Holy Spirit enables man to respond to the call of Jesus: "*Be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.*"⁸⁰
- b) The original Creed of Nicaea simply ended with "We believe in the Holy Spirit." The other additions were approved at the Council of Constantinople in AD 381. However, most scholars believe that the text of the full creed dates prior to this council, and that the bishops simply gave their approval to a local creed already in use. The reason these additions were included in the Nicene Creed is that some Christians of the 4th century denied the full divinity of the Holy Spirit. The names given to these heretics were Macedonians (named after a heretical bishop) or *pneumatomachi* ("fighters against the Spirit").

Who Proceeds from the Father and the Son

- a) 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. The Spirit always existed, as did the son.⁸¹
- b) The phrase "and the Son," in Latin, *filioque*, was not in the original text of the creed, but was added in many Western Churches. The addition likely developed over time as a tool against Arians in the Gothic lands. There are theological and historical justifications for the addition or exclusion of the *filioque*. The Eastern Churches oppose the addition of the *filioque*, while many Western churches accept it. Actually, despite current division on the matter, the issue has been pretty much theologically resolved. The Catholic Church acknowledges that the Father is the sole source within the Trinity, and admits that

⁷⁵ Mt. 24:36

⁷⁶ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.253). Print.

⁷⁷ Gal. 4:6

⁷⁸ 1 Cor. 12:3

⁷⁹ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.767). Print.

⁸⁰ Pope Paul VI, (1968, June 30). Solemni Hac Liturgia (Credo Of The People Of God). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/motu_proprio/documents/hf_p-vi_motu-proprio_19680630_credo.html; Mt. 5:48;

⁸¹ Gn. 1:2

"proceeds from the Father and the Son" means "proceeds from the Father *through* the Son." Catholics also acknowledge that the procession through the Son is not metaphysical, but economic (i.e. describing the Spirit's actions).

- c) Eastern Catholics (those Eastern Churches in communion with Rome) do not say the *filioque*, and remain in full communion with the Catholic Church. The Eastern Orthodox Churches seem willing to allow the interpretation "through the Son," because it does not destroy the monarchy of the Father within the Holy Trinity. However, the *filioque* remains a major division between Eastern and Western Christianity, mainly because the Western Church added the *filioque* to the Nicene Creed without Eastern input. It is hoped that this issue will be resolved in the future, as the current environment is far less political than in the past.

Who With the Father and Son Is Adored and Glorified

- a) The Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, consubstantial with the Father and the Son.⁸² 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

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

I Believe in the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

- a) The creed requires belief in the Catholic (universal) Church, whose origins are ancient and historical, going back to the Apostles themselves. Thus, the 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. The Church is "holy" on account of Christ's holiness and grace, and not because its members or leaders are perfect. In fact, at times throughout history, the Church has remained holy in spite of its members.
- b) We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church built by Jesus Christ on that rock which is Peter. She is the Mystical Body of Christ; at the same time a visible society instituted with hierarchical organs, and a spiritual community; the Church on earth, the pilgrim People of God here below, and the Church filled with heavenly blessings; the germ and the first fruits of the Kingdom of God, through which the work and the sufferings of Redemption are continued throughout human history, and which looks for its perfect accomplishment beyond time in glory.⁸³ In the course of time, the Lord Jesus

⁸² Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para.685). Print.

⁸³ Pope Paul VI. (1964, November 21). Lumen Gentium. (Para. 8, 5). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

forms His Church by means of the sacraments emanating from His plenitude.⁸⁴ By these she makes her members participants in the Mystery of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, in the grace of the Holy Spirit who gives her life and movement.⁸⁵ She is therefore holy, though she has sinners in her bosom, because she herself has no other life but that of grace: it is by living by her life that her members are sanctified; it is by removing themselves from her life that they fall into sins and disorders that prevent the radiation of her sanctity. This is why she suffers and does penance for these offenses, of which she has the power to heal her children through the blood of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

- c) We believe that the Church founded by Jesus Christ and for which He prayed is indefectibly one in faith, worship and the bond of hierarchical communion. In the bosom of this Church, the rich variety of liturgical rites and the legitimate diversity of theological and spiritual heritages and special disciplines, far from injuring her unity, make it more manifest.⁸⁶
- d) We believe that the Church is necessary for salvation, because Christ, who is the sole mediator and way of salvation, renders Himself present for us in His body which is the Church.⁸⁷ But the divine design of salvation embraces all men, and those who without fault on their part do not know the Gospel of Christ and His Church, but seek God sincerely, and under the influence of grace endeavor to do His will as recognized through the promptings of their conscience, they, in a number known only to God, can obtain salvation.⁸⁸
- e) We believe that the Mass, celebrated by the priest representing the person of Christ by virtue of the power received through the Sacrament of Orders, and offered by him in the name of Christ and the members of His Mystical Body, is the sacrifice of Calvary rendered sacramentally present on our altars. We believe that as the bread and wine consecrated by the Lord at the Last Supper were changed into His body and His blood which were to be offered for us on the cross, likewise the bread and wine consecrated by the priest are changed into the body and blood of Christ enthroned gloriously in heaven, and we believe that the mysterious presence of the Lord, under what continues to appear

⁸⁴ Pope Paul VI. (1964, November 21). Lumen Gentium. (Para. 7, 11). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

⁸⁵ Sacrosanctum Concilium, 5, 6; Pope Paul VI. (1964, November 21). Lumen Gentium. (Para. 7, 12, 50). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

⁸⁶ Pope Paul VI. (1964, November 21). Lumen Gentium. (Para. 23). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html; Orientalium Ecclesiarum 2, 3, 5, 6

⁸⁷ Pope Paul VI. (1964, November 21). Lumen Gentium. (Para. 14). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

⁸⁸ Pope Paul VI. (1964, November 21). Lumen Gentium. (Para. 16). In Vatican Website. Retrieved from http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html

to our senses as before, is a true, real and substantial presence.⁸⁹

- f) Christ cannot be thus present in this sacrament except by the change into His body of the reality itself of the bread and the change into His blood of the reality itself of the wine, leaving unchanged only the properties of the bread and wine which our senses perceive. This mysterious change is very appropriately called by the Church transubstantiation. Every theological explanation which seeks some understanding of this mystery must, in order to be in accord with Catholic faith, maintain that in the reality itself, independently of our mind, the bread and wine have ceased to exist after the Consecration, so that it is the adorable body and blood of the Lord Jesus that from then on are really before us under the sacramental species of bread and wine,⁹⁰ as the Lord willed it, in order to give Himself to us as food and to associate us with the unity of His Mystical Body.⁹¹

I Confess One Baptism for the Forgiveness of Sins

- a) Catholics believe that sacramentally, through the waters of baptism, God forgives us of our sins, and we are born again. John the Baptist proclaimed a baptism of repentance with water for the forgiveness of sins.⁹² This ancient and universally acknowledged belief in baptism's saving power is reflected 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.
- b) We believe in one Baptism instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Baptism should be administered even to little children who have not yet been able to be guilty of any personal sin, in order that, though born deprived of supernatural grace, they may be reborn "of water and the Holy Spirit" to the divine life in Christ Jesus.⁹³

And I Look Forward the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Life of the World to Come

We believe in the life eternal. We believe that the souls of all those who die in the grace of Christ--whether they must still be purified in purgatory,⁹⁴ or whether from the moment they leave their bodies Jesus takes them to paradise as Jesus did for the Good Thief on the cross⁹⁵--are the People of God in the eternity beyond death, which will be finally conquered on the day of the Resurrection.⁹⁶

⁸⁹ Dz.-Sch. 1651

⁹⁰ Dz.-Sch. 1642,1651-1654; Paul VI, Enc. *Mysterium Fidei*

⁹¹ S.Th.,111,73,3

⁹² Lk. 3:3

⁹³ Dz.-Sch. 1514

⁹⁴ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 1031). Print.

⁹⁵ Lk. 23:43

⁹⁶ Libreria Editrice Vaticana. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. First ed. New York City: Image/Doubleday, 1995. (para. 1038). Print.