

The Christian Creed - What Catholics Really Believe

Deacon Greg Ollick, M.A.T.
2014

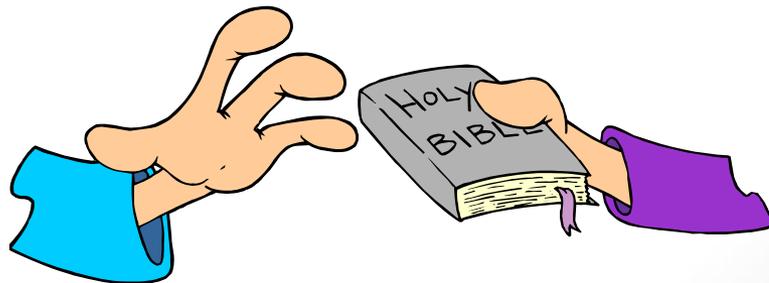


Early Heresies

- **Adoptionism** – Maintained that Jesus was human in every way but, because he was more righteous than anyone else, God appointed him to be his Son – adopted him.
- **Docetism** – Jesus wasn't human at all, but only seemed to be. He only seemed to have flesh and blood, human frailties and the ability to suffer and die.
- **Arianism** – Jesus, the Son of God, was and is subservient to God the Father (created) and therefore not fully God himself.

The Christian Creed

- From its earliest history the Church has summarized its core beliefs in the form of creeds.
- They represent the first and fundamental truths that we as Christians profess.
- The *Apostles Creed* is the the oldest known summary of Christian truth.
- The *Nicene Creed* stems from the 1st two ecumenical councils (325 and 381 A.D.)
- These Creeds existed before the formal canon of NT Scripture. (Hippo 393 A.D.; Carthage 397 A.D.)



The Nicene Creed

- This Creed professes our Trinitarian understanding of God as Father, Son & Holy Spirit.
- This Creed professes our belief in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church that continues Jesus' mission in the world.



The Catholic Faith

- One God is the Creator of all that exists.
- God reveals himself to us in human history and calls us to a relationship.
- Jesus Christ is the fullness of God's revelation to us.
- Faith is our response to God's call.
- God is a Trinity of Persons.
- The Incarnation expresses the truth that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human.

The Catholic Faith:

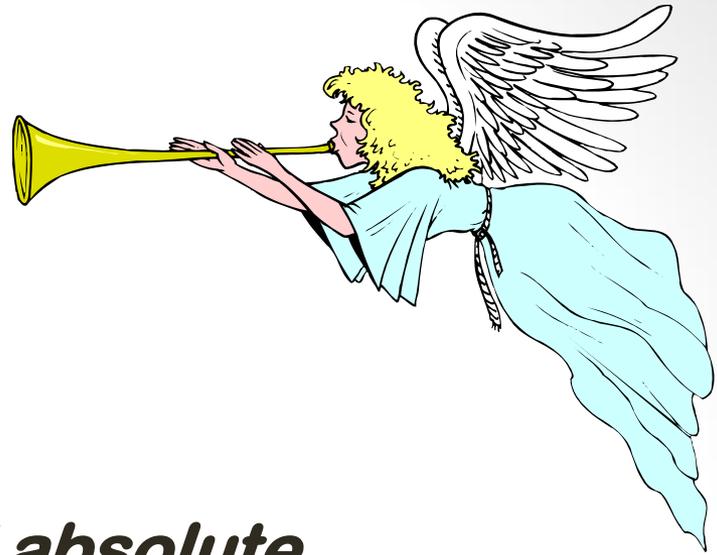
- The Holy Spirit gives life to us and binds us together as a community of faith.
 - The Church is the Body of Christ, the community of believers.
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- Creeds are summary statements of the community about its core beliefs.
 - The Nicene Creed expresses the central truths of our faith.

The Fundamentals:

- Inspiration of Scripture
- Trinity
- The Incarnation (Virgin Birth)
- Atoning death
- Resurrection
- Second coming



Faith



Faith is a relationship of absolute trust, a fundamental confidence in the power and goodness of God.

Faith inspires a renewal of heart and brings about conversion & commitment.

**“We believe in God the
Father the Almighty maker
of heaven and earth, of all
that is seen and unseen.”**

Nicene Creed



“We believe in God.”

Does God Exist?

What is God like?

- Agnostic
- Atheist
- Deist
- Theist
- Polytheist
- Pantheist



How do we know God?

- The knowledge of God is *inherent* in man. (Romans 1:19)
- The knowledge of God is *known* from creation. (Romans 1:20)
- The knowledge of God is *revealed* through his word. (John 1:1-4) (Romans 10:17)
- The knowledge of God is the *gift* of faith. (Matthew 16:17)
- The knowledge of God is revealed in *Jesus*. (John 1:18)
- The Knowledge of God is made known to men in every age through the *Church*. (Jn 16:13; 1 Tim 3:15)

The Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth...

- God's creative power is the origin of all that exists.
- God reveals Himself to us in a continuous act of self-giving.
- God invites us into relationship.
- God loves us with the deep and abiding love of a parent.
- We discover God in all the goodness of God's world.

“We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God , Light from Light, True God from true God, begotten not made, one in being with the Father. Through him all things were made.”

Jesus Christ

- Son of God
- Co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit
- Eternal (no beginning and no end)
- Of one being with the Father and the Holy Spirit.
- He shares in creative power with the Father.

* (John 1:1-5, 10-11, 14)



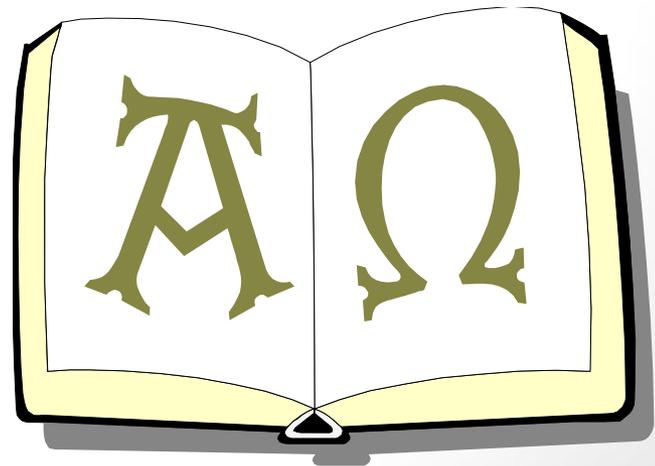
“For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born (incarnate) of the Virgin Mary and became man.”



The Incarnation

- **God's plan for revelation and salvation reached its climax in Jesus.**
- **He made all things new and reconciled all humanity with the Father.**
- **Through the mystery of the Incarnation, Jesus was one of us, and yet he was also God!**

“I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”



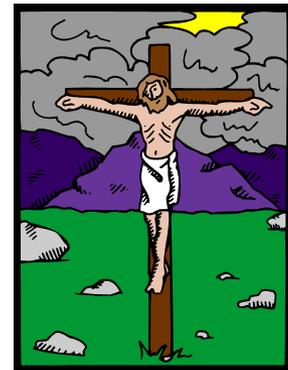
“For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.”

Atonement and Salvation

- Jesus suffered and died for us.
- Through him, and only through him, our sins are forgiven and we are given the gift of salvation.
- We cannot earn our salvation.
- Jesus rose bodily from the dead.
- He reigns in heaven with the Father.
- Jesus will return again (second coming).
- He will judge the living and the dead (general judgment).
- The kingdom of God will never end (transcends time).

Why did God do it like that?

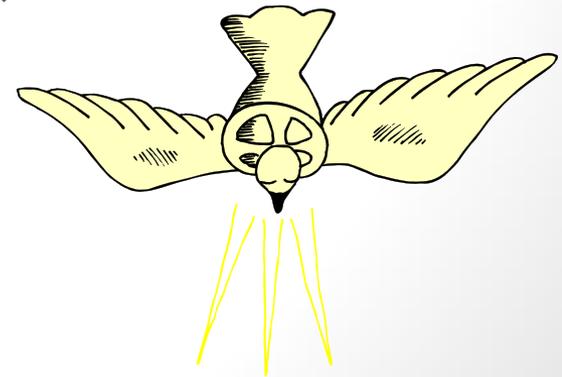
- So we would know how much he loves us.
- So we would have a perfect model.
- So we would learn the effects of sin.
- So we could know God as a father, a brother, a friend.
- So He would know how we feel.



Jesus

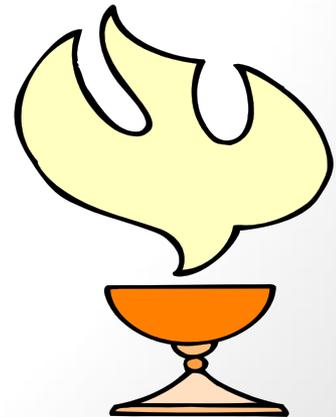
- Jesus announced the reign of God. *(Mark 1:14,15)
- Jesus showed us glimpses of the world that God intended. (love, truth, mercy, communion with God)
- Jesus invited us to help that “kingdom come”. *(Matthew 5:14-16)
- Jesus revealed the Father’s justice, healing and forgiveness. *(John 8: 3-11)
- Jesus revealed the Paschal mystery that death always leads to new life. *(Romans 6:3-4)

“We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.”



The Holy Spirit

- The Holy Spirit is God, the third person of the Trinity.
- The Spirit was powerfully shown at Pentecost.
*(Acts 2:1-4)
- The same Spirit continues to bind the Church together as a Community of Faith.
- The Spirit reveals Jesus to us.
- The Spirit gives and sustains the life of God in us.
- *(1 Cor 2: 7-13)



The Holy Spirit

- The Spirit animates us and moves us toward the fullness of life in God. It is that same Spirit of God that has brought us all here tonight.
- The Spirit prompts us in our conscience to know right from wrong and to live as God intended.
- By choosing to live in the Spirit, the *creed proclaimed* becomes the *creed lived*.



“We believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.”

Amen

Commissioning the Apostles

- “Make disciples of all nations.” (Mt 28:19-20)
- “Preach the gospel to the whole creation.”
(Mk 16:15)
- “As the Father has sent me, even so I send you. Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven, if you retain them, they are retained.” (John 20:21-23)
- “Lo, I am with you always.” (Mt 28:20)

Church Authority

- Jesus came with the full authority of the Father.
- Jesus conferred this authority on Peter and the apostles.
- The Lord continued to confer authority on the elders and their successors. This is an unbroken chain beginning with the apostles down to the present time.
- Certain elders assumed special leadership roles. The Bishop of Rome came to be recognized as a leader among bishops as Peter had been the leader among the apostles.

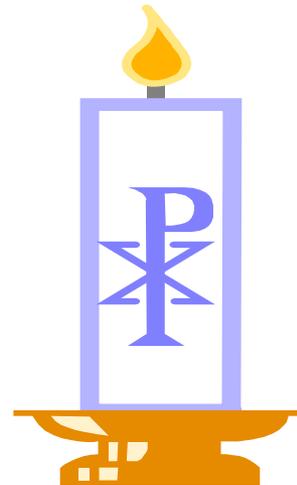
The Catholic Church is fully:

- **One**
- **Holy**
- **Catholic**
- **Apostolic**



The Church is One - “One Lord, one faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all.” (*Eph 4:3-6)

- **Doctrine**
- **Moral teaching**
- **Authority**
- **Visibility**
- **Historicity**
- **Baptism**



The Church is One.

- **God wills that there be one united church.
(*John 17:22,23)**
- **The early Christians understood the importance of this unity. (*Phil 1:27, 2:2)**
- **Paul taught this and strove for both unity and accuracy in the presentation of the gospel.
(Gal 2:1,2,5)**

The Church is Holy.

- **The Catholic Church renounces triumphalism.**
- **The Church is also a church of sinners.
(*Mt 9:12,13; 1Jn 1:8,9)**
- **The holiness of the church is evident in the lives of many of its members throughout the ages.
(lives of the saints)**
- **The Catholic Church promotes the religious life.**

The Church is Holy.

***Eph 5:25-27**

- **The Church belongs to Christ.**
- **The Church was instituted by Christ.**
- **Christ came and died to cleanse the Church.**
- **Apart from the world**
- **Different from the world**
- **The Church is the Second Sacrament.**
- **Christ is present in the Church.**

We are saved by being made part of the Church, Christ's Body. The Church is holy and makes us holy.

The Church is Catholic.

- **Bishop Ignatius of Antioch: first to use the term “catholic.”**
- **The church is catholic (universal) because in and through it the whole material universe is transformed and saved.**
- **The church is hospitable. It invites all races, classes and nations. The church is a family.**
- **The Church encompasses earth, purgatory and heaven.**

The Church is Catholic.

- The Church is catholic in the eschatological sense.
- The Church is catholic in her ultimate destiny.
- (Kingdom of God & the Bride of Christ)
- The Church is an extension of the Incarnation. (Sacrament)
- The Catholic Church is more universal than the universe.



The Church is Apostolic.

- The Church is founded on the apostles because it faithfully defends and proclaims the true teachings of the apostles.
(apostolic tradition - creed)
- The Church preserves and rightly exercises the authority that Jesus gave to the apostles, and that the apostles conferred on the elders who took their place.



The Church is Apostolic.

- The Catholic Church can trace its line of elders and their authority directly back to the apostles in unbroken succession for almost 20 centuries.

The Catholic Church is indeed the Church of the 1st century in the 21st century.



What's so great about being Catholic?

- Tradition
- The Appreciation of Creation
- A Universal Vision
- A Holistic Outlook
- An Invitation of Personal Holiness
- An Experience of Community
- A Call to Social Transformation
- A Profound Sense of History
- An Optimistic Attitude
- A Catholic Worldview

The Catholic Church is what she has always been called to be - the Sacrament of Salvation until the end of time.

Defending the Faith
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2014

