

The Apostles' Creed

The main important things that God has revealed are contained in the Apostles' Creed.

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth;
- and 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 into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead;
- he ascended into heaven; is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
- from thence he shall come 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.

There are 12 specific items stated and revealed in this Creed

1. The first article of the Creed is, 'I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth'. It's a statement the Apostles made and declared to all to whom they preached the Gospel when Jesus told them to go and teach to the ends of the earth to all creatures. (Mat 28:18-20 & Mark 16:15-16)

God is the supreme Spirit, who alone exists of himself, and is infinite in all perfections. God is called 'Almighty' because he can do all things: 'With God all things are possible'. Matt 19:26

God is called 'Creator of heaven and earth' because he made heaven and earth, and all things, out of nothing, by his word.

God had no beginning: he always was, he is, and he always will be.

God exist in all places, both in heaven and on earth and all places in between. He is not limited by time and or space. All things to Him is present and always in existence. God knows and sees all things, even our most secret thoughts. God is pure spirit of goodness and holiness. All things he creates has His quality, but is also given free will. Thus all things he originates or creates begins with His likeness, goodness. Genesis 1: 31

There is only one God.

There are three distinct but of the same substance and unity, Persons in God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. These three Persons are not three Gods: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all one and the same God. The mystery of the three Persons in one God is called the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. By a mystery we mean a truth which is above reason, but revealed by God.

There is this likeness to the Blessed Trinity in our soul: that as in one God there are three Persons, so in our one soul there are three powers. The three powers of our soul are my memory, my understanding, and my will.

Second Article of the Apostles' Creed - is, 'and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord'.

Most of us have been taught or believe and understand that Jesus Christ is God the Son, made man for us. He is truly God. He is truly God because he has one and the same nature with God the Father. He was always God, one with the Father from all eternity. We refer to Him as the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity.

We believe and trust in what was understand and experienced by the Apostles, that Jesus Christ is truly man. He is truly man because he has the nature of man, having a body and soul like ours. Scripture from the very beginning of the fall of Adam and Eve speaks to this covenant (making of a family with us). Of course, Jesus Christ was not always man. He has been man only from the time of his Incarnation. (Conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary) When we use the word Incarnate or Incarnation, we mean to say that God the Son took to himself the nature of man: 'the Word was made Flesh'. (John 1: 14)

Therefore there are two natures in Jesus Christ, the nature of God and the nature of man. Still, there is only one Person in Jesus Christ, which is the Person of God the Son. God the Son was made man to redeem us from sin and hell, and to teach us the way to heaven. Recall the story of Adam and Eve and the fall from grace and complete happiness.

The holy name JESUS means Saviour. Matt. 1:21 The Jewish spelling of his name would have been something like Yeshua, with the root meaning for salvation, pronounced like Yee-sUa. Yeshua in Hebrew is verbal derivative from "to rescue", "to deliver"

The name CHRIST means Anointed. The word Christ, has it's origin from Greek, from christos, which the equivalent of Hebrew means messiah.

Like the Father as God, Jesus the Christ is always present and everywhere. As God made man, he is in heaven, and in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. Being God, He is not limited to time and space. There is no dimension in which He is confined or not present. Again, these are mysteries that we as humans are not able to fully understand or comprehend. We take them on faith. For if we understand everything, then we too would be God or His equal and there in not equal to God.

Third article of Apostle's Creed

The third article of the Creed is, 'who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary'. It means that God the Son took a Body and Soul like ours, in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

He had no earthly father. St. Joseph was only his guardian or foster-father. Mat 1: 18-24
As scripture states, He was born in a stable at Bethlehem, in other words, a humble place. We call that particular day of His birth Christmas Day.

Fourth article of Apostle's Creed - He 'suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and buried'. The chief sufferings of Christ were:

- first, his agony, and his sweat of blood in the Garden;
- secondly, his being scourged at the pillar, and crowned with thorns; and thirdly, his carrying his cross, his crucifixion, and his death between two thieves.

These sufferings of our Lord are called the Passion of Jesus Christ. Scripture speaks to this suffering in many books of the Bible and that He would suffered to atone for our sins, and to purchase for us eternal life. (But, as we shall learn, that does not leave us with no responsibility or need to be holy in order to be with Him in heaven for eternity.)

We called Jesus our Redeemer because his precious blood is the price by which we were ransomed. We know, from recorded history, that He died on Good Friday and that it took place on what we refer to as Mount Calvary. Scripture names it Golgotha in Hebrew, meaning the place of the skull. John 19: 17

The sign of the cross - We make the sign of the cross - first, to put us in mind of the Blessed Trinity: and secondly, to remind us that God the Son died for us on the Cross. In making the sign of the cross we are reminded of the Blessed Trinity by the words, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'. In making the sign of the cross we are also reminded that Christ died for us on the Cross by the very form of the cross which we make upon ourselves.

The fifth article of the Apostle's Creed - is, 'he descended into hell (or among the dead); the third day he rose again from the dead'.

By the words, 'he descended into hell', we mean that, as soon as Christ was dead, his blessed Soul went down into that part of hell called Limbo. Limbo means a place of rest, where the souls of the just who died before Christ were detained. The souls of the just were detained in Limbo because they could not go up to the kingdom of heaven till Christ had opened it for them. It was due to Adam and Eve's disobedience that the gates of heaven where closed and life on earth changed forever. But, as we read in scripture, God promised to send a Savior to redeem us from this sin and all sins, if we but obey Him from that day forward and that by doing so, we would be able to enter the gates of heaven to be with Him in a complete state of joy and happiness, no suffering ever to touch us again. Certainly something to celebrate and be joyous about and to tell others about, but we so often either forget or distort the fullness of truth of what this means and the responsibility we have in order to participate in the reward. Yet, another reason to understand what being Catholic really entails.

When we say the words, 'the third day he rose again from the dead,' we mean that, after Christ had been dead and buried part of three days, he raised his blessed Body to life again on the third day. This day of course is celebrated on Easter Sunday. We know it was a Sunday, because he was crucified and died on a Friday.

Sixth article of Apostle's Creed - is, 'he ascended into heaven; is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty'. By the words, 'he ascended into heaven', we mean that our Savior went up Body and Soul into heaven on Ascension Day, forty days after his resurrection. (Interesting that 40 days symbolizes the forty days in the desert before Jesus began his public ministry and the 40 years the Israelites spend in the desert wondering.)

By the words, 'is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.' we do not mean that God the Father has hands, for he is a spirit; but we mean that Christ, as God, is equal to the Father and, as man, is in the highest place in heaven.

Seventh article of Apostle's Creed - is, 'from thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead'. Christ will come again from heaven at the last day, to judge all mankind. Again, found in scripture. John 21: 23, Act 1: 9-11, Also references found in:

Mt 24:44 - be prepared, Jesus coming at unexpected hour
Mt 25:13 - stay awake, you know neither the day nor hour
Mk 13:35-37 - watch, unknown when lord of house coming
Lk 12:46 - master will come at unexpected day and hour
1 Thess 5:2-3 - day of Lord will come like thief in night
2 Pet 3:9-10 - day of Lord will come like a thief
Rev 3:3 - if not watchful, will come like a thief
Mt 24:36 - no one but Father alone knows day and hour

When Christ comes at the final time, He will judge our thoughts, words, works, and omissions.

To the wicked He will say: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels'. Matt. 25:41

To the just He will say to the just: 'Come, ye blessed of my father, possess ye the kingdom prepared for you'. Matt.25:34

Every one will be judged at death, as well as at the last day: 'It is appointed unto men once to die; and after this, the judgment'. Heb. 9:27

The eighth article of Apostle's Creed - is, 'I believe in the Holy Spirit'.

The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity. The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son. He too, also was, and always will be. The Holy Trinity represents family and unity as one. He too has no limitations. The Holy Spirit is equal to the Father and to the Son, for he is the same Lord and God as they are. The Holy Spirit came down on the Apostles on Pentecost, in the form of 'parted tongues, as it were, of fire. Acts 2:3

The Holy Spirit came down on the Apostles to confirm their faith, to sanctify them, and to enable them to found the Church. During the sacrament of Confirmation, we too shall have available to us, this same grace to be bestowed upon us.

More on Confirmation can be found in scripture:

Acts 19:5-6 - Paul imposed hands on baptized, received H. Spirit
Acts 8:14-17 - laid hands upon them, they received
Holy Spirit 2 Cor 1:21-22 - put seal on us & given Holy Spirit in our hearts
Eph 1:13 - you were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit
Heb 6:2 - instruction about baptism & laying on of hands

The ninth of Apostle's Creed - is, 'the Holy Catholic Church; the Communion of Saints'.

The Catholic Church is the union of all the faithful under one Head. The Head of the Catholic Church is Jesus Christ. The Church has a visible Head on earth - the Bishop of Rome, who is the Vicar of Christ. The Bishop of Rome is the Head of the Church because he is the successor of St. Peter, whom Christ appointed to be the Head of the Church. We know that Christ appointed St. Peter to be the Head of the Church because Christ said to him; 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And to thee I will give the keys of the kingdom of heaven'. Matt. 16:18,19

The Bishop of Rome is called the Pope, which word signifies Father. The Pope is the Spiritual Father of all Christians. The Pope is the Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians, because Christ made St. Peter the Shepherd of the whole flock when he said: 'Feed my lambs, feed my sheep'. He also prayed that his 'faith' might never fail, and commanded him to 'confirm' his brethren. Jn.21:15-17, Lk.22:32

We say that the Pope is infallible. When we say that the Pope is infallible, we mean that the Pope cannot err when, as

Shepherd and Teacher of all Christians, he defines a doctrine concerning faith or morals, to be held by the whole Church.

We can find more on the Primacy of the Pope in scripture and Tradition:

Mt 16:18 - upon this rock (Peter) I will build my church

Mt 16:19 - give you keys of the kingdom; power to bind & loose

Lk 22:32 - Peter's faith will strengthen his brethren

Jn 21:17 - given (Christ's flock as chief shepherd

Mk 16:7 - angel sent to announce Resurrection to Peter

Lk 24:34 - risen Jesus first appeared to Peter

Acts 1:13-26 - headed meeting which elected Matthias

Acts 2:14 - led Apostles in preaching on Pentecost

Acts 2:41 - received first converts

Acts 3:6-7 - performed first miracle after Pentecost

Acts 5:1-11 - inflicted first punishment Ananias & Saphira

Acts 8:21 - excommunicated first heretic, Simon Magnus

Acts 10:44-46 - received revelation to admit Gentiles into church

Acts 15:7 - led first council in Jerusalem

Acts 15:19 - pronounces first dogmatic decision

Gal 1:18- after c» aversion, Paul visits chief Apostle

*Gal 2:11-14 - I opposed Cephas to his face, for his hypocrisy (A verse used to challenge Catholic Doctrines)

Peter's name always heads list of Apostles: Mt 10: M; Mk 3:16-19; Lk6:14-;6; Acts 1:13

"Peter and his companions" - Lk 9:32; Mk 16:7

Spoke for Apostles -Mt 18:21; Mk 8:29; Lk 8:45, 12:41; Jn 6:69

Peter's name occurs 195 times, more than all the rest put together

The Church of Christ has four marks by which we may know her: she is **One** - she is **Holy** - she is **Catholic** - she is **Apostolic**.

The Church is **One** because all her members agree in one Faith, have all the same Sacrifice and Sacraments, and are all united under one Head.

The Church is **Holy** because Jesus Christ, Her Founder is holy, teaches a holy doctrine, and offers to all the means of holiness.

The word **Catholic** means universal. The Church is Catholic or universal because she subsists in all ages, teaches all nations, and is the source of all Truth.

The Church is **Apostolic** because it was founded by Christ on the apostles and, according to His Divine Will, has always been governed by their lawful successors.

Can the Church err in what she teaches? - The Church cannot err in what she teaches as to faith or morals, for she is our infallible guide in both. Note that we are only speaking in terms of faith and morals, not about other things, such as statements regarding politics. The Catholic Church has ONE Mission only, and that is to save souls, to bring them to Christ. Nothing else need matter to her. Thus, if members or clergy of church speak to matters other than the salvation of souls, it matters not and has no weight.

We know that the Church cannot err in what she teaches because Christ promised that the gates of hell shall never prevail against his Church; that the Holy Spirit shall teach her all things; and that he himself will be with her all days, even to the consummation of the world. Matt. 16:18, John 14:16-26, Matt. 28:20

When we speak of the Communion of Saints we mean that all the members of the Church, in heaven, on earth, and in purgatory, are in communion with each other, as being one body in Jesus Christ. We can find more on the Communion of Saints in scripture:

Eph 1:22-23 - he is head of the church, which is his body

Eph 5:21-32 - Christ is head of church, savior of the body

Col 1:18, 24 - he is the head of the body, the church

1 Cor 12:12-27 - if 1 suffers, all suffer, if 1 honored, all rejoice

Rom 12:5 - we are 1 body in Christ, indiv. parts of one another

Eph 4:4 - one body, one Spirit, called to one hope

Col 3:15 - you were called in one body

Rom 8:35-39 - death cannot separate us from Christ

Rom 12:10 - love one another with mutual affection

1 Thess 5:11 - encourage, build up one another

Gal 6:2 - bear one another's burdens

Gal 6:10 - let us do good to all, esp. those in family of faith

The faithful on earth are in communion with each other by professing the same faith, obeying the same authority, and assisting each other with their prayers and good works. We are in communion with the Saints in heaven by honoring them as the glorified members of the Church, and also by our praying to them, and by their praying for us.

We are in communion with the souls in purgatory by helping them with our prayers and good works: 'It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins'.

Purgatory is a place where souls suffer for a time after death on account of their sins. Those souls go to purgatory that depart this life in venial sin; or that have not fully paid the debt of temporal punishment due to those sins of which the guilt has been forgiven.

What is temporal punishment?

Temporal punishment is punishment which will have an end, either in this world, or in the world to come.

We prove that there is a purgatory from the constant teaching of the Church; and from the doctrine of Holy Scripture, which declares that God will render to every man according to his works; that nothing defiled shall enter heaven; and that some will be saved, "as one who has gone through fires". Matt. 16:27, Apoc. 21:27.1, Cor. 3:15 And more:

Mt 5:48 - be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect

Heb 12:14 - strive for that holiness w/o which cannot see God

Jam 3:2 - we all fall short in many respects

Rev 21:27 - nothing unclean shall enter heaven

1 Jn 5:16-17 - degrees of sins distinguished

Jam 1:14-15 - when sin reaches maturity gives birth to death

2 Sam 12:13-14 - David, though forgiven, still punished for sin

Mt 5:26 - you will not be released until paid last penny

Mt 12:32 - sin against Holy Spirit unforgiven in this age or next

Mt 12:36 - account for every idle word on judgment day

2 Mace 12:44-46 - atoned for dead to free them from sin

1 Cor 3:15 - suffer loss, but saved as through fire

1 Pet 3:18-20; 4:6 - Jesus preached to the spirits in prison

2 Tim 1:16-18 - Paul prays for dead friend Onesiphorus

1 Cor 15:29-30 - Paul mentions people baptizing for the dead

The tenth article of Apostle's Creed - is, 'the forgiveness of sins'.

By 'the forgiveness of sins' we mean that Christ has left the power of forgiving sins to the Pastors of his Church. Jn.20:23

Sins are forgiven principally by the Sacraments of Baptism and Penance. We can find more about the power to forgive sins through Confess throughout scripture:

Mt 9:2-8 - Son of Man has authority to forgive sins

Jn 20:23 - whose sins you forgive/retain are forgiven/retained

Jn 20:22 - breathed on them, "receive Holy Spirit" (recall Gn 2:7]

2 Cor 5:17-20 - given us the ministry of reconciliation

James 5:13-15 - prayer of presbyters forgives sin

Jam 5:16 - confess your sins to one another

Mt 18:18-whatever you bind & loose on earth, so it is in heaven

1 Jn 5:16 - there is sin that is not deadly

Sin is an offense against God, by any thought, word, deed or omission against the law of God.

There are two kinds of sin, original sin and actual sin.

Original sin is that guilt and stain of sin which we inherit from Adam, who was the origin and head of all mankind.

Because we are all descendants of Adam and Eve, we inherit this original sin. It's a tendency to sin, called concupiscence, meaning a desire to covet, in short sin. We have it built into our DNA so to speak.

More on original sin can be found within scripture that has developed the beliefs within the Church:

Gn 2:16-17 - the day you eat of that tree, you shall die

Gn 3:11-19 - God's punishment for eating of the tree

Rom 5:12-19 - many became sinners through one man's sin

1 Cor 15:21-23 - by a man came death; in Adam all die

Eph 2:1-3 - we all once lived in the passions of our flesh

Adam and Eve's sin was the sin of disobedience when he ate the forbidden fruit, from the tree of knowledge, the tree that bore fruit that knowledge between good and bad and thus their desire to having to know and experience both good and bad. Gen 2: 16-17

All mankind have contracted the guilt and stain of original sin, except the Blessed Virgin, who, through the merits of her Divine Son, was conceived without the least guilt or stain of original sin. This privilege of the Blessed Virgin is called the Immaculate Conception. We can find more on the Immaculate Conception in scripture on how this doctrine of faith came about in the Catholic Church:

Lk 1:28 - hail full of grace [highly favored] Lord is with you

Lk 1:30 - you have found favor with God

Lk 1:37 - for with God nothing shall be impossible

Gn 3:15 - complete enmity between/ woman & Satan, sin

Ex 25:11-21 - ark made of purest gold for God's word

*Rom 3:23 - all have sinned & are deprived of God's glory

*Lk 1:47 - my spirit rejoices in God my savior

(Above two verses used to challenge Catholic Doctrine)

Actual sin is every sin which we ourselves commit. It is divided into mortal sin and venial sin.

Mortal sin is a serious offence against God. It is called mortal sin because it is so serious that it kills the soul and deserves hell. Mortal sin kills the soul by depriving it of sanctifying grace, which is the supernatural life of the soul. It is the greatest of all evils to fall into mortal sin. It condemns one to hell for all eternity. One never wants to die with mortal sin upon their soul.

Venial sin is an offense which does not kill the soul, yet displeases God, and often leads to mortal sin. It is called venial sin because it is more easily pardoned than mortal sin.

1 Jn 16-17 (We will cover more on sin in a later study.)

The eleventh article of Apostles' Creed - is, 'the resurrection of the body'.

By the resurrection of the body we mean that we shall all rise again with the same bodies at the day of judgment.

Judged according to deeds found in:

Rom 2:5-8 - God will repay each man according to his works

2 Cor 5:10 - recompense accord to what did in body

2 Cor i 1:15 - their end will correspond to their deeds

1 Pet 1:17 - God judges impartially according to one's works

Rev 20:12-13 - dead judged according to their deeds

Col 3:24-25 - will receive due payment for whatever you do

The twelfth article of the Creed - is, 'life everlasting'.

'Life everlasting' means that the good shall live forever in the glory and happiness of heaven. The glory and happiness of heaven is to see, love, and enjoy God forever. We refer to this as the Beatific Vision, the seeing of God. Scripture says on the happiness of heaven: 'What eye has not seen, or ear has heard, and what has not entered the human heart of man, what things God has prepared for them that love him'. 1 Cor. 2:9

The wicked also shall live and be punished forever in the fire of hell.

Jesus speaks of hell more than 90 times in scripture and of heaven only 27 times. There must be a reason He amplifies the reality of hell. Do we know hell exists? Scripture certainly says so:

Is 33:11, 14 - who of us can live with the everlasting flames

Mt 25:41 - depart, you accursed, into the eternal fire

Mt 25:46 - these will go off to eternal punishment

Lk 3:16-17 - the chaff he will burn in unquenchable fire

2 Thess 1:6-9 - these will pay the penalty of eternal ruin

As you can see, this brief statement of faith and belief set forth by the Apostles themselves can expand into the far reaching realm of the Catholic Faith, what we call the Deposit of Faith and the fullness of Faith. Of course, it is much more expansive, but we will only be addressing the basics of the faith to create a foundation upon which to build and for one to learn more about the faith and what had been handed down to us, the faithful.