

# The Institute for Catechesis and Formation

## *Course Outline for Students*



## **CAT I – The Creed**

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed is the symbol of our faith in God and the affirmation of our belief in the truth of the Catholic Church. This course will examine the four-part structure of the Creed as the foundation and statement of our belief as Catholic Christians. The course will address the fundamental tenets of the Catholic faith, providing a foundation for belief in God and His plan of eternal union with us.

**Texts:** The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC): <http://www.scborromeo.org/ccc.htm>  
The Bible: <http://www.usccb.org/bible/books-of-the-bible/>

**CCC Part I**  
**THE PROFESSION OF FAITH**

**SECTION TWO**  
**THE PROFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH**

## THE CREDO

### The Apostles Creed

I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
creator of heaven and earth.

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.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died, and was buried.  
He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

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

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.

### 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.

## **Week 1: How do we know what we believe?**

**Weekly Reading Before Class: CCC 185-187, 153-158; 160-162; 163-165**

Following the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the Apostles carry on the proclamation of the Gospel. The Faith is spread through preaching, and through letter-writing, before what we now know as the New Testament is even written down. As the Church spreads, reaching more and more people, baptizing them and drawing them into communities of faith, it becomes increasingly necessary to define what it means to be a believing Christian to prevent confusion among the faithful, and to correct the mistakes of some who are trying to understand and explain the beliefs of this new faith.

### **Apostolic Tradition**

The Apostolic Tradition is the foundation of Christianity –

- Summary of teachings of Christianity
- Emphasis on the Trinity
- Significance of the life, death and resurrection of Christ

Kerygma (proclamation/preaching)

Acts 2:22-24, 32, 36-41; 1 Cor 2:1-5; 1 Cor 2: 5-11; Phil 2: 5-11; Rom 10:8-10

### **What is a “creed,” and why do we need one? (CCC 185-187)**

1. Councils are initiated in order to judge orthodoxy and to settle doctrinal questions. Arguments and controversies arise in the Councils as the Fathers work out the foundation of the Faith
2. Questions arise about the identity of Jesus and what it means to be a believing Christian
3. Confusion as the Gospel is spread to a widening audience
4. Necessity of clarifying doctrine, and the means to inform the local churches

**Credo** – “I believe”

### **What is faith?**

**Faith** is a *free response to God’s revelation of Himself* to us. (CCC 153-158; 160-162; 163-165)

## **Week 2: “I believe in God...”**

**Weekly Reading Before Class: CCC 280-301; 355-373; 386 – 395; 397-400; 402-405**

The Creed outlines the central beliefs of the Catholic Faith by addressing who God is, His relationship to us, and our lives on earth which lead to our eternal destiny with Him. God is Love, and His love is freely given to us as a Gift. This gift is a share in His very life and creative action in the world, and even when we abuse the Gift, God lovingly offers us an opportunity to receive it anew.

### **In what (and Whom) do we believe?**

The Creed outlines our beliefs about God, the Virgin Mary, Sin and Salvation, the establishment of the Church, and our destiny as human persons

### **Who is God?**

**Trinity** – CCC 234

- Communion of persons
- Relational
- Three persons in one God
- Unity in difference

### **I believe in (three Persons in) One God...**

Father – Creator and Source (CCC 290)

Son – Redeemer, Word by which creation comes to be (CCC 291)

Holy Spirit – reveals God to man and communicates new life (CCC 291, 292)

God creates the world and all things in it; and the human person (CCC 355-365; 369-373)

- Image and likeness
- Male and female (unity in difference)
- Freedom
- Union of body and soul
- Share in God’s lordship over the earth

### **The Fall of man and the abundance of Grace (Genesis 3)**

**Original sin** is not a personal fault but a deprivation of holiness and justice (CCC 397- 400; 402-406)

God reveals a loving plan of Salvation which calls for entrance into His own creation as a profound show of His love for us.

### **Genesis 3: 15 – the Protoevangelium (“first Gospel”)**

*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel.*

## **Week 3: I believe in Jesus Christ, the only Son of God**

**Weekly Reading Before Class: CCC 426-429; 457-460; 484-487**

Despite the rejection of the Gift, God does not abandon His people. His love is so great that His own Son condescends into His creation to become one of us in all things but sin. The Incarnation shows us God's overwhelming love for us, as well as His affirmation that the human person (a unity of body and soul) is *very good*.

God enters into a series of **covenants** with man in preparation for the fulfillment of His promised salvation in Jesus Christ. A covenant as God's free offering of Himself, and man is equally free to accept or reject God's friendship.

### **Second Person of the Trinity, Son of God, Jesus Christ (Jn 1:1-18)**

Incarnation - God becomes man (CCC 457-460):

- To save us by reconciling us with God
- That thus we might know God's love
- To be our model of holiness
- To make us partakers in the divine nature

### **Conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary (CCC 484-487)**

**Protoevangelium – Gn. 3:15** – is fulfilled in the Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38)

- Mary is the Mother of God
- Mary is ever-virgin
- Mary is the model disciple
- Mary is the Mother of us all

**Jesus is** (CCC 426-429):

- Christ – anointed one (CCC 453)
- Messiah – savior (CCC 712-714)
- Son of Man (CCC 460)
- Son of God (CCC 454)

**Jesus' mission on earth is:**

- Teaching
- Healing
- Redemption

Jesus' life culminates in the **Paschal Mystery** – His suffering, death and resurrection. *Paschal* refers to the Passover, and it signifies that that Christ is *our* Passover.

## **Week 4: I believe in the Holy Spirit**

**Weekly Reading Before Class: CCC 687-688; 691-693; 703-704; 706-708; 731-732; 737-739**

God's gift of Himself to us, and His gracious act of redemption, are carried on through His Church on earth. The Holy Spirit – the One who is the breath of Life and God's inspiration (to the Prophets, the Apostles, and the authors of Sacred Scripture) continues to lead, inspire, and breathe new life into Christ's Body, the Church – *the Way* of our pilgrimage back to Him.

### **The Holy Spirit:**

- The third Divine Person of the Trinity
- Prepares the world for the coming of the Redeemer
- Overshadows Mary, who "conceives by the power of the Holy Spirit"
- Anoints Christ for His mission, and is sent by Christ after the Ascension
- Empowers the disciples to proclaim the Gospel (Acts 1:1-5; Acts 2:1-4)
- Guides the Church
- Convicts us of our sins and makes way for the forgiveness of our sins, driving us to the waiting arms of our Savior:

*Jesus in the confessional is not a dry cleaner; it is an encounter with Jesus ... who waits for us just as we are.... Jesus "donates to us the peace that only he gives.*

*[Confession] is going to praise God, because I, a sinner, have been saved by him.*

*And if tomorrow I do the same? Go again, and go and go and go.*

Homily of Pope Francis, April 29, 2013

### **The Holy Spirit reveals the Church (CCC 767-768)**

The Church is (CCC 751-752; 866-870):

- Gathering/community
- One
- Holy
- Catholic
- Apostolic

### **The communion of saints... (CCC 947)**

*"Since all the faithful form one body, the good of each is communicated to the others. . . . We must therefore believe that there exists a communion of goods in the Church. But the most important member is Christ, since he is the head. . . . Therefore, the riches of Christ are communicated to all the members, through the sacraments." "As this Church is governed by one and the same Spirit, all the goods she has received necessarily become a common fund."*

### **I believe in the resurrection of the body, the life everlasting**

Through the Church, Jesus Christ personally encounters us both *spiritually* and *physically* through the Sacraments

- We are spiritually cleansed and born into new life through **Baptism**
- The Holy Spirit physically touches and seals us with His mark in our **Confirmation**, and in touching us in a healing way through **Anointing**
- Bread and wine are sanctified – made holy, perfect, transformed – in the sacrament of the **Eucharist**
- Through our very bodies, God Himself touches us in the laying on of hands of **Holy Orders**, the joining of the two in **Marriage**, and the hand of blessing in **Confession**

We are *embodied persons*. By His Incarnation, Jesus affirms that our *bodies and souls* are “very good,” (cf. Gn 1:31) and made for eternal life. (CCC 988-989)