

The Institute for Catechesis and Formation

Course Outline for Instructors



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?

CCC 185-187, 153-158; 160-162; 163-165

Apostolic Tradition

Following the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus, the Apostles carry on the proclamation of the Gospel. 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)

The Gospel is proclaimed orally before being written

Belief is affirmed when people hear the Word proclaimed and become baptized

Kerygmatic statements –

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)

- In the early days of Christianity, questions arise about the identity of Jesus and what it means to be a believing Christian
- Some confusion arises as the Gospel is spread to a widening audience
- As a result, there is a pressing need to clarify doctrine, and develop a means to inform the local churches

Heresy (infidelity to the faith and corruption of dogmas)

- Arius – denial of Christ’s divinity; Jesus is a creation of God
- Pelagius – denial of Original Sin
- The need to combat heresy leads to the formulation of creeds

Credo – “I believe”

Apostles Creed – circa 2nd/ 3rd century AD

Nicene Creed – 325 AD (Council of Nicea; affirms divinity of Christ, consubstantiality of Father and Son)

Athanasian Creed – circa 361 AD

Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed – 381 (Council of Constantinople; Creed is solidified)

Councils are initiated in order to establish orthodoxy and to settle doctrinal questions. Arguments and controversies arise in the Councils as the Fathers work out the foundation of the Faith

Athanasius

Gregory Nazianzen

Basil the Great

Gregory of Nyssa

The language of the Creed must be precise, but not say more than what is necessary so that the Fathers do not fall into the errors of Arius and others

What is *faith*?

CCC 153-158; 160-162; 163-165

Faith is a *free response to God's revelation of Himself to us.*

Week 2: “I believe in God...”

CCC 280-301; 355-373; 386 – 395; 397-400; 402-405

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

God reveals Himself as Trinity –

Mt 28:19; Mk 1:10-11; Lk 3:22; Jn 3: 34-35; Jn 15:10-11; Jn 14: 11-12, 16-17; Jn 15:26; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor 12:3; Heb 2:4; 2 Pt 1: 17, 21

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 (Gn 1 and 2; Ps 104; CCC 280, 295-301)

- Creation does not make God “more godlike”
- Gratuitous act of love
- All being is *contingent* – radical dependence on God
- All being is *gift*
- Creation is God’s sharing of Himself and His love
- Everything God creates is *good*

God creates the human person (CCC 355-365; 369-373)

- Image and likeness
- Male and female (unity in difference)
- Freedom
- Union of body and soul (physical body; spiritual soul with powers of intellect and will)

- Share in God's lordship over the earth (dominion over the earth, responsibility for cultivating earth's gifts, and a share in God's creativity: Gn 1:28, 2:24)

The human person is created for eternal union with God

The Fall of man and the abundance of *Grace*

(Genesis 3)

- The reality of sin (CCC 386-395) - The fall of Lucifer and the angels precedes the fall of the human person
- Sin in the world – temptation of the serpent (CCC 404, 1850)
- Human person mistrusts God and the Gift

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

Consequences of sin (CCC 402-406)

- Subject to ignorance
- Suffering
- Dominion of death
- Concupiscence – the inclination toward sin

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

God enters into a series of **covenants** with man in preparation for the fulfillment of His promised salvation in Jesus Christ.

God initiates the covenant as an offering of Himself, and man is free to accept or reject God's friendship.

- Original covenant with Adam is broken by original sin
- Covenant with Noah brings about a new creation
- Covenant with Abraham draws humanity together (Gn. 15)
 - The Father of new life for God's plan of salvation (Gn. 12)
 - Foreshadowing of God's sacrifice of Christ (Gn. 22)
- David receives the promise that the Savior will come from his line (2 Sam 7)

Second Person of the Trinity, Son of God, Jesus Christ

Jn 1:1-18

Incarnation - God becomes man (CCC 461-463)

- The Word became flesh for us (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

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

- Mary's "yes" to God's gift of Himself recuperates Eve's mistrust and her disobedient act
- Mary becomes the New Eve, and Jesus becomes the New Adam
- Mary is the first and model disciple who teaches us how to respond in trust
- Contrast Zechariah's response to the angel with Mary's upon each one hearing that God will do something miraculous and seemingly impossible. (Lk 1: 5-25)

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

Jesus is true God and true man, having a human nature and a divine nature.

- God became man, not losing His divinity, or becoming corrupted by humanity
- Jesus willingly takes flesh from Mary, the Creator entering into a deep and personal relationship with His creation
- Mary is the Mother of God (Theotokos – God-bearer)
- Mary is ever-virgin (CCC 496)
- Mary is the model disciple (Lk 1:38, 46-55; Lk 2:19, 34-35; Jn 2: 3,5; Acts 1:14)
- Mary is the Mother of us all (Jn 19:25-27)

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 one of:

- Teaching – proclamation of the Kingdom; parables; Beatitudes; prayer (CCC 543-545; 546; 1716-1717; Mt 6:5-15)
- Healing – Jesus is moved with compassion for the sick and suffering (CCC 1503-1505; Mt 8; Mt 9:1-8, 18-26; Mk 5:21-43; Jn 9; Jn 11:1-44)
- Redemption – Jesus offers Himself completely by His suffering and death for the forgiveness of our sins. Jesus Christ is the New Adam. (CCC 517-518; 613-614, 616; Jn 18-21)

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

CCC 687-688; 691-693; 703-704; 706-708; 731-732; 737-739; Gn 1:2 Mk 1:8; Lk 11:15; Jn 1:32; Jn 14: 16-17; Acts 2:3-4, 38; Ti 3:5-6

The Holy Spirit is the third Divine Person of the Trinity, *consubstantial* with the Father and the Son

He is the spirit that hovers over the earth *in the beginning...* (Gn 1:2)

- *Ruah* (CCC 91)
- *Pneuma*

The Holy Spirit:

- Prepares the world for the coming of the Redeemer (calling the prophets, who spoke through the power of the Holy Spirit; CCC 243; 2Pt 1:21)
- Overshadows Mary, who “conceives by the power of the Holy Spirit” (CCC 721-726; Lk 1:35)
- Anoints Christ for His mission, and is sent by Christ after the Ascension (Lk 4:1, 14; Acts 10:38; Jn 14:26)
- Empowers the disciples to proclaim the Gospel (Acts 1:1-5; Acts 2:1-4)
- Guides the Church (CCC 688; Acts 4:31, 33)
- Convicts us of our sins (CCC 388, 1989; Jn 16:7-8, 13); 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 communion of saints... (CCC 946-948)

After confessing "the holy catholic Church," the Apostles' Creed adds "the communion of saints." In a certain sense this article is a further explanation of the preceding: "What is the Church if not the assembly of all the saints?"⁴⁷⁹ The communion of saints is the Church.

"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."

The term "communion of saints" therefore has two closely linked meanings: communion in holy things (sancta)" and "among holy persons (sancti)."

Sancta sanctis! ("God's holy gifts for God's holy people") is proclaimed by the celebrant in most Eastern liturgies during the elevation of the holy Gifts before the distribution of communion. The faithful (*sancti*) are fed by Christ's holy body and blood (*sancta*) to grow in the communion of the Holy Spirit (*koinonia*) and to communicate it to the world.

*Today we have the joy of meeting on the Solemnity of All Saints. This feast day helps us to reflect on the **double horizon of humanity, which we symbolically express with the words "earth" and "heaven": the earth represents the journey of history, heaven eternity, the fullness of life in God.** And so this feast day helps us to think about **the Church in its dual dimension: the Church journeying in time and the Church that celebrates the never-ending feast, the heavenly Jerusalem.** These two dimensions are united by the reality of the "Communion of Saints": a reality that begins here on earth and that reaches its fulfillment in heaven.*

On earth, the Church is the beginning of this mystery of communion that unites humanity, a mystery totally centred on Jesus Christ: it is he who introduced this new dynamic to mankind, a movement that leads towards God and at the same time towards unity, towards peace in its deepest sense. Jesus Christ — says the Gospel of John (11:52) — died "to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad", and his work continues in the Church which is inseparably "one", "holy" and "catholic". Being a Christian, being part of the Church means being open to this communion, like a seed that dies in the ground, germinates and sprouts upwards, toward heaven. Pope Benedict XVI, Angelus for the Solemnity of All Saints, 1 November 2012 (*Emphasis added*)

Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us rid ourselves of every burden and sin that clings to us and persevere in running the race that lies before us.... Heb 12:1

Saints are not just people who lived at a certain time, or were given something "special" that none of us have. They are

- Models of faith and holiness
- Witnesses (*martyrs*) to the love of Christ
- Real, historical persons to whom we can look for comfort, friendship and help
- To be a *saint* is the destiny of each person – to strive toward holiness through our lives and one day be united in intimate union with God

The Spirit and the bride say, "Come." (Rev 22:17)

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

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, and thus, all those who believe would have access through Christ in one Spirit to the Father. He is the Spirit of Life, a fountain of water springing up to life eternal. To men, dead in sin, the Father gives life through Him, until, in Christ, He brings to life their mortal bodies. The Spirit dwells in the Church and in the hearts of the faithful, as in

a temple. In them He prays on their behalf and bears witness to the fact that they are adopted sons. The Church, which the Spirit guides in way of all truth and which He unified in communion and in works of ministry, He both equips and directs with hierarchical and charismatic gifts and adorns with His fruits. By the power of the Gospel He makes the Church keep the freshness of youth. Uninterruptedly He renews it and leads it to perfect union with its Spouse. The Spirit and the Bride both say to Jesus, the Lord, "Come!" Thus, the Church has been seen as "a people made one with the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." ~ Lumen gentium 4

The Church is a *gathering* and a *community* of believers (CCC 751-752)

- Ecclesia
- Ekkalein
- Kyriake
- The Body of Christ

The Church is (CCC 866-870):

- One – unity in the Trinity. One faith, one Lord, one baptism, one body, one communion held together in the Holy Spirit
- Holy – origin in the Trinity, source of holiness. The Church is holy in her Founder, her saints and her means of salvation
- Catholic – universal; salvation in Christ is offered to all
- Apostolic – built upon the foundation of the Apostles. Faithful to the teaching of the Apostles in an unbroken succession from Christ to His chosen ones

The Church is the **place of encounter** between God and the human person, through the **celebration of the Liturgy**, the **communion of believers** (in union with the saints in Heaven and those awaiting eternal union with God in Purgatory; CCC 954, 957, 958), and through the **communication of *grace*** (God's free self-offering) through the Sacraments.

But Christian identity is not an identity card. Christian identity means being a member of the Church, since all these people belonged to the Church, to Mother Church, for apart from the Church it is not possible to find Jesus. The great Paul VI said: it is an absurd dichotomy to wish to live with Jesus but without the Church, to follow Jesus but without the Church, to love Jesus but without the Church (cf. [Evangelii Nuntiandi](#), 16). And that Mother Church who gives us Jesus also gives us an identity which is not simply a rubber stamp: it is membership. Identity means membership, belonging. Belonging to the Church: this is beautiful! Homily of Pope Francis, April 23, 2013

The Church is *The Way* (cf. Acts 9:2) which we follow in our pilgrimage through life, back to God.

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**

As human beings we are *embodied persons* – not simply spiritual souls trapped in a physical *casing* that is unimportant. By His Incarnation, Jesus affirms that our *bodies and souls* are “very good,” (cf. Gn 1:31) made for eternal life.

CCC 988-989

I believe in *the resurrection of the body, the life everlasting* (CCC 997-1001)

If the dead are not raised: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” 1 Cor 15:32

We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives forever, so after death the righteous will live forever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day. Our resurrection, like his own, will be the work of the Most Holy Trinity:

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you. (CCC 989)