

Nicene Creed

The **Nicene Creed** (Greek: Σύμβολον τῆς Νικαίας or, τῆς πίστεως, Latin: *Symbolum Nicaenum*) is a statement of belief widely used in Christian liturgy. It is called *Nicene* /ˈnaɪsiːn/ because it was originally adopted in the city of Nicaea (present day İznik, Turkey) by the First Council of Nicaea in 325.^[1] In 381, it was amended at the First Council of Constantinople, and the amended form is referred to as the Nicene or the **Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed**.

The Oriental Orthodox and Assyrian churches use this profession of faith with the verbs in the original plural ("we believe"), but the Eastern Orthodox and Catholic churches convert those verbs to the singular ("I believe"). The Anglican and many Protestant denominations generally use the singular form, sometimes the plural.

The Apostles' Creed is also used in the Latin West, but not in the Eastern liturgies.^{[2][3][4]} On Sundays and solemnities, one of these two creeds is recited in the Roman Rite Mass after the homily. The Nicene Creed is also part of the profession of faith required of those undertaking important functions within the Catholic Church.^{[5][6]}

In the Byzantine Rite, the Nicene Creed is sung or recited at the Divine Liturgy, immediately preceding the Anaphora (Eucharistic Prayer), and is also recited daily at compline.^{[7][8]}



Icon depicting the Emperor Constantine, accompanied by the bishops of the First Council of Nicaea (325), holding the Niceno–Constantinopolitan Creed of 381

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History

The actual purpose of a creed is to provide a doctrinal statement of correct belief or orthodoxy. The creeds of Christianity have been drawn up at times of conflict about doctrine: acceptance or rejection of a creed served to distinguish believers and deniers of particular doctrines. For that reason, a creed was called in Greek a σύμβολον (*symbolon*), which originally meant half of a broken object which, when fitted to the other half, verified the bearer's identity.^[9] The Greek word passed through Latin *symbolum* into English "symbol", which only later took on the meaning of an outward sign of something.^[10]

The Nicene Creed was adopted to resolve the Arian controversy, whose leader, Arius, a clergyman of Alexandria, "objected to Alexander's (the bishop of the time) apparent carelessness in blurring the distinction of nature between the Father and the Son by his emphasis on eternal generation".^[11] In reply, Alexander accused Arius of denying the divinity of the Son and also of being too "Jewish" and "Greek" in his thought. Alexander and his supporters created the Nicene Creed to clarify the key tenets of the Christian faith in response to the widespread adoption of Arius' doctrine, which was henceforth marked as heresy.

The Nicene Creed of 325 explicitly affirms the co-essential divinity of the Son, applying to him the term "consubstantial". The 381 version speaks of the Holy Spirit as worshipped and glorified with the Father and the Son. The later Athanasian Creed (not used in Eastern Christianity) describes in much greater detail the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The earlier Apostles' Creed does not explicitly affirm the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, but in the view of many who use it, this doctrine is implicit in it.

Original Nicene Creed of 325

The original Nicene Creed was first adopted on 19 June 325 at the First Council of Nicaea.^[12] At that time, the text ended with the words "We believe in the Holy Spirit", after which various anathemas against Arian propositions were added.^[13]

F. J. A. Hort and Adolf von Harnack argued that the Nicene creed was the local creed of Caesarea^[14] (an important center of Early Christianity) recited in the council by Eusebius of Caesarea. Their case relied largely on a very specific interpretation of Eusebius' own account of the Council's proceedings.^[15] More recent scholarship has not been convinced by their arguments.^[16] The large number of secondary divergences from the text of the creed quoted by Eusebius make it unlikely that it was used as a starting point by those who drafted the conciliar creed.^[17] Their initial text was probably a local creed from a Syro-Palestinian source into which they awkwardly inserted phrases to define the Nicene theology.^[18] The Eusebian Creed may thus have been either a second or one of many nominations for the Nicene Creed.

The 1911 *Catholic Encyclopedia* says that, soon after the Council of Nicaea, new formulae of faith were composed, most of them variations of the Nicene Symbol, to meet new phases of Arianism, of which there were at least four before the Council of Sardica (341), at which a new form was presented and inserted in its acts, although the council did not accept it.^[19]

Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed

What is known as the "Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed" or the "Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed"^[20] received this name because of a belief that it was adopted at the Second Ecumenical Council held in Constantinople in 381 as a modification of the original Nicene Creed of 325. In that light, it also came to be very commonly known simply as the "Nicene Creed". It is the only



Oldest extant manuscript of the Nicene Creed, dated to the 6th Century

authoritative *ecumenical* statement of the Christian faith accepted by the Catholic Church, the Eastern Orthodox Church, Oriental Orthodoxy, the Church of the East, much of Protestantism including the Anglican communion.^{[21][22]} (The Apostles' and Athanasian creeds are not as widely accepted.)^[23]

It differs in a number of respects, both by addition and omission, from the creed adopted at the First Council of Nicaea. The most notable difference is the additional section "And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver-of-Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spake by the prophets. And [we believe] in one, holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church. We acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins, [and] we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen."^[24]

Since the end of the 19th century,^[25] scholars have questioned the traditional explanation of the origin of this creed, which has been passed down in the name of the council, whose official acts have been lost over time. A local council of Constantinople in 382 and the third ecumenical council (Ephesus, 431) made no mention of it,^[26] with the latter affirming the 325 creed of Nicaea as a valid statement of the faith and using it to denounce Nestorianism. Though some scholarship claims that hints of the later creed's existence are discernible in some writings,^[27] no extant document gives its text or makes explicit mention of it earlier than the fourth ecumenical council at Chalcedon in 451.^{[25][26][28]} Many of the bishops of the 451 council themselves had never heard of it and initially greeted it skeptically, but it was then produced from the episcopal archives of Constantinople, and the council accepted it "not as supplying any omission but as an authentic interpretation of the faith of Nicaea".^[26] In spite of the questions raised, it is considered most likely that this creed was in fact adopted at the 381 second ecumenical council.^[23]

On the basis of evidence both internal and external to the text, it has been argued that this creed originated not as an editing of the original Creed proposed at Nicaea in 325, but as an independent creed (probably an older baptismal creed) modified to make it more like the Nicene Creed.^[29] Some scholars have argued that the creed may have been presented at Chalcedon as "a precedent for drawing up new creeds and definitions to supplement the Creed of Nicaea, as a way of getting round the ban on new creeds in Canon 7 of Ephesus".^[28] It is generally agreed that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is not simply an expansion of the Creed of Nicaea, and was probably based on another traditional creed independent of the one from Nicaea.^{[23][25]}

The third Ecumenical Council (Council of Ephesus of 431) reaffirmed the original 325 version^[30] of the Nicene Creed and declared that "it is unlawful for any man to bring forward, or to write, or to compose a different (ἑτέραν) faith as a rival to that established by the holy Fathers assembled with the Holy Ghost in Nicaea" (i.e., the 325 creed). The word ἑτέραν is more accurately translated as used by the Council to mean "different", "contradictory", rather than "another".^{[31][31]} This statement has been interpreted as a prohibition against changing this creed or composing others, but not all accept this interpretation.^[31] This question is connected with the controversy whether a creed proclaimed by an Ecumenical Council is definitive in excluding not only excisions from its text but also additions to it.

In one respect, the Eastern Orthodox Church's received text^[32] of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed differs from the earliest text, which is included in the acts of the Council of Chalcedon of 451: The Eastern Orthodox Church uses the singular forms of verbs such as "I believe", in place of the plural form ("we believe") used by the council. Byzantine Rite Eastern Catholic Churches use exactly the same form of the Creed, since the Catholic Church teaches that it is wrong to add "and the Son" to the Greek verb "ἐκπορευόμενον", though correct to add it to the Latin "qui procedit", which does not have precisely the same meaning.^[33] The form generally used in Western churches does add "and the Son" and also the phrase "God from God", which is found in the original 325 Creed.^[34]

Comparison between creed of 325 and creed of 381

The following table, which indicates by [square brackets] the portions of the 325 text that were omitted or moved in 381, and uses *italics* to indicate what phrases, absent in the 325 text, were added in 381, juxtaposes the earlier (AD 325) and later (AD 381) forms of this Creed in the English translation given in Philip Schaff's compilation *The Creeds of Christendom* (1877).^[35]

First Council of Nicaea (325)	First Council of Constantinople (381)
We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.	We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of <i>heaven and earth</i> , and of all things visible and invisible.
And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father [the only-begotten; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God,] Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;	And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the <i>only-begotten</i> Son of God, begotten of the Father <i>before all worlds (æons)</i> , Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father;
By whom all things were made [both in heaven and on earth];	by whom all things were made;
Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man;	who for us men, and for our salvation, came down <i>from heaven</i> , and was incarnate <i>by the Holy Ghost and of the Virgin Mary</i> , and was made man;
He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven;	he was <i>crucified for us under Pontius Pilate</i> , and suffered, and was <i>buried</i> , and the third day he rose again, <i>according to the Scriptures</i> , and ascended into heaven, and <i>sitteth on the right hand of the Father</i> ;
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.	from thence he shall come <i>again, with glory</i> , to judge the quick and the dead. ;
	<i>whose kingdom shall have no end.</i>
And in the Holy Ghost.	And in the Holy Ghost, <i>the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified, who spake by the prophets.</i>
	<i>In one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.</i>
[But those who say: 'There was a time when he was not;' and 'He was not before he was made;' and 'He was made out of nothing,' or 'He is of another substance' or 'essence,' or 'The Son of God is created,' or 'changeable,' or 'alterable'— they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church.]	
<i>The differences between the actual wordings (in Greek) adopted in 325^[36] and in 381^[37] can be presented in a similar way, as follows:</i>	
First Council of Nicaea (325)	First Council of Constantinople (381)
Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα Θεὸν Πατέρα παντοκράτορα, πάντων ὁρατῶν τε καὶ ἀορατῶν ποιητὴν·	Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα Θεὸν Πατέρα παντοκράτορα, ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς , ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀορατῶν.
καὶ εἰς ἕνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, γεννηθέντα ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς [μονογενῆ, τούτέστιν ἐκ τῆς οὐσίας τοῦ Πατρὸς, Θεὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ,] Φῶς ἐκ Φωτός, Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα, οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί,	Καὶ εἰς ἕνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ , τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων , φῶς ἐκ φωτός, Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί·
δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο, [τὰ τε ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ γῆ.]	δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο·
τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα καὶ σαρκωθέντα καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα,	τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς παρθένου καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα,
παθόντα, καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ, ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς,	

	σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ παθόντα καὶ ταφέντα, καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ κατὰ τὰς γραφάς, καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, καὶ καθεζόμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς,
ἐρχόμενον κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς.	καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς·
	οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος.
Καὶ εἰς τὸ Ἅγιον Πνεῦμα.	Καὶ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, τὸ Κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιόν, τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον, τὸ σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον, τὸ λαλῆσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν. Εἰς μίαν, ἁγίαν, καθολικὴν καὶ ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν· ὁμολογοῦμεν ἓν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν· προσδοκοῦμεν ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν, καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος. Ἀμήν.
[Τοὺς δὲ λέγοντας, Ἦν ποτε ὅτε οὐκ ἦν, καὶ Πρὶν γεννηθῆναι οὐκ ἦν, καὶ ὅτι Ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων ἐγένετο, ἢ Ἐξ ἐτέρας ὑποστάσεως ἢ οὐσίας φάσκοντας εἶναι, ἢ κτιστόν, ἢ τρεπτόν, ἢ ἀλλοιωτόν τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ, τούτους ἀναθεματίζει ἡ ἁγία καθολικὴ καὶ ἀποστολικὴ ἐκκλησία].	

Filioque controversy

In the late 6th century, some Latin-speaking churches added the words "and from the Son" (*Filioque*) to the description of the procession of the Holy Spirit, in what many Eastern Orthodox Christians have at a later stage argued is a violation of Canon VII (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf214.x.xvi.x.html>) of the Third Ecumenical Council, since the words were not included in the text by either the Council of Nicaea or that of Constantinople.^[38] This was incorporated into the liturgical practice of Rome in 1014.^[33] *Filioque* eventually became one of the main causes for the East-West Schism in 1054, and the failures of the repeated union attempts.

The Vatican stated in 1995 that, while the words καὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ ("and the Son") would indeed be heretical if used with the Greek verb ἐκπορεύομαι^[39] (from ἐκ, "out of" and πορεύομαι "to come or go") – which is one of the terms used by St. Gregory of Nazianzus and the one adopted by the Council of Constantinople^{[33][40][41]}— the word *Filioque* is not heretical when associated with the Latin verb *procedo* and the related word *processio*. Whereas the verb ἐκπορεύομαι in Gregory and other Fathers necessarily means "to originate from a cause or principle," the Latin term *procedo* (from *pro*, "forward;" and *cedo*, "to go") has no such connotation and simply denotes the communication of the Divine Essence or Substance. In this sense, *processio* is similar in meaning to the Greek term προϊέναι, used by the Fathers from Alexandria (especially Cyril of Alexandria) as well as others.^{[33][42]} Partly due to the influence of the Latin translations of the New Testament (especially of John 15:26), the term ἐκπορευόμενον (the present participle of ἐκπορεύομαι) in the creed was translated into Latin as *procedentem*. In time, the Latin version of the Creed came to be interpreted in the West in the light of the Western concept of *processio*, which required the affirmation of the *Filioque* to avoid the heresy of Arianism.^{[33][43]}

Views on the importance of this creed

The view that the Nicene Creed can serve as a touchstone of true Christian faith is reflected in the name "symbol of faith", which was given to it in Greek and Latin, when in those languages the word "symbol" meant a "token for identification (by comparison with a counterpart)".^[44]

In the Roman Rite Mass, the Latin text of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, with "Deum de Deo" (God from God) and "Filioque" (and from the Son), phrases absent in the original text, was previously the only form used for the "profession of faith". The Roman Missal now refers to it jointly with the Apostles' Creed as "the Symbol or Profession of Faith or Creed", describing the second as "the baptismal Symbol of the Roman Church, known as the Apostles' Creed".^[45]

The liturgies of the ancient Churches of Eastern Christianity (Eastern Orthodox Church, Oriental Orthodoxy, Church of the East and the Eastern Catholic Churches), use the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, never the Western Apostles' Creed.

While in certain places where the Byzantine Rite is used, the choir or congregation sings the Creed at the Divine Liturgy, in many places the Creed is typically recited by the cantor, who in this capacity represents the whole congregation although many, and sometimes all, members of the congregation may join in rhythmic recitation. Where the latter is the practice, it is customary to invite, as a token of honor, any prominent lay member of the congregation who happens to be present, e.g., royalty, a visiting dignitary, the Mayor, etc., to recite the Creed in lieu of the cantor. This practice stems from the tradition that the prerogative to recite the Creed belonged to the Emperor, speaking for his populace.

Some evangelical and other Christians consider the Nicene Creed helpful and to a certain extent authoritative, but not infallibly so in view of their belief that only Scripture is truly authoritative.^{[46][47]} Non-Trinitarian groups, such as the Church of the New Jerusalem, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Jehovah's Witnesses, explicitly reject some of the statements in the Nicene Creed.^{[48][49][50][51]}

Ancient liturgical versions

There are several designations for the two forms of the Nicene creed, some with overlapping meanings:

- **Nicene Creed** or the **Creed of Nicaea** is used to refer to the original version adopted at the First Council of Nicaea (325), to the revised version adopted by the First Council of Constantinople (381), to the liturgical text used by the Orthodox Church (with "I believe" instead of "We believe"),^[52] to the Latin version that includes the phrase "Deum de Deo" and "Filioque",^[53] and to the Armenian version, which does not include "and from the Son", but does include "God from God" and many other phrases.^[54]
- **Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed** can stand for the revised version of Constantinople (381) or the later Latin version^[55] or various other versions.^[56]
- **Icon/Symbol of the Faith** is the usual designation for the revised version of Constantinople 381 in the Orthodox churches, where this is the only creed used in the liturgy.
- **Profession of Faith of the 318 Fathers** refers specifically to the version of Nicaea 325 (traditionally, 318 bishops took part at the First Council of Nicaea).
- **Profession of Faith of the 150 Fathers** refers specifically to the version of Constantinople 381 (traditionally, 150 bishops took part at the First Council of Constantinople).

In musical settings, particularly when sung in Latin, this Creed is usually referred to by its first word, *Credo*.

This section is not meant to collect the texts of all liturgical versions of the Nicene Creed, and provides only three, the Greek, the Latin, and the Armenian, of special interest. Others are mentioned separately, but without the texts. All ancient liturgical versions, even the Greek, differ at least to some small extent from the text adopted by the First Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople. The Creed was originally written in Greek, owing to the location of the two councils.^[54]

But though the councils' texts have "Πιστεύομεν ... ὁμολογοῦμεν ... προσδοκοῦμεν" (we believe ... confess ... await), the Creed that the Churches of Byzantine tradition use in their liturgy has "Πιστεύω ... ὁμολογῶ ... προσδοκῶ" (I believe ... confess ... await), accentuating the personal nature of recitation of the Creed. The Latin text, as well as using the singular, has two additions: "Deum de Deo" (God from God) and "Filioque" (and from the Son). The Armenian text has many more additions, and is included as showing how that ancient church has chosen to recite the Creed with these numerous elaborations of its contents.^[54]

An English translation of the Armenian text is added; English translations of the Greek and Latin liturgical texts are given at English versions of the Nicene Creed in current use.

Greek liturgical text

Πιστεύω εἰς ἕνα Θεόν, Πατέρα, Παντοκράτορα, ποιητὴν οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς, ὁρατῶν τε πάντων καὶ ἀοράτων.

Καὶ εἰς ἕνα Κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν, τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ Θεοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ, τὸν ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς γεννηθέντα πρὸ πάντων τῶν αἰώνων·

φῶς ἐκ φωτός, Θεὸν ἀληθινὸν ἐκ Θεοῦ ἀληθινοῦ, γεννηθέντα οὐ ποιηθέντα, ὁμοούσιον τῷ Πατρί, δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα ἐγένετο.

Τὸν δι' ἡμᾶς τοὺς ἀνθρώπους καὶ διὰ τὴν ἡμετέραν σωτηρίαν κατελθόντα ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν καὶ σαρκωθέντα ἐκ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου καὶ Μαρίας τῆς Παρθένου καὶ ἐνανθρωπήσαντα.

Σταυρωθέντα τε ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν ἐπὶ Ποντίου Πιλάτου, καὶ παθόντα καὶ ταφέντα.

Καὶ ἀναστάντα τῇ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ κατὰ τὰς Γραφάς.

Καὶ ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς καὶ καθεζόμενον ἐκ δεξιῶν τοῦ Πατρὸς.

Καὶ πάλιν ἐρχόμενον μετὰ δόξης κρῖναι ζῶντας καὶ νεκρούς, οὗ τῆς βασιλείας οὐκ ἔσται τέλος.

Καὶ εἰς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ Ἅγιον, τὸ κύριον, τὸ ζωοποιόν,

τὸ ἐκ τοῦ Πατρὸς ἐκπορευόμενον,

τὸ σὺν Πατρὶ καὶ Υἱῷ συμπροσκυνούμενον καὶ συνδοξαζόμενον,

τὸ λαλῆσαν διὰ τῶν προφητῶν.

Εἰς μίαν, Ἁγίαν, Καθολικὴν καὶ Ἀποστολικὴν Ἐκκλησίαν.

Ὁμολογῶ ἕν βάπτισμα εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν.

Προσδοκῶ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν.

Καὶ ζωὴν τοῦ μέλλοντος αἰῶνος.

Ἀμήν.^{[57][58]}

Latin liturgical version

Credo in unum Deum,

Patrem omnipotentem,

Factorem caeli et terrae,

visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

Et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum,

Filium Dei unigenitum,

et ex Patre natum ante ómnia sáecula.
Deum de Deo, lumen de lúmíne, Deum verum de Deo vero,
génitum, non factum, consubstantiálem Patri:
per quem ómnia facta sunt.
Qui propter nos hómínes et propter nostram salútem
descéndit de cælis,
et incarnátus est de Spírítu Sancto
ex María Vírgine, et homo factus est;
crucifíxus étiam pro nobis sub Póntio Piláto,
passus et sepúltus est,
et resurréxit tértia die, secúndum Scriptúras,
et ascéndit in cælum, sedet ad délixeram Patris;
et íterum ventúrus est cum glória,
iudicáre vivos et mórtuos,
cuius regni non erit finis.
Et in Spírítum Sanctum, Dóminum et vivificántem:
qui ex Patre Filióque procedít,
qui cum Patre et Fílio simul adorátur et conglorificátur,
qui locútus est per prophétas.
Et unam, sanctam, cathólicam et apostólicam Ecclésiám.
Confíteor unum baptísma in remissiónem peccatórum.
Et expécto resurrectiónem mortuórum,
et vitam ventúri sáeculi. Amen.^[59]

The Latin text adds "Deum de Deo" and "Filioque" to the Greek. On the latter see The Filioque Controversy above. Inevitably also, the overtones of the terms used, such as "παντοκράτορα" (pantokratora) and "omnipotentem" differ ("pantokratora" meaning Ruler of all; "omnipotentem" meaning omnipotent, Almighty). The implications of this for the interpretation of "ἐκπορευόμενον" and "qui ... procedit" was the object of the study *The Greek and the Latin Traditions regarding the Procession of the Holy Spirit* published by the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in 1996.

Again, the terms "ὁμοούσιον" and "consubstantialem", translated as "of one being" or "consubstantial", have different overtones, being based respectively on Greek οὐσία (stable being, immutable reality, substance, essence, true nature),^[3] (<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3D%2376030>) and Latin *substantia* (that of which a

thing consists, the being, essence, contents, material, substance).^[60]

"Credo", which in classical Latin is used with the accusative case of the thing held to be true (and with the dative of the person to whom credence is given),^[61] is here used three times with the preposition "in", a literal translation of the Greek "εἰς" (in unum Deum ..., in unum Dominum ..., in Spiritum Sanctum ...), and once in the classical preposition-less construction (unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam).

Armenian liturgical text

Հաւատամք իմի
Աստուած, ի Հայրն
ամենակալ, յարարիչն
երկնի եւ երկրի,
երեւելեաց եւ
աներեւութից:

Եւ ի մի Տէր Յիսուս
Քրիստոս, յՈրդին
Աստուծոյ, ծնեալն
յԱստուծոյ Հօրէ, միածին՝
այսինքն յեութենէ Հօր:

Աստուած յԱստուծոյ, լոյս
ի լոսոյ, Աստուած
ճշմարիտ յԱստուծոյ
ճշմարտէ, ծնունդ եւ ոչ
արարած: Նոյն ինքն ի
բնութենէ Հօր, որով
ամենայն ինչ եղել
յերկինս եւ ի վերայ
երկրի, երեւելիք եւ
աներեւոյթք:

Որ յաղագս մեր
մարդկան եւ վասն մերոյ
փրկութեան իջեալ ի
յերկնից՝ մարմնացաւ,
մարդացաւ, ծնաւ
կատարելապէս ի
Մարիամայ սրբոյ կուսէն
Հոգևովն Սրբով:

Որով Էառ զմարմին,
զհոգի եւ զմիտ, եւ
զամենայն որ ինչ է ի
մարդ, ճշմարտապէս եւ
ոչ կարծեօք:



17th-century Russian icon illustrating the articles of the Creed

Չարչարեալ, իսաչեալ,
թաղեալ, յերրորդ աւուր
յարուցեալ, ելեալ ի
յերկինս նովին մարմնով,
նստաւ ընդ աջմէ Հօր:

Գալոց Է նովին մարմնովն
եւ փառօք Հօր ի դատել
զկենդանիս եւ զմեռեալս,
որոյ թագաւորութեանն
ոչ գոյ վախճան:

Հաւատամք եւ ի սուրբ
Հոգին, յանեղն եւ ի
կատարեալն. Որ
իսօսեցաւ յօրէնս եւ ի
մարգարէս եւ
յաւետարանս. Որ Էջն ի
Յորդանան, քարոզեաց
գառաքեալսն, եւ
բնակեցաւ ի սուրբսն:

Հաւատամք եւ ի մի
միայն, ընդհանրական,
եւ առաքելական, Սուրբ
Եկեղեցի. ի մի
մկրտութիւն,
յապաշխարհութիւն, ի
քաւութիւն եւ ի
թողութիւն մեղաց. ի
յարութիւնն մեռելոց. ի
դատաստանն
յաւիտենից հոգւոց եւ
մարմնոց.
յարքայութիւնն երկնից,
եւ ի կեանսն
յաւիտենականս:

English translation of the Armenian version

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth, of things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the begotten of God the Father, the Only-begotten, that is of the essence of the Father.

God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten and not made; of the very same nature of the Father, by Whom all things came into being, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible.

Who for us humanity and for our salvation came down from heaven, was incarnate, was made human, was born perfectly of the holy virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit.

By whom He took body, soul, and mind, and everything that is in man, truly and not in semblance.

He suffered, was crucified, was buried, rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven with the same body, [and] sat at the right hand of the Father.

He is to come with the same body and with the glory of the Father, to judge the living and the dead; of His kingdom there is no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, in the uncreated and the perfect; Who spoke through the Law, prophets, and Gospels; Who came down upon the Jordan, preached through the apostles, and lived in the saints.

We believe also in only One, Universal, Apostolic, and [Holy] Church; in one baptism in repentance, for the remission, and forgiveness of sins; and in the resurrection of the dead, in the everlasting judgement of souls and bodies, and the Kingdom of Heaven and in the everlasting life.^[62]

Other ancient liturgical versions

The version in the Church Slavonic language, used by several Eastern Orthodox Churches is practically identical with the Greek liturgical version.

This version is used also by some Byzantine Rite Eastern Catholic Churches. Although the Union of Brest excluded addition of the *Filioque*, this was sometimes added by Ruthenian Catholics,^[63] whose older liturgical books also show the phrase in brackets, and by Ukrainian Catholics. Writing in 1971, the Ruthenian Scholar Fr. Casimir Kucharek noted, "In Eastern Catholic Churches, the *Filioque* may be omitted except when scandal would ensue. Most of the Eastern Catholic Rites use it."^[64] However, in the decades that followed 1971 it has come to be used more rarely.^{[65][66][67]}

The versions used by Oriental Orthodoxy and the Church of the East^[68] differ from the Greek liturgical version in having "We believe", as in the original text, instead of "I believe".^[69]



English translations

The version found in the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* is still commonly used by some English speakers, but more modern translations are now more common. The International Consultation on English Texts published an English translation of the Nicene Creed, first in 1970 and then in successive revisions in 1971 and 1975. These texts were adopted by several churches. The Roman Catholic Church in the United States, which adopted the 1971 version in 1973, and the Catholic Church in other English-speaking countries, which in 1975 adopted the version published in that year, continued to use them until 2011, when it replaced them with the version in the *Roman Missal third edition*. The 1975 version was included in the 1979 Episcopal Church (United States) *Book of Common Prayer*, but with one variation: in the line "For us men and for our salvation", it omitted the word "men".

See also


- Homoousion
- First seven ecumenical councils

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43. Briefly, Arianism is a Trinitarian heresy that denies the divinity of the Son, the Second Person. It claims that the Son is subordinate to the Father, so much so that the Son is a mere creature. Orthodox (in the sense of non-heterodox) Trinitarian doctrine teaches that the Persons are distinct from each other only as regards their mutual relations. If the Father has the power to communicate the Divine essence to the Holy Spirit (which is the same thing as saying that the Holy Spirit proceeds – in the Latin sense – from the Father), it follows that the Son must have exactly the same power, since Father and Son are the same in every respect except in their mutual relation. Denying this (by denying the *Filioque*), Catholic doctrine would argue, would make the Son subordinate to the Father, as in Arianism.
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External links

-  The full text of Nicene Creed at Wikisource
-  Latin Wikisource has original text related to this article: *Symbolum Nicænum Costantinopolitanum*
-  Greek Wikisource has original text related to this article: *Nicene Creed in Greek*
- Extensive discussion of the texts of the First Council of Nicaea (<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/basis/nicea1.txt>)
- Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom* Volume I: (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds1.iv.iii.html>) Nicene Creed
- Athanasius, *De Decretis* or Defence of the Nicene Definition (<http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/NPNF2-04/Npnf2-04-54.htm>)
- Line-by-Line Roman Catholic Explanation of the Nicene Creed (<http://www.ancient-future.net/nicene.html>)
- Nicene Creed in languages of the world (<http://exomni.narod.ru/credo/credoframeset.htm>)
- Essays on the Nicene Creed from the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library (<http://www.wlsessays.net/subject/N/Nicene+Creed>)
- Modern English translations of the documents produced at Nicaea (<https://web.archive.org/web/20131029234314/http://www.fourthcentury.com/index.php/councils-and-creeds>)
- "The Nicene Creed", run time 42 minutes, BBC "In Our Time" audio history series, moderator and historians, Episode 12-27-2007 (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qykl/episodes/2007>)

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