

Whoever wishes to be saved must, above all, keep the Catholic Faith.

For unless a person keeps this Faith whole and entire, he will undoubtedly be lost forever.

This is what the Catholic Faith teaches: we worship one God in the Trinity and the Trinity in unity.

Neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the substance.

For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, another of the Holy Ghost.

But the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost have one divinity, equal glory, and coeternal majesty.

What the Father is, the Son is, and the Holy Ghost is.

The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, and the Holy Ghost is uncreated.

The Father is boundless, the Son is boundless, and the Holy Ghost is boundless.

The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Ghost is eternal.

Nevertheless, there are not three eternal beings, but one Eternal Being.

So there are not three uncreated beings, nor three boundless beings, but One Uncreated Being and One Boundless Being.

Likewise, the Father is omnipotent, the Son is omnipotent, the Holy Ghost is omnipotent.

Yet there are not three omnipotent beings, but One Omnipotent Being.

Thus the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God.

However, there are not three gods, but One God.

The Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord.

However, there are not three lords, but One Lord.

For as we are obliged by Christian truth to acknowledge every Person singly to be God and Lord, so too are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say that there are three gods or lords.

The Father was not made, nor created, nor generated by anyone.

The Son is not made, nor created, but begotten by the Father alone.

The Holy Ghost is not made, nor created, nor generated, but proceeds from the Father and the Son.

There is, then, one Father, not three fathers; one Son, not three sons; one Holy Ghost, not three holy ghosts.

In this Trinity, there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less. The entire three Persons are coeternal and coequal with one another.

So that in all things, as has been said above, the Unity is to be worshiped in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity.

He, therefore, who wishes to be saved, must believe thus about the Trinity.

It is also necessary for eternal salvation that he believes steadfastly in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Thus the right faith is that we believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is both God and man.

As God, He was begotten of the substance of the Father before time; as man, He was born in time of the substance of His Mother.

He is perfect God; and He is perfect man, with a rational soul and human flesh.

He is equal to the Father in His divinity, but inferior to the Father in His humanity.

Although He is God and man, He is not two, but one Christ.

And He is one, not because His divinity was changed into flesh, but because His humanity was assumed unto God.

He is one, not by a mingling of substances, but by unity of person.

As a rational soul and flesh are one man: so God and man are one Christ.

He died for our salvation, descended into hell, and rose from the dead on the third day.

He ascended into Heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father almighty. From there He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

At His coming, all men are to arise with their own bodies; and they are to give an account of their own deeds.

Those who have done good deeds will go into eternal life; those who have done evil will go into the everlasting fire.

This is the Catholic faith. Everyone must believe it, firmly and steadfastly; otherwise he cannot be saved. Amen.

CREEDS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

The Catholic Church has four major creeds¹ which come to us from the first centuries of Christianity. Each of these is an infallible dogmatic proclamation of the True Faith. If one were to knowingly reject or willfully doubt any statement in these creeds, he would be jeopardizing his eternal salvation by sinning gravely against the supernatural virtue of Faith - for “*without faith it is impossible to please God*” (Heb 11:6).

These four creeds are: **(1) The Apostles Creed**, which we pray at the start of the Holy Rosary. Tradition holds it was composed around the time of Our Lady’s Assumption by the Twelve Apostles, each Apostle contributing one of its twelve propositions. It comes to us as the Church of Rome’s profession of Faith in the First Century. **(2) The Nicene-Constantinople Creed**, which we pray at Holy Mass on Sundays and major feasts. It was formulated at the Councils of Nicea (325) and Constantinople (381) and affirms the divinity of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. **(3) The Symbol of Chalcedon**, which clearly expresses the mystery of the Eternal and Incarnate Son of God. It was composed by Pope Leo the Great and unanimously accepted by the Church Fathers at Chalcedon (451). **(4) The Athanasian Creed**,² which tradition attributes to St. Athanasius, yet since no written record of it has been discovered among his writings or in Greek from antiquity, many today doubt his authorship.³ Similar language has been found in the writings of St. Vincent of Lerins from Gaul (+450), and so many modern scholars believe this Creed originated in the Latin West during the Fifth Century. Some suggest it was composed by St. Ambrose. The oldest written record we have thus far discovered comes from St. Caesarius of Arles (+542), who attributes it to St. Athanasius, and the oldest copy we know of from the East stems from the 12th Century. This Creed has been used in the Catholic liturgy (*lex orandi, lex credendi*) and is greatly venerated in both East and West. In fact, it was selected by the Church Fathers - from East and West - to *infallibly* proclaim the Catholic Faith at the Council of Florence (1431-1449).⁴

A fifth Creed often listed among the major creeds of the Church, often replacing the Symbol of Chalcedon as the ‘principal four,’ is the Profession of Faith proclaimed at the Council of Trent. Following Tradition, the Church Fathers at the First Vatican Council (1869-1870) also proclaimed a Profession of Faith which incorporated principal teachings from that Council into the Profession of Faith proclaimed at the Council of Trent. Subsequent popes have made similar Professions of Faith which include the dogmas from Vatican I and infallible dogmatic papal teachings on the Blessed Virgin Mary.⁵

¹ The term “symbol” or “formula” is often used as a synonym for “creed” in ecclesiastical language.

² The *Athanasian Creed* is also known as the “*Quicumque Vult*” (*Whoever wishes*) as those are the first words of the Creed in Latin. We often refer to our prayers by their first words, such as the ‘Our Father’ (*Pater Noster*) and ‘Hail Mary’ (*Ave Maria*).

³ Prior to 1642, when a Protestant published an article against this Creed, the entire Christian world had accepted Athanasian authorship for this Creed.

⁴ The *Athanasian Creed* has been publicly proclaimed by the magisterium at other synods and was promulgated by Charlemagne, but the Council of Florence is of greatest significance because it is one of the great Ecumenical Councils and because the East and West were reunited at this Council. There they ended the Orthodox Schism of 1054, but the fall of Constantinople (1454) prevented this unification from taking lasting effect. The Council of Florence represents the last time the East was united with Rome in dogmatically proclaiming the same One True Faith.

⁵ To my knowledge, the last of these professions of Faith was issued by Paul VI on 30 June 1968.