

The 39 Article Project – Article 8

A Brief Discourse on the Origin and Use
of the Historic Creeds of Christianity

~ Fr. Sean Templeton ~

Article VIII. Of the Three Creeds.

The three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius' Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought to thoroughly be received (and believed), for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Scripture.

Creeds of the Church

From the very beginning the Church has defined her identity and doctrine through the profession of creeds. The English word “creed” is derived from the Latin *credo* which translates simply, “I believe.” Creedal statements are simply those things which are believed by the Church. The Church catholic traditionally has held to three Creeds: the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed and Athanasian Creed. There has been much discussion where each of these stand in relative importance, but the Church both in the East and West place the Nicene Creed as the primary Creed of the Church.

The Creeds are part of the great Tradition of the Church and as such, are treasured by Anglicans and most Protestants as well as Roman Catholics and the Orthodox. There are those, such as the Anabaptists, who claim not to believe in Creeds in principle, but in point-of-fact they agree theologically with the substance of most Creedal tenets if not with the form itself.

Anglicans are reformed catholics as embodied by the *39 Articles of Religion*. Being both catholic and reformed,

Anglicans faithfully hold to the historic authority of the Creeds as well as to that of the Holy Scriptures because the Creeds formulate Scriptural doctrine. Article 8 of the *39 Articles* summarized this well:

The three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius’ Creed, and that which is commonly called the Apostles’ Creed, ought to thoroughly be received (and believed), for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Scripture.¹

In order to further understand the place of the Creeds, it is imperative to comprehend the context and history of such statements of faith. This overview will help shed light through the veil of history. Furthermore, once the context is understood, a more proper use and understanding of the Creeds in the Church can be implemented.

Early Creeds

The profession of belief of the Church catholic is largely a continuation of a legacy that began with God’s chosen people, Israel. The Israelites of old as well as Jews of today recite the *Shema* which proclaims, “Hear, O Israel that

the Lord our God is one” at the beginning of their daily prayers. The Apostles and early Christians were quite familiar with this practice, which certainly can be seen as a basic creed.

Additionally, the epistles of Scripture hold bedrock tenets of the Faith which also appear to be creeds:

For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles.²

Non-canonical evidence of early creeds also exists in the writings of those holy men who were taught by the Apostles. Church Fathers such as Ignatius of Antioch and Hippolytus of Rome give us a glimpse into other creeds in the early church.

Such early creeds demonstrate that from the very beginning, the Church used creeds for a two-fold purpose. The first purpose was to provide a summation of her belief since they first appear as services of baptism used to initiate new members:

The early church tended to baptize its converts on Easter Day, using the period of Lent as a time of preparation and instruction for this moment of public declaration of faith and commitment ... it seems the Creeds began to emerge as a

uniform declaration of faith and commitment.³

The second purpose for creeds in the Church was to protect the faithful from those who Paul calls “false apostles, deceitful workmen disguising themselves as apostles of Christ.”⁴ As soon as Christians began to be baptized, heresy began to creep into the body. St. Paul addresses this several places in his epistles and the Acts of the Apostles records the story of Simon Magnus, the first heretic.⁵ The Creeds served as a foundation of the Faith to help the faithful discern false teaching.

While these dual purposes of instruction and refutation seem different, throughout history they have often been united in the one purpose of establishing and maintaining orthodoxy, literally straight doctrine. The Apostles’, Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds are a historic solution for the perennial challenges of catechesis and defence against heresy and, as the *39 Articles* suggest, ought to be more used as such today.

The Apostles’ Creed

The Apostles’ Creed is often erroneously thought to be the “Creed of the Apostles” most likely due to medieval apocryphal stories which circulated through Western Europe. Such stories claimed that the twelve Apostles each wrote a section of the Creed. The fact that the Creed did not originate with the Twelve, however, should not be seen as a challenge to the Creed’s antiquity or authority. While the Apostles’ Creed in its full form might not stretch back to the Apostles, sections of it reach back to the first century of Christianity and those who were directly taught by the Twelve.

Substantial pieces of the Apostles' Creed appear in several early works of the Church Fathers. St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, an early defender of the Faith, was martyred in Rome in approximately 107AD. Apostolic legend suggests that he was one of the children whom Jesus calls to himself in Matthew 18:2.⁶ Whether true or not, there is no doubt that Ignatius knew several Apostles personally. His writings are some of the closest in historic proximity to the epistles of Scripture. Ignatius wrote letters to surrounding churches, one of such is to the Symmaeans. Fragments of these letters have survived to this day. The following is a creed from it:

He was truly of the seed of David according to the flesh, and the Son of God according to the will and power of God; that He was truly born of a virgin, was baptized by John in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled by Him; and was truly under Pontius Pilate and Herod the tetrarch, nailed to the cross for us in His flesh. Of this fruit we are by His divinely blessed passion that he might set up a standard for all ages through his resurrection to all His faithful and holy followers, whether among Jews or Gentiles in the one body of His Church.⁷

Another Church Father, St. Irenaeus of Lyons, wrote a book against the Gnostic heresies which were sweeping the early Church in the second century. While his original work *Against Heresies*, written around 175AD, has perished, fragments have survived the ages. One such fragment contains another significant proto-Creed:

...believing in one God, the Creator of heaven and earth, and all things therein by means of Christ Jesus, the Son of God; who, because of His surpassing love towards His creation, condescended to be born of the Virgin, He Himself uniting man through Himself to God, and having suffered under Pontius Pilate, and rising again, and having been received in splendour, shall come in glory, the Saviour of those who are saved and the judge of those who are judged, and sending into eternal fire those who transform the truth and despise His Father and His advent.⁸

There are some significant differences in this Creed (such as not mentioning Christ's death, which is inferred, and the ending admonishment of those who do not believe) but there are also striking similarities.

Perhaps the most striking evidence of the origin of the Apostles' Creed comes from writings attributed to Hippolytus of Rome. Hippolytus was a presbyter in Rome in the early third century. The following fragment is thought to be written in 215AD. It clearly outlines the procedure for baptism including much of the text which came to become the Apostles' Creed.

A deacon, likewise, will go down with them into the water. When each of them to be baptized has gone down into the water, the one baptizing shall lay hands on each of them, asking, "**Do you believe in God the Father Almighty?**" And the one being baptized shall answer, "I believe." He shall then baptize each of them once, laying his hand upon each of their heads. Then he shall ask, "**Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son**

of God, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died, and rose on the third day living from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, the one coming to judge the living and the dead?" When each has answered, "I believe," he shall baptize a second time. Then he shall ask, "**Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church and the resurrection of the flesh?"** Then each being baptized shall answer, "I believe." And thus let him baptize the third time.⁹

It is clear from this fragment that by the third century the Apostles' Creed had come about in full Trinitarian form and was the authoritative doctrinal statement of at least part of the Church. Just how universal this baptismal liturgy was is unclear, but in light of how meticulous the early liturgists of the Church were, it is not unreasonable to think that this creed was used with some regularity and uniformity.

The Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed is the earliest universal Creed of the Church to emerge from an Ecumenical Council. It has been and still is the "gold standard" of both the Eastern and Western branches of the Church catholic and is recited worldwide by Catholics and Protestants alike. It is the Creed most commonly used in the Mass.

When Emperor Constantine called the Council of Nicaea in 325AD, the major heresy threatening the Church was Arianism. This sect's namesake was

Arius, a priest who insisted that Jesus was not really God, but rather a creature of creation. He claimed that Holy Scripture references to Jesus as equal to God were, "merely courtesy titles."¹⁰ This abhorrent heresy threatened to undermine salvation itself. It also gathered great support throughout the world. The nature of the Arian heresy caused the Church to once again look at the Trinitarian nature of God but to focus sharply on second person of the Godhead, Jesus Christ.

The Council of Nicaea was significant especially in the fact that it was the first major crisis of the Church where an appeal to Scripture alone could not refute those in error. Instead, authority had to be derived from two sources: *the Holy Scriptures as well as the Faith or Traditions delivered from the Apostles.*

The Fathers of the Council at Nice (*Nicaea*) were at one time ready to accede to the request of some of the bishops and use only scriptural expressions in their definitions. But, after several attempts, they found that all these were capable of being explained away. Athanasius describes with much wit and penetration how he saw them nodding and winking to each other when the orthodox proposed expressions which they had thought of a way of escaping from the force of.¹¹

The danger here was that the Faith itself was in danger of being utterly compromised on account of language and interpretation.¹² The bishops of Nicaea therefore opted to clarify the language of the doctrine of the Church by going outside of the Scriptures—but not contrary to it. This action itself would set a precedent in refining

church doctrine which even would affect the very phrasing of Article 8 regarding the Creeds.

The Christian Faith could not and can never be solely Scripture. Jesus Christ is the *living* Word who is constantly refining the Church through the holy Spirit. The key is that the living word will never contradict Scripture because He would be contradicting Himself. The “Faith delivered to the saints” depends on the Scriptures but may interpret them according to the Apostolic teachings. The bishops of the early centuries saw themselves as entrusted with the Faith of the Apostles and, as such, its defenders from all threats.

They understood their position to be that of witnesses, not that of exegetes. They recognized but one duty resting upon them in this respect—to hand down to other faithful men that good thing the Church had received according to the command of God. The first requirement was not learning, but honesty. The question they were called upon to answer was not, What do I think probable, or even certain, from Holy Scripture? but, What have I been taught, what has been entrusted to me to hand down to others?¹³

This was the very reason that the Creeds emerged. If the Scriptures had been sufficient, they never would have come about. The teachings and traditions of the Apostles had to be preserved and passed down to future generations.

It would be erroneous and simplistic to think that the bishops of the Council of Nicaea gathered to write the Nicene Creed from thin air. The prior texts of

the Fathers demonstrate that there were already creeds entrenched as part of Christian Tradition but there was nothing comprehensive enough to adequately withstand the attacks of Arianism. For this reason, bishops such as Eusebius of Caesarea had begun to hammer out possible creedal statements. It is said that Eusebius’ draft was presented to the council with great success. The similarities of his text to the official text are astounding. Here is Eusebius’ draft:

We believe in one only God, Father Almighty, Creator of things visible and invisible; and in the Lord Jesus Christ, for he is the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, life of life, his only Son, the first-born of all creatures, begotten of the Father before all time, by whom also everything was created, who became flesh for our redemption, who lived and suffered amongst men, rose again the third day, returned to the Father, and will come again one day in his glory to judge the quick and the dead. We believe also in the Holy Ghost. We believe that each of these three is and subsists; the Father truly as Father, the Son truly as Son, the Holy Ghost truly as Holy Ghost; as our Lord also said, when he sent his disciples to preach: Go and teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.¹⁴

The Council of Nicaea eventually adopted a very similar Creed which here is written (a comparison of the two can be found at the end of this article):

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, 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 which be in heaven and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation came down [from heaven] and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead. And [we believe] in the Holy Ghost. And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a different substance or essence [from the Father] or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion -all that so say, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.¹⁵

The success of the Nicene Creed can be judged by its catholicity. Forms of the Creed begin to appear in many different documents of this time from all over the world. Epiphanius of Salamis records this version of the Creed in 374AD:

We believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible: and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, that is of the substance of the Father, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father: by whom all things were made, both in heaven and earth who for us men and for our

salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man, was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and on the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and from thence he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end. And 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: 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. And those who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, and before he was begotten he was not, or that he was of things which are not, or that he is of a different hypostasis or substance, or pretend that he is effluent or changeable, these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.¹⁶

Epiphanius cites the Council of Nicaea as the origin of this Creed and further bolsters the authority of the bishops who have defended the Faith. "And this faith was delivered from the Holy Apostles and in the Church, the Holy City, from all the Holy Bishops together more than three hundred and ten in number."¹⁷ He goes on to record another creed (here omitted for the sake of the reader) which can be found with the text of the Athanasian Creed in Table Number VI at the end of the article.

The Second Ecumenical Council and Further Anti-Trinitarian Heresies

The Council of Nicaea certainly can be judged a success. In the end, only two bishops opposed the Creed and were exiled. The victory was short-lived, however. In the year 359AD a revived Arianism swept the Church. One historian writes, "...and so shortly afterwards as in 359 the double-synod of Rimini and Selencia rejected the expressions *homousion* and *homoiousion*¹⁸ equally and, Jerome gave birth to his famous phrase, 'the world awoke to find itself Arian.'¹⁹ This second wave of Arians, or "Semi-Arians" as they are sometimes called, was more subtle. They diminished their attack on the *divinity of Jesus* and heightened their attack on the *divinity of the Holy Spirit* likening him to a "helping spirit" akin to the angelic being.

Other heretics emerged as well such as the Apollinarians, who began to deny Jesus' humanity, and the Sabellians, who denied personhood of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The Council of Constantinople held in 381AD cast out the heretics and reaffirmed the Nicene Creed. It is this council that standardized the Creed. This is the form which was embraced universally. It was still called the "Nicene Creed" in deference to its original writers.

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us

men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the Right Hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead. Whose kingdom shall have no end.

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.²⁰

The adoption of this Creed solidified the doctrine of the Church and ended any question as to the authority of the Council of Nicaea. But ironically, the Creed itself would be a cause for division between the Eastern and Western branches of the Church.

The Filioque

One small Latin word of the Nicene Creed again brought strife into the Church. Much has been written about this debate, and it would be irresponsible to omit it from a discussion of the Creeds.

Scholars are not certain where or when it happened, but at some point, Western Christians began to add the word *filioque* or “and the son” to section of the Creed which deals with the Holy Spirit. Theories abound as to the origin of this phrase, but the most commonly held theory is that a council in Iberia (Spain) inserted the word.

As early as the year 400 it had been found necessary at a Council of Toledo to affirm the double procession against the Priscillianists and in 589 by the authority of the Third Council of Toledo the newly converted Goths were required to sign the Creed with the addition.²¹

The addition of the *Filioque* spread rapidly through the West. The Franks (France) seem to have adopted the addition fairly quickly. Liturgical historian Dix writes,

Some Frankish monks at Jerusalem got into trouble for singing it with the *Filioque* as early as A.D. 806, and defended themselves with the plea that they had heard it ‘sung thus in the West in the emperor’s chapel.’²²

Interestingly enough, Pope Leo III fought the addition “on the express ground that the General Councils had forbidden any addition to be made to their formulary.”²³ Sadly, in 1014AD (just prior to the Great Schism between the East and West in 1054AD) Pope Benedict VIII sanctioned the use of the Creed with the *Filioque* thereby overruling the authority of the Council with supposed papal authority.²⁴ There has been much debate between the East and the West on this addition. Theological differences have emerged regarding who the Holy Spirit is, simply on the question of whether he proceeds

from the Father or the Father *and the Son*. The historical record is clear: the *Filioque* was a Western innovation. It is the opinion of this author that the West needs to remedy this grievous error which is the cause of such pain between the Eastern and Western Church as a step toward reunification.

The Athanasian Creed

The last of the Creeds accepted by the western Church in general, and the *Articles of Religion* particularly, is a Creed called the “Athanasian Creed.” Here is the English text as found in the Book of Common Prayer.

Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and

one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be both God and Lord, So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion, to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten.

The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Substance of the

Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the Substance of his Mother, born in the world; Perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting; Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father, as touching his Manhood. Who, although he be God and Man, yet he is not two, but one Christ; One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh but by taking of the Manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.²⁵

The name would seem to indicate that this Creed was written by St. Athanasius, but most scholars do not think this to be the case for several reasons.²⁶ The most obvious indication dismissing his authorship is that all of the texts of this Creed are in Latin. St. Athanasius was not a Westerner and did not know Latin well enough to write in it. All of his other works are in Greek, none of which even mention this Creed. Lastly, there are certain theological nuances within the Creed which have been documented as later developments in theology.²⁷ But if the

Creed was not written by St. Athanasius then by whom was it written and whence did it derive its name? There are several different theories.

Some scholars believe that it was written by those schooled in St. Athanasius's ways which gave it his name (a common thing in the Ancient world). Another theory is that the Creed was composed to counter the Nestorian heresy of the fifth century.²⁸ Others believe it was a much later Creed. While the Athanasian Creed's authorship is certainly much more in question, it is nonetheless a thorough and useful statement of the Faith and addresses many possible heresies.

The English Reformation

The Reformation (and Renaissance prior to it) was the occasion for great research into the early Church. Archbishop Cranmer's works, culminating with the Book of Common Prayer, are evidence of the rich results that such research produced. The Creeds remained central to the Faith through the Reformation, perhaps largely due to the fact that the Creeds provided a concise form of the essential tenets of the Faith as well as a buttress against innovations made to it by Rome. Furthermore, the fact that the Creeds were the result of *councils* of the Church — and not the papacy — buttressed the Protestant, and in our case Anglican, cause.

Documents during the Henrician Reformation as early as the Wittenberg Articles of 1536 AD placed the Creeds in prime importance. While the agreement between the English under Henry

VIII and the Lutheran German princes fell through, this still provides an insight into the Reformation mindset

on the subject of the Creeds for the two nations. Article 1 reads:

...we confess simply and clearly without any ambiguity, that we believe, hold, teach and defend everything which is in the canon of the Bible and the three Creeds, i.e. The Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian Creeds, in the same meaning which the Creeds themselves intend and in which the approved holy Fathers use and defend them.²⁹

We see here the historic and enduring formula of Scripture coupled with Apostolic Tradition which would guide the English Reformation.

Archbishop Cranmer wrote a series of 15 articles in 1538 AD. The first article on the Trinity reads:

Concerning the unity of the divine essence and the three persons, we hold the decree of the Council of Nicaea to be true without any doubt to be believed...³⁰

As the English Reformation went on, it grew more Protestant in nature — especially with the ascendancy of Edward VI. Some scholars have claimed that there is an implied order of importance in the order of the 39 *Articles of Religion*. On this point, note that while the Creeds still hold a prominent place in the 39 *Articles* of 1571 AD, they are no longer first. Instead, Holy Scripture precedes it, but this need not diminish the importance of the Creeds. It is, rather, a proper perspective to which the Church Fathers certainly would have assented.

This perspective was the guiding principle of the Church Fathers themselves. The Creeds were meant to con-

cisely encapsulate the doctrine of the Trinity as consonant with the Holy Scriptures and the teaching of the Apostles. The very wording of Article 8 presents this:

The three Creeds, Nicene Creed, Athanasius's Creed and that which is commonly called the Apostles' Creed, ought to thoroughly be received (and believed), **for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.**³¹

The Creeds along with the Holy Scriptures *together* form the most basic and essential core of Christianity. An understanding of both is necessary and all Christians ought to be instructed in them, but sadly one would be hard-pressed to find Christians who understand the meaning of the Creeds even amongst liturgical Churches where they are recited in the Offices and Holy Communion. This is something that must be addressed if the Church is to hold on to the Faith. It is especially important in this current era where culture and fad define Christianity rather than bedrock Truth. In closing, the words of Epiphanius are as apt today as they were in the fourth century, and ought to be taken to heart by all who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior:

The children of the Church have received from the holy fathers, that is from the holy Apostles, the Faith to keep, and to hand down, and to

teach their children. To these children you belong, and I beg you to receive it and pass it on. And whilst you teach your children these things and such as these from the holy Scriptures, cease not to confirm and strengthen them and indeed all who hear you: tell them that this is the holy faith of the Holy Catholic Church.³²

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Table I – A Comparison of the Baptismal Creed of St. Hippolytus and the Apostles’ Creed

<p>The Creed of Baptism found in St. Hippolytus (c. 215AD)</p>	<p>The Apostles as in the Book of Common Prayer (1979AD)</p>
<p>"Do you believe in God the Father Almighty?" And the one being baptized shall answer, "I believe." He shall then baptize each of them once, laying his hand upon each of their heads. Then he shall ask, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died, and rose on the third day living from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, the one coming to judge the living and the dead?" When each has answered, "I believe," he shall baptize a second time. Then he shall ask, "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church and the resurrection of the flesh?" Then each being baptized shall answer, "I believe."</p>	<p>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 to the dead. 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.</p>

**Table II – A Comparison of the Accepted
Nicene Creed and Eusebius’s Draft**

The Nicene Creed Adopted by the Council of Nicaea (325AD)	The Drafted Creed of Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 325AD)
<p>We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, 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 which be in heaven and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead.</p> <p>And we believe in the Holy Ghost. And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a different substance or essence [from the Father] or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion — all that so say, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.</p>	<p>We believe in one only God, Father Almighty, Creator of things visible and invisible; and in the Lord Jesus Christ, for he is the Word of God, God of God, Light of Light, life of life, his only Son, the first-born of all creatures, begotten of the Father before all time, by whom also everything was created, who became flesh for our redemption, who lived and suffered amongst men, rose again the third day, returned to the Father, and will come again one day in his glory to judge the quick and the dead.</p> <p>We believe also in the Holy Ghost We believe that each of these three is and subsists; the Father truly as Father, the Son truly as Son, the Holy Ghost truly as Holy Ghost; as our Lord also said, when he sent his disciples to preach: Go and teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.</p>

**Table III – A Comparison of the Nicene Creed
and Its Niceno-Constantinopolitan Standardization**

<p style="text-align: center;">The Nicene Creed Adopted by the Council of Nicaea (325AD)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Nicene Creed Adopted by the Second Council of Constantinople (381AD)</p>
<p>We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible;</p> <p>and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, 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 which be in heaven and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead.</p> <p>And we believe in the Holy Ghost. And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a different substance or essence [from the Father] or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion -all that so say, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.</p>	<p>We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.</p> <p>And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the Right Hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead. Whose kingdom shall have no end.</p> <p>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.</p>

**Table IV- A Comparison of the Nicene Creed
and the Creed of Epiphanius of Salamis**

The Nicene Creed Adopted by the Council of Nicaea (325AD)	The Creed of Epiphanius (c. 374AD)
<p>We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, of the substance of the Father, God of God, 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 which be in heaven and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate and was made man. He suffered and the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven. And he shall come again to judge both the quick and the dead.</p> <p>And we believe in the Holy Ghost. And whosoever shall say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, or that before he was begotten he was not, or that he was made of things that were not, or that he is of a different substance or essence [from the Father] or that he is a creature, or subject to change or conversion -all that so say, the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes them.</p>	<p>We believe in one God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible: and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, that is of the substance of the Father, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father: by whom all things were made, both in heaven and earth who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man, was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and on the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and from thence he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end.</p> <p>And 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: 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. And those who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not, and before he was begotten he was not, or that he was of things which are not, or that he is of a different hypostasis or substance, or pretend that he is effluent or changeable, these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.</p>

Table V – A Comparison of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed and the 1979 Version of the Nicene Creed

The Nicene Creed Adopted by the Council of Constantinople (325AD)	The Nicene Creed from the Book of Common Prayer (1979AD)
<p>We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.</p> <p>And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate. He suffered and was buried, and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the Right Hand of the Father. And he shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead. Whose kingdom shall have no end.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.</p> <p>We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again 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.</p> <p>We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.</p>

Table VI – A Presentation of the Athanasian and Lengthier Creed of Epiphanius of Salamis

The Athanasian Creed	A Lengthier Creed of Epiphanius (c. 374)
<p>Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith. Which Faith except everyone do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic Faith is this: That we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity, neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal.</p> <p>Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated, the Son uncreated, and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is Almighty, the Son Almighty, and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties, but one Almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by himself to be both God and Lord, So are we forbidden by the Catholic Religion, to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created, nor begotten.</p>	<p>We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of all things, invisible and visible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten of God the Father, only begotten, that is of the substance of the Father, God of God, 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 which be in heaven and in earth, whether they be visible or invisible. Who for us men and for our salvation came down, and was incarnate, that is to say was conceived perfectly through the Holy Ghost of the holy ever-virgin Mary, and was made man, that is to say a perfect man, receiving a soul, and body, and intellect, and all that make up a man, but without sin, not from human seed, nor [that he dwelt] in a man, but taking flesh to himself into one holy entity; not as he inspired the prophets and spake and worked [in them], but was perfectly made man, for the Word was made flesh; neither did he experience any change, nor did he convert his divine nature into the nature of man, but united it to his one holy perfection and Divinity.</p> <p>For there is one Lord Jesus Christ, not two, the same is God, the same is Lord, the same is King. He suffered in the flesh, and rose again, and ascended into heaven in the same body, and with glory he sat down at the right hand of the Father, and in the same body he will come in glory to judge both the quick and the dead, and of his kingdom there shall be no end.</p> <p>And we believe in the Holy Ghost, who spake in the Law, and preached in the Prophets, and descended at Jordan, and spake in the Apostles, and indwells the Saints. And thus we believe in him, that he is the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, the perfect Spirit, the Spirit the Comforter, uncreate, who proceedeth from the Father, receiving of the Son, and believed on.</p>

The Son is of the Father alone, not made, nor created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; But the whole three Persons are co-eternal together and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation that he also believe rightly the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Substance of the Father, begotten before the worlds; and Man of the Substance Christ; One, not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh but by taking of the Manhood into God; One altogether; not by confusion of Substance, but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father, God Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. At whose coming all men shall rise again with their bodies and shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil into everlasting fire. This is the Catholic Faith, which except a man believe faithfully, he cannot be saved.¹

[We believe] in one Catholic and Apostolic Church. And in one baptism of penitence, and in the resurrection of the dead, and the just judgment of souls and bodies, and in the Kingdom of heaven and in life everlasting.

And those who say that there was a time when the Son was not, or when the Holy Ghost was not, or that either was made of that which previously had no being, or that he is of a different nature or substance, and affirm that the Son of God and the Holy Spirit are subject to change and mutation; all such the Catholic and Apostolic Church, the mother both of you and of us, anathematizes. And further we anathematize such as do not confess the resurrection of the dead, as well as all heresies which are not in accord with the true faith.

Finally, you and your children thus believing and keeping the commandments of this same faith, we trust that you will always pray for us, that we may have a share and lot in that same faith and in the keeping of these same commandments. For us make your intercessions you and all who believe thus, and keep the commandments of the Lord in our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom and with whom, glory be to the Father with the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.²