



THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
and born of the virgin Mary.
He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended into hell.
The third day he rose from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of
God the Father Almighty.
From there he will come 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 Apostles' Creed

"I Believe in the Holy Spirit."



Apostles' Creed

The Church always believes as she prays. From the time of the apostles until the current age, the way the Church prays effects what she believes. Her prayer is most completely revealed within the liturgical life – the celebration of the Sacraments and other ritualistic actions. In the second century, the Church of Rome was using a baptismal formula, which had the catechumens (those to be baptized) declare their belief in the Triune God as well as the Church and the resurrection of the body via a series of questions. These questions, which find similarity to the baptismal rites of today, developed into the Apostles' Creed by the end of the seventh century.

Commentary is by Saint Thomas Aquinas. By universal consent, Thomas Aquinas is the preeminent spokesman of the Catholic tradition of reason and of divine revelation. He is one of the great teachers of the medieval Catholic Church, honored with the titles Doctor of the Church and Angelic Doctor.

“I Believe in the Holy Spirit.”

As we have said, the Word of God is the Son of God just as in a way the word of man is the concept of his intellect. But sometimes man has a word which is dead. This is when, for instance, he conceives what he ought to do, but he has not the will to do it; or when one believes but does not practise; then his faith is said to be dead, as St. James points out [2:17]. The word of God, however, is alive: “For the word of God is living” [Hb 4:12]. It is necessary, therefore, that in God there be will and love. Thus, St. Augustine says: “The word of God which we plan to speak is knowledge with love” [*De Trinitate* IX, 10]. Now, as the Word of God is the Son of God, God’s love is the Holy Spirit. Hence, it is that one possesses the Holy Spirit when he loves God: “The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit who is given to us” [Rm 5:5].

There are some who held false opinions concerning the Holy Spirit. They said, for instance, that He was only the servant and minister of God. Hence, to remove these errors the holy Fathers added [in the Nicene Creed] five phrases concerning the Holy Spirit.

“The Holy Spirit, the Lord.”—The **first is**, that although there are other spirits, such as the Angels who are ministers of God. “Art they not all ministering spirits?” [Hb 1:14], nevertheless the Holy Spirit is the Lord. “God is a Spirit” [Jn 4:24] and, “Now the Lord is a Spirit” [2 Cor 3:17], and also, “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” [2 Cor 3:11]. The reason is that He makes us love God and cease to love the world. Thus, the Creed says: **“In the Holy Spirit, the Lord.”**

“And Giver of life.”—The **second phrase** is there because **the soul’s life is to be united to God, inasmuch as God is the life of the soul**, and as truly as the soul is the life of the body. Now, the Holy Spirit unites the soul to God through love, because He is the love of God, and therefore He gives life. “It is the spirit who gives life” [Jn 6:64]. Therefore, it is said: **“and Giver of life.”**

“Who Proceeds from the Father and the Son.”—The **third** is that the **Holy Spirit is one in substance with the Father and the Son**; because as the Son is the Word of the Father, so the Holy Spirit is the love both of the Father and the Son, and, therefore, He proceeds from them both. Moreover, just as the Word of God is of the same substance as the Father, so also is Love [Holy Spirit]. of the same substance as the Father and the Son. Hence, it is said: **“who proceeds from the Father and the Son.” From this it is seen that the Holy Spirit is not a Creature.**

“Who... is Adored and Glorified.”—The **fourth** phrase is that **the Holy Spirit as regards adoration is equal to the Father and the Son**: “The true adorers shall adore the Father in spirit and truth” [Jn 4:23]. “Teach all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” [Mt 28:19]. Hence, it is said: **“Who together with the Father and the Son is adored.”**

“Who Spoke through the Prophets.”—The **fifth** phrase, **wherein the Holy Spirit is declared equal to God**, is that the holy prophets spoke on behalf of God. It is clear that, if the Holy Spirit were not God, then it would not be said that the prophets had spoken of God on His behalf. Thus, says St. Peter: “The holy men of God spoke, inspired by the Holy Spirit” [2 Pt 1:21]. Also: “The Lord God sent me, and His Spirit” [Is 48:16]. And so it is said: “Who spoke through the prophets.”

In all this **two errors are condemned**. The **Manicheans said that the Old Testament was not from God**. But this is false because the Holy Spirit spoke through the prophets. Likewise, **the error of Priscillian and Montanus was that they believed that the prophets did not speak by the Holy Spirit but were somewhat beside themselves**.

Benefits

Many benefits come to us from the Holy Spirit:

(1) He cleanses us from our sins. The reason is that one must repair that which one has made. Now, the soul is created by the Holy Spirit, because God has made all things through Him; for God, by loving His goodness, created everything: “You love all things that are, and hate none of the things which You made” [Wis 11:25]. Thus, Dionysius says: “Divine love did not permit Him to be without offspring” [*Div nom.* IV, 20]. It is necessary, therefore, that the hearts of men, destroyed by sin, be made anew by the Holy Spirit: “Send forth your Spirit, and they shall be created; and You shall renew the face of the earth” [Ps 103:30]. Nor is it any wonder that the Spirit cleanses, since all sins are taken away by love: “Many sins are forgiven her, because she has loved much” [Lk 7:47]. “Charity covers all sins” [Prov 10:12]. And likewise: “Charity covers a multitude of sins” [1 Pt 4:8].

(2) The Holy Spirit enlightens the intellect, since all that we know, we know through the Holy Spirit: “But the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you” [Jn 14:26]. Also: “His unction teaches you all things” [1 Jn 2:27].

(3) He assists us and, to a certain extent, compels us to keep the commandments. No one can keep the commandments unless he loves God: “If any one love Me, he will keep My word” [Jn 14:23]. Thus, the Holy Spirit makes us love God: “And I give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit in the midst of you; and I will cause you to walk in My commandments and to keep My judgments and do them” [Ez 36:26-27].

(4) He strengthens in us the hope of eternal life, because He is the pledge to us of this our destiny: “You were signed with the Holy Spirit of promise who is the pledge of our inheritance” [Eph 1:13]. He is, as it were, the surety of our eternal life. The reason is that eternal life is due to man inasmuch as he is become the son of God; and this is brought about in that he is made like unto Christ; and this, in turn, follows from his having the Spirit of Christ, and this is the Holy Spirit: “For you have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear; but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God” [Rm 8:15-16]. And also: “Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying: Abba, Father” [Gal 4:6].

(5) He counsels us when we are in doubt, and teaches us what is the will of God: “He that has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches” [Rev 2:7]. Likewise: “I may hear him as a master” [Is 50:4].

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