



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

"The Resurrection of the Body"



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.

“The Resurrection of the Body”

Not only does the Holy Spirit sanctify the Church as regards the souls of its members, but also **our bodies shall rise again by His power**: “We believe in Him that raised up Jesus Christ, Our Lord, from the dead” [Rm 4:24]. And: “By a man came death: and by a Man the resurrection of the dead” [1 Cor 15:21]. In this there occur four considerations: **(1)** the benefits which proceed from our faith in the resurrection; **(2)** the qualities of those who shall rise, taken all in general; **(3)** the condition of the blessed; **(4)** the condition of the damned.

Benefits

Concerning the first, **our faith and hope in the resurrection** is beneficial in four ways. **Firstly, it takes away the sorrow which we feel for the departed.** It is impossible for one not to grieve over the death of a relative or friend; but the hope that such a one will rise again greatly tempers the pain of parting: “And we will not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that you be not sorrowful, as others who have no hope” [1 Thes 4:12].

Secondly, it takes away the fear of death. If one does not hope in another and better life after death, then without doubt one is greatly in fear of death and would willingly commit any crime rather than suffer death. But because we believe in another life which will be ours after death, we do not fear death, nor would we do anything wrong through fear of it: “That, through death He might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil, and might deliver those who through fear of death were all their life subject to bondage” [Hb 2:14].

Thirdly, it makes us watchful and careful to live uprightly. If, however, this life in which we live were all, we would not have this great incentive to live well, for whatever we do would be of little importance, since it would be regulated not by eternity, but by brief, determined time. But we believe that we shall receive eternal rewards in the resurrection for whatsoever we do here. Hence, we are anxious to do good: “If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable” [1 Cor 15:19].

Finally, it withdraws us from evil. Just as the hope of reward urges us to do good, so also the fear of punishment, which we believe is reserved for wicked deeds, keeps us from evil: “But they who have done good things shall come forth unto the resurrection of life; but they who have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment” [Jn 5:29].

Qualities of those who arise

There is a fourfold condition of all those who shall take part in the resurrection:

(a) **The Identity of the Bodies of the Risen.**—It will be the same body as it is now, both as regards its flesh and its bones. Some, indeed, have said that it will not be this same body which is corrupted that shall be raised up; but such view is contrary to the Apostle: “For this corruptible must put on incorruption” [1 Cor 15:53]. And likewise the Sacred Scripture says that by the power of God this same body shall rise to life: “And I shall be clothed again with my skin; and in my flesh I shall see my God” [Job 19:26].

(b) **The Incorruptibility of the Risen Bodies.**—The bodies of the risen shall be of a different quality from that of the mortal body, because they shall be incorruptible, both of the blessed, who shall be ever in glory, and of the damned, who shall be ever in punishments: “For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality” [1 Cor 15:53]. And since the body will be incorruptible and immortal, there will no longer be the use of food or of the marriage relations: “For in the resurrection they shall neither marry nor be married, but shall be as the Angels of God in heaven” [Mt 22:30]. **This is directly against the Jews and Muslims:** “Nor shall he return any more into his house” [Job 7:10].

(c) **The Integrity of the Risen Bodies.**—Both the good and the wicked shall rise with all soundness of body which is natural to man. He will not be blind or deaf or bear any kind of physical defect: “The dead shall rise again incorruptible” [1 Cor 15:52], this is to mean, wholly free from the defects of the present life.

(d) **The Age of the Risen Bodies.**—All will rise in the condition of perfect age, which is of thirty-two or thirty-three years. This is because all who were not yet arrived at this age, did not possess this perfect age, and the old had already lost it. Hence, youths and children will be given what they lack, and what the aged once had will be restored to them: “Until we all attain the unity of faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the age of the fullness of Christ” [Eph 4:13].

Condition of the blessed

It must be known that the good will enjoy a special glory because the blessed will have glorified bodies which will be endowed with four gifts:

(a) **Brilliance.**—“Then shall the just shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” [Mt 13:43].

(b) **Impassibility** (i.e., Incapability of Receiving Action).—“It is sown in dishonor; it shall rise in glory.” [1 Cor 15:43] “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more. Nor mourning, nor crying, nor sorrow shall be anymore, for the former things are passed away” [Rev 21:4].

(c) **Agility.**—“The just shall shine and shall run to and fro like sparks among the reeds” [Wis 3:7].

(d) **Subtily.**—“It is sown a natural body; it shall rise a spiritual body” [1 Cor 15:44]. This is in the sense of not being altogether a spirit, but that the body will be wholly subject to the spirit.

Condition of the damned

It must also be known that the **condition of the damned will be the exact contrary to that of the blessed.** Theirs is the state of eternal punishment, which has a fourfold evil condition. **The bodies of the damned will not be brilliant:** “Their countenances shall be as faces burnt” [Is 13:8]. **Likewise they shall be passible,** because they shall never deteriorate and, although burning eternally in fire, they shall never be consumed: “Their worm shall not die and their fire shall not be quenched” [Is 66:24]. **They will be weighed down,** and the soul of the damned will be as it were chained therein: “To bind their kings with fetters, and their nobles with manacles of iron” [Ps 149:8]. **Finally, they will be in a certain manner fleshly both in soul and body:** “The beasts have rotted in their dung” [Joel 1:17].

End