



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

"He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God,
the Father Almighty."



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.

“He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.”

Besides the resurrection of Christ, we must also believe in **His ascension**; for He ascended into heaven on the fortieth day. Hence, the Creed says: “He ascended into heaven.” Concerning this we ought to observe three things, viz., **that it was sublime, reasonable, and beneficial.**

It was certainly sublime that Christ ascended into heaven. This is expounded in three ways. **Firstly**, He ascended above the physical heaven: “He... ascended above all the heavens” [Eph 4:10]. **Secondly**, He ascended above all the spiritual heavens, i.e., spiritual natures: “Raising [Jesus] up from the dead and setting Him on His right hand in the heavenly places. Above all principality and power and virtue and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come. And He subjected all things under His feet” [Eph 1:20-22]. **Thirdly**, He ascended up to the very throne of the Father: “Lo, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven. And He came to the Ancient of days” [Dan 7:13]. “And the Lord Jesus, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven and sat at the right hand of God” [Mk 16:19]. Now, it is not to be taken in the literal sense, but figuratively, that Christ is at the right hand of God. Inasmuch as Christ is God, He is said to sit at the right hand of the Father, that is, in equality with the Father; and as Christ is man, He sits at the right hand of the Father, that is, in a more preferable place. The devil once feigned to do this: “I will ascend above the height of the clouds. I will be like the Most High” [Is 14:13-14]. But Christ alone succeeded in this, and so it is said: “He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father.” “The Lord said to my Lord: Sit You at My right hand” [Ps 109:1].

The Ascension of Christ into heaven is in accord with reason:

(1) Because heaven was due to Christ by His very nature. It is natural for one to return to that place from whence he takes his origin. The beginning of Christ is from God, who is above all things: “I came forth from the Father and am come into the world; again I leave the world and I go to the Father” [Jn 16:28]. “No man ascended into heaven, but He who descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven.” [Jn 3:13] The just ascend into heaven, but not in the manner that Christ ascended, i.e., by His own power; for they are taken up by Christ: “Draw me, we will run after You” [Sg 1:3]. Or, indeed, we can say that no man but Christ has ascended into heaven, because the just do not ascend except in so far as they are the members of Christ who is the head of the Church. “Wherever the body shall be, there shall the eagles also be gathered together” [Mt 24:28].

(2) Heaven is due to Christ because of His victory. For He was sent into the world to combat the devil, and He did overcome him. Therefore, Christ deserved to be exalted above all things: “I also have overcome and am set down with My Father in His throne” [Rev 3:21].

(3) The Ascension is reasonable because of the humility of Christ. There never was humility so great as that of Christ, who, although He was God, yet wished to become man; and although He was the Lord, yet wished to take the form of a servant, and, as St. Paul says: “He was made obedient unto death” [Phil 2:8], and descended even into the underworld. For this He deserved to be exalted even to heaven and to the throne of God, for humility leads to exaltation: “He who humbles himself shall be exalted” [Lk 14:11]. “He who descended is the same also who ascended above all the heavens” [Eph 4:10].

The Ascension of Christ was very beneficial for us. This is seen three ways. **Firstly**, as our Leader, because He ascended in order to lead us; for we had lost the way, but He has shown it to us. “For He who opens the breach shall go up before them” [Micah 2:13]. and thus we may be made certain of possessing the heavenly kingdom: “I go to prepare a place for you” [Jn 14:2]. **Secondly**, that He might draw our hearts to Himself: “For where your treasure is, there is your heart so” [Mt 6:21]. **Thirdly**, to let us withdraw from worldly things: “Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth” [Col 3:1].