

## The Ecumenical Creeds

Our English word “ecumenical” derives from the Greek word *oikoumenikos*, which means “world-wide.” The three ancient creedal statements given below are called “ecumenical” because the teachings in them have been affirmed by Christians all over the world, whether they be in Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, or Protestant churches.

### Symbolum Apostolorum

Latin text from Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, p. 45.

Credo in Deum Patrem omnipotentem,  
Creatorem caeli et terrae.

Et in Iesum Christum, Filium eius unicum,  
Dominum nostrum, qui conceptus est de  
Spiritu Sancto, natus ex Maria Virgine,  
passus sub Pontio Pilato, crucifixus,  
mortuus, et sepultus, descendit ad inferna,  
tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad  
caelos, sedet ad dexteram Dei Patris  
omnipotentis, inde venturus est iudicare  
vivos et mortuos.

Credo in Spiritum Sanctum, sanctam  
Ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum  
communione, remissionem peccatorum,  
carnis resurrectionem, vitam aeternam.  
Amen.

### Symbolum Nicæno-Constantinopolitanum

Latin text from The Canons and Decrees of the  
Council of Trent, as given in Schaff, *Creeds of  
Christendom*, vol. 2, p. 58.

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem  
omnipotentem, factorem caeli et terrae,  
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

Et in unum Dominum Iesum Christum,  
Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum  
ante omnia saecula. Deum de Deo, Lumen  
de Lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero,  
genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri;  
per quem omnia facta sunt. Qui propter nos

### The Apostles' Creed

English text from *The Common Service Book of the  
Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia, 1917), p. 17.

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

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born  
of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius  
Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He  
descended into hell; the third day He rose  
again from the dead; He ascended into  
heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God  
the Father Almighty; from thence He shall  
come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy  
Christian Church, the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of  
the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

### The Nicæno-Constantinopolitan Creed

English text from *The Common Service Book of the  
Lutheran Church* (Philadelphia, 1917), p. 16.

I 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, 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; who

homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis. Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est. Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato, passus et sepultus est, et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas, et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris. Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos, cuius regni non erit finis.

for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of 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 on 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.

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre Filioque procedit. Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur: qui locutus est per prophetas. Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam. Confiteor unum baptismum in remissionem peccatorum. Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum, et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### Greek Text of the Nicæno-Constantinopolitan Creed

According to Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, pp. 57-8.

Πιστευομεν εις ενα θεον πατερα παντοκρατορα, ποιητην ουρανου και γης, ορατων τε παντων και αορατων.

Και εις ενα κυριον Ιησουν Χριστον, τον υιον του θεου τον μονογενη, τον εκ του πατρος γεννηθεντα προ παντων των αιωνων, φως εκ φωτος, θεον αληθινον εκ θεου αληθινου, γεννηθεντα, ου ποιηθεντα, ομοουσιον τω πατρι· δι ου τα παντα εγενετο· τον δι ημας τους ανθρωπους και δια την ημετερας σωτηριαν κατελθοντα εκ των ουρανων και σαρκωθεντα εκ πνευματος αγιου και Μαρίας της παρθενου και ενανθρωπησαντα, σταυρωθεντα τε υπερ ημων επι Ποντιου Πιλατου, και πανθοντα και ταφεντα, και ανασταντα τη τριτη ημερα κατα τας γραφας, και ανελθοντα εις τους ουρανους, και καθεζομενον εκ δεξιων του πατρος, και παλιν ερχομενον μετα δοξης κριναι ζωντας και νεκρους· ου της βασιλειας ουκ εσται τελος.

Και εις το πνευμα το αγιον, το κυριον, (και) το ζωοποιον, το εκ του πατρος εκπορευομενον, το συν πατρι και υιω συν προσκυνουμενον και συνδοξαζομενον, το λαλησαν δια των προφητων· εις μιαν, αγιαν, καθολικην και αποστολικην εκκλησιαν· ομολογουμεν εν βαπτισμα εις αφεσιν αμαρτιων· προσδοκωμεν αναστασιν νεκρων, και ζωην του μελλοντος αιωνος. Αμην.

Symbolum Quicumque

Latin text from Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, p. 66.

Quicumque vult salvus esse: ante omnia opus est, ut teneat catholicam fidem. Quam nisi quisque integram inviolatamque servaverit: absque dubio in æternum peribit

Fides autem catholica hæc est: ut unum Deum in Trinitate, et Trinitatem in Unitate veneremur;

Neque confundentes personas: neque substantiam separantes.

Alia est enim persona Patris: alia Filii: alia Spiritus Sancti.

Sed Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti una est divinitas: æqualis gloria, coæterna maiestas.

Qualis Pater: talis Filius: talis Spiritus Sanctus.

Increatus Pater: increatus Filius: increatus Spiritus Sanctus.

Immensus Pater: immensus filius: immensus Spiritus Sanctus.

Æternus Pater: æternus Filius: æternus Spiritus Sanctus.

Et tamen non tres æterni: sed unus æternus.

Sicut non tres increati: nec tres immensi: sed unus increatus: et unus immensus.

Similiter omnipotens Pater: omnipotens Filius: omnipotens Spiritus Sanctus.

Et tamen non tres omnipotentes: sed unus omnipotens.

Ita deus Pater: deus Filius: deus Spiritus Sanctus.

Et tamen non tres dii: sed unus est Deus.

Ita dominus Pater: dominus Filius: dominus Spiritus Sanctus.

Et tamen non tres domini: sed unus Dominus.

The Athanasian Creed

English text from Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, p. 66.

Whosoever will be saved: before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic Faith: Which Faith except every one 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 coeternal.

Such as the Father is: such is the Son: and such is the Holy Ghost.

The Father uncreate: the Son uncreate: and the Holy Ghost uncreate.

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 eternal: but one eternal.

As also there are not three uncreated: nor three incomprehensibles, 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.

Quia sicut singulatim unamquamque personam Deum ac Dominum confiteri, Christiana veritate compellimur: Ita tres deos, aut tres dominos dicere, catholica religione prohibemur.

Pater a nullo est factus: nec creatus, nec genitus.

Filius a Patre solo est: non factus, nec creatus: sed genitus.

Spiritus Sanctus a Patre et filio: non factus, nec creatus, nec genitus: sed procedens.

Unus ergo Pater, non tres patres: unus Filius, non tres filii: unus Spiritus Sanctus, non tres spiritus sancti.

Et in hac Trinitate nihil prius, aut posterius: nihil maius, aut minus.

Sed totæ tres personæ coæternæ sibi sunt, et coæquales.

Ita, ut per omnia, sicut iam supra dictum est: et Unitas in Trinitate, et Trinitas in Unitate, veneranda sit.

Qui vult ergo salvus esse, ita de Trinitate sentiat.

Sed necessarium est ad æternam salutem: ut incarnationem quoque Domini nostri Iesu Christi fideliter credat.

Est ergo fides recta, ut credamus et confiteamur: quod Dominus noster Iesus Christus Dei Filius, Deus et homo est; Deus ex substantia Patris, ante secula genitus: et homo ex substantia matris, in seculo natus.

Perfectus Deus: perfectus homo, ex anima rationali et humana carne subsistens.

Aequalis Patri secundum divinitatem: minor Patre secundum humanitatem.

Qui licet Deus sit et homo; non duo tamen, sed unus est Christus.

Unus autem, non conversione divinitatis in carnem: sed assumptione humanitatis in Deum.

Unus omnino; non confusione substantiæ: sed unitate personæ.

Nam sicut anima rationalis et caro unus est

For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity: to acknowledge every Person by himself to be 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 another: none is greater, or less than another.

But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal.

So that in all things, as aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshiped.

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 Iesus Christ.

For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess: that our Lord Iesus 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

homo: ita Deus et homo unus est Christus.  
Qui passus est pro nostra salute: descendit  
ad inferos: tertia die resurrexit a mortuis.

Ascendit ad cælos: sedet ad dexteram Dei  
Patris omnipotentis.  
Inde venturus iudicare vivos et mortuos.

Ad cuius adventum omnes homines  
resurgere habent cum corporibus suis;  
Et redditori sunt de factis propriis rationem.  
Et qui bona egerunt, ibunt in vitam æternam:  
qui vero mala, in ignem æternum.

Hæc est fides catholicæ: quam nisi quisque  
fideliter firmiterque crediderit, salvus esse  
non poterit.

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 can not be saved.

Although the “definition of Chalcedon” is not as well known as the three creeds given above, it does have a similar ecumenical character, and it is often mentioned in connection with them.

### Symbolum Chalcedonense

Latin text according to Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, p. 63.

Sequentes igitur sanctos patres, unum eundemque confiteri Filium et Dominum nostrum Jesum Christum consonanter omnes docemus, eundem perfectum in deitate et eundem perfectum in humanitate; Deum verum et hominem verum eundem ex anima rationali et corpore; consubstantialem Patri secundum deitatem, consubstantialem nobis eundem secundum humanitatem; ‘per omnia nobis similem, absque peccato’ (Heb. iv.): ante secula quidem de Patre genitum secundum deitatem; in novissimis autem diebus eundem propter nos et propter nostram salutem ex Maria virgine, Dei genitrice secundum humanitatem; unum eundemque Christum, filium, Dominum, unigenitum, in duabus naturis inconfuse, immutabiliter, indivise, inseparabiliter

### The Definition of Chalcedon

English text from Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 2, p. 62.

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means

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agnoscendum: nusquam sublata differentia naturarum propter unionem, magisque salva proprietate utriusque naturae, et in unam personam atque subsistentiam concurrente: non in duos personas partitum aut divisum, sed unum eundemque Filium et unigenitum, Deum verbum, Dominum Jesum Christum; sicut ante prophetae de eo et ipse nos Jesus Christus erudivit et patrum nobis symbolum tradidit.

taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.