

## Preaching the Nicene Creed

### *Homily Helps*

The following material is provided for the Year of Faith to assist the homilist in preaching the Nicene Creed. The material is organized around the twelve articles of faith of the Creed beginning with a general introduction. This content does not provide anything new to the homilist but is meant to catechize those to whom we preach. These helps are meant to provide the faithful with, or remind them of, the fundamental truths of our faith. The homilist may want to utilize the ideas and quotes presented for twelve or more homilies. (More than one homily can be developed from any one of the twelve articles.) Homilies on the Creed can be delivered consecutively for twelve or more Sundays or delivered on a monthly basis during the Year of Faith. Sources are provided in the appendix with reference to the source in the text. The quoted material provides only the idea contained in that area of the particular source. The theme can be expanded by going directly to the source of the quote. A reminder: the Catechism of the Catholic Church focuses on the Apostles Creed which makes the language of the articles slightly different from the Nicene Creed.

#### I Introduction

- A. “The word creed comes into English from a Latin verb meaning ‘to believe’. A creed is a statement or list of beliefs. The idea most closely linked to a creed is faith in it.” (TFFB p. 9) “Professions of faith are called ‘creeds’ on account of what is usually their first word in Latin: credo (‘I believe’).” (CCC 187)
- B. The Nicene Creed serves four main functions. (TFFB p. 13)
  - a. It is **confessional**. By saying “I believe” the person commits him/herself to what the Creed says. While “faith is a personal act –the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself...faith is not an isolated act.” (CCC 166) We all have received the faith from others, parents, grandparents, teachers, etc. “No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith as you have not given yourself life. The believer has received faith from others and should hand it on to others. Our love for Jesus and for our neighbor impels us to speak to others about our faith. Each believer is thus a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by my faith I help support others in the faith.” (CCC 166) “Whoever says ‘I believe’ says ‘I pledge myself to what we believe. Communion in faith needs a common language of faith, normative for all and uniting all in the same confession of faith.” (CCC 185)
  - b. It is **liturgical**. “Recitation of the Creed is an act of worship. It is part of the liturgy of baptism, where the candidate professes a personal faith, and, part of the Eucharistic assembly, where the entire Church gathers to commune with God.” (TFFB p. 13)
  - c. It is **symbolic**. “A symbol of faith is a summary of the principal truths of the faith and therefore serves as the first and fundamental point of reference for

catechesis.” “In the early Church, catechumens had to learn the Creed and recite it to the bishop before he would baptize them.” (TFFB p. 14)

- d. It is **normative**. “The Creed is a ‘rule of faith’ in two senses. One, it *defines* the faith by including what Christians believe and excluding what they do not. Two, it establishes boundaries for conduct. “In the Creed we state that we believe Jesus “will come to judge the living and the dead”. What effect does this have on our behavior? (TFFB p. 15)
- C. The homilist may wish to provide information on the calling of the Council at Nicaea in 325. “Arius taught the Son of God was not eternal like the Father. He attacked the divinity of Christ. He said Jesus was not of the same nature as the Father. Arius was excommunicated by the Egyptian bishops in 319, but simply went elsewhere and gathered followers including other bishops. The bishops at the Council of Nicaea responded by stating that Jesus was of the same nature as the Father and therefore eternal. Unfortunately, the matter didn’t end there. Supported by the Arian emperor, Arianism nearly overwhelmed Christianity. In 381 the Catholic emperor called a council in Constantinople to resolve the matter. For two months 150 Eastern bishops, see below, worked to strengthen the creed of Nicaea. It is essentially the version we use today. (TFFB p. 26) “The Niceno-Constantinopolitan or Nicene Creed draws its great authority from the fact that it stems from the first two ecumenical Councils (in 325 and 381). It remains common to all the great Churches of both East and West to this day.” (CCC 195)
- D. “The Nicene Creed expands the Apostles’ Creed. “ The former was “hammered out in the heat of battle and over a longer period of time.” (TFFB p. 25)
  - a. *They arrived at the Council (of Constantinople in 381) bearing the scars of ‘persecutions, afflictions, imperial threats, cruelty from officials, and whatever other trial’ the Arian troublemakers could inflict upon them. They carried around on their bodies ‘the marks of Christ’s wounds and bruises’. They had endured financial loss, fines, confiscation of property, imprisonment, and other outrages. Despite these injuries-perhaps because of them-these bishops met to clarify and reinforce the First Council of Nicaea held fifty-six years earlier. You know the Nicene Creed we recite at Sunday Mass? Well, that statement of faith is the result of these bishops gathered in council.* (TFFB p. 16 quoting Tanner)
- E. The words of the Nicene Creed are very important. People gave their lives that we may have the truth of the faith handed on to us.

## Article One of the Nicene Creed

*I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.*

- I The confession of God's oneness has its roots in the divine revelation of the Old Covenant. (CCC 200) To Israel God revealed himself as the only One:
- A. "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone! Therefore, you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your strength." (Deut. 6: 4-5)
  - B. "Turn to me and be safe, all you ends of the earth, for I am God; there is no other!" (Isa. 45: 22-24)
  - C. Jesus affirms that "The Lord our God is Lord alone!" (Mk. 12: 29) "Faith in God comes first because God comes first." (CC p. 32.1)
  - D. While Israel believed in one God they struggled to free themselves from the worship of other gods, i.e. Maccabean soldiers carrying charms of foreign gods into battle. (TFFB p. 32)
  - E. "For Judaism and Islam, God's singleness is at the core of God, unlike Christianity's belief in a triune God... For both Judaism and Islam, 'one God' means that God is alone. Not only is there no one like him, but he is himself, solitary, eternally apart, completely other." (TFFB p. 33)
  - F. "For Christians there is one God, but the one God is made up of three distinct Persons. Through Jesus Christ, the oneness of God is revealed differently than in Judaism and Islam. God's oneness has a three-ness about it." (TFFB p. 33) We bless ourselves with a Trinitarian formula to begin and end the celebration of Holy Mass. We are baptized by this formula since it was revealed to us by Jesus. (Mt. 28:19) "The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life. It is the mystery of God in himself." (CCC 234) The doctrine of the Trinity reveals "the nature of God". (CC p. 39.12) "Other mysteries of our faith tell us what God has done in time (the creation, the Incarnation, the Resurrection), but the Trinity tells us what God is in eternity.) (CC p. 40.12)
  - G. "God revealed himself progressively and under different names to his people, but the revelation that proved to be the fundamental one for both the Old and New Covenants was the revelation of the divine name to Moses..." (CCC 204) In revealing his mysterious name YHWH ('I AM HE WHO IS,' 'I AM WHO AM' or 'I AM WHO I AM'), God says who he is and by what name he is to be called." (CCC 206)

- II        “Many religions invoke God as ‘Father’. In Israel, God is called ‘Father’ inasmuch as he is Creator of the world. Even more, God is Father because of the covenant and the gift of the law to Israel...Most especially he is ‘the Father of the poor,’ of the orphaned and the widowed, who are under his loving protection.” (CCC 238)
- A. By calling God ‘Father,’ two main things are indicated:” that God is the first origin of everything and transcendent authority; and that he is at the same time goodness and loving care for all his children.” CCC 239)
- B. “Of all the names for God that are human analogies, the primary one is ‘Father’”. (CC p. 39.11)
- C. “Jesus revealed that God is Father in an unheard-of sense: he is Father not only in being Creator; he is eternally Father in relation to his only Son, who is eternally Son only in relation to his Father: ‘No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and any one to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.’ ( Mt. 11: 27, CCC 240) Jesus taught us to call God “Our Father” in prayer. “When Jesus, the Son, describes his Father in the Gospels, he uses a language of relationship, not biology. The Father is not older than the Son, since the Son was with the Father ‘in the beginning’ (John 1:2).” (TFFB p. 35)
- III        “‘In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.’ Holy Scripture begins with these solemn words. The Apostles Creed states that God the Father almighty is ‘Creator of heaven and earth.’” (CCC 279) “Creation is the foundation of ‘all God’s saving plans,’ the ‘beginning of the history of salvation’ that culminate in Christ.” (CCC 280) “God simply spoke and the universe was created.” (TFFB p. 38)
- A. “If God created the universe, then the universe is really real, true, good beautiful, and one. It is true-orderly and intelligible-for it came, not from mindless chance, but from divine wisdom. Thus the doctrine of creation is the strongest basis for natural science. It is good and valuable and to be appreciated and cared for, for ‘God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.’” (CC p. 46.4)
- B. “God had no need to create. He was not lonely or bored or incomplete. ‘God created all things not to increase his glory [for that is impossible] but to show it forth and to communicate it.’” (CC p. 48.7, CCC 293)

IV        God creates “all things visible and invisible.” “This definition is important for modern Christians. Ancient people had no problem believing in spiritual realities-heaven, hell, angels, demons, and the immortality of the human soul. Most ancients not only believed in the reality of spirits, but they thought (as Plato did) that such things were more ‘real’ and more important than physical realities. But they had trouble believing that the physical creation was good and created by the same God who created the spiritual realm. By contrast, modern people tend to have difficulty believing that spiritual beings exist at all. Our modern scientific society tends to scoff at the idea of angels and demons. Technology and the advancements of science have wrongly convinced many that ‘what you see is what you get’-that the material realm of the five senses is all that exists. The Creed, then, has opened a new world to modern man, in stark contrast to the world portrayed by our secular and material society.” (TFFB p. 40)

## Article Two of the Nicene Creed

*I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages.*

- I 

“In the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the ineffable Hebrew name YHWH, by which God revealed himself to Moses, is rendered as Kyrios, ‘Lord.’ From then on, ‘Lord’ becomes the more usual name by which to indicate the divinity of Israel’s God. The New Testament uses this full sense of the title ‘Lord’ both for the Father and-what is new-for Jesus, who is thereby recognized as God Himself.” (CCC 446)

  - A. “Very often in the Gospels people address Jesus as ‘Lord’. This title testifies to the respect and trust of those who approach him for help and healing. In the encounter with the risen Jesus, this title becomes adoration; ‘My Lord and my God!’ It thus takes on a connotation of love and affection that remains proper to the Christian tradition: ‘It is the Lord.’” (CCC 448) “Jesus Christ is Lord (Phil. 2: 11) is probably the earliest and shortest Christian Creed.” (CC p. 73.13)
  - B. “By attributing to Jesus the divine title ‘Lord,’ the first confessions of the Church’s faith affirm from the beginning that the power, honor, and glory due to God the Father are due also to Jesus because ‘he was in the form of God’...” (CCC 449)
  - C. Christ has lordship over the world and over history. “Caesar is not ‘the Lord.’ The center and purpose of man’s history is found in the Lord. (CCC 450)
  - D. Our prayers use this title especially in the celebration of Holy Mass. At the beginning, “The Lord be with You.” At the end, “Through Christ our Lord or “through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
- II 

“Jesus in Hebrew means ‘God saves.’ At the annunciation the angel gave him the name Jesus as his proper name, which expresses both his identity and his mission. Since God alone can forgive sins, it is God who, in Jesus his eternal Son made man, ‘will save his people from their sins.’” (CCC 430) “Joseph learned in a dream that Mary’s child would be called Jesus, because he would save his people from their sins (Matt. 1: 21).” (TFFB p. 43)

  - A. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew word Yeshua and was the name of the Old Testament hero Joshua.
  - B. “*The Hail Mary* reaches its high point in the words ‘blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.’ The Eastern prayer of the heart, the *Jesus Prayer*, says: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ Many Christians, such as St. Joan of Arc, have died with the one word ‘Jesus’ on their lips.” (CCC 435)

- III      “The word ‘Christ’ comes from the Greek (Christos) translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, which means anointed. It is not Jesus’ last name but his title.” (TFFG p. 43)
- A.      “The New Testament shows Jesus being very careful about revealing his identity, yet he praised Peter for recognizing him as the Messiah. And he acknowledged it before his Jewish and Roman captors. At Pentecost, Peter announced that Jesus was both Lord and Christ.” (TFFB p. 43)
- B.      “To the shepherds, the angel announced the birth of Jesus as the Messiah promised to Israel: ‘To you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord’” (CCC 438)
- IV      “In John’s Gospel we see what ‘begetting’ means. Harking back to the Genesis story of creation, John places the Word (Jesus) ‘in the beginning’, that is, before the creation of the universe: ‘The Word was with God.’ John twice identifies that Word as the only begotten Son who ‘was coming’ into time, taking on human flesh-human nature. The Son’s ‘begetting’ is eternal-or, according to a literal translation of the Greek, ‘out of the Father before all eons.’ From all eternity and without a starting point the Son is generated, begotten from the Father. A human son has a starting point from which he begins to exist. Not so for the Son of God. The Son is before all things.” (TFFB p. 45-46)
- A.      “Son of God” as a title is used in many different ways in the Old Testament. (CCC 441) At the Baptism of Our Lord and the Transfiguration of Christ, the voice of the Father says Jesus is his ‘beloved Son’. Jesus refers to himself as the “only Son of God.” (Jn. 3: 16; cf. 10: 36, CCC 444) (See CCC 441, 442, 444, 445 for more examples.)

### Article Three of the Nicene Creed

*God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made.*

- I        “The New testament insists that Jesus of Nazareth is God. John begins his Gospel with ‘the word was God’ and ends with Doubting Thomas’s words ‘My Lord and my God!’ (John 20: 28). A mere twenty years after the Resurrection, Paul can write to ‘the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ’ (1 Thess. 1: 1), where Paul places Jesus on the same level as the Father. ‘For us,’ he writes the Corinthians, ‘there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist’ (1 Cor. 8:6). (TFFB p. 46)
  - A.        “Jesus is ‘in the form of God’” (Phil. 2:6).
  - B.        “Jesus is the image of God in the flesh, and all the fullness of God dwells in him (Col. 1: 19; 2:9).”
  - C.        In reference to Jesus St. John writes in the book of Revelations “I am the first and I am the Last; besides me there is no God.” In writing this St. John is quoting the prophet Isaiah who was referring to Yahweh. (Is. 44:6 cf. Rev. 1:8; 2:16; 22: 13). (TFFB p. 47)
- II        The early Church Fathers claimed Jesus is God.
  - A.        “Jesus Christ our God.” Ignatius of Antioch, early second century. (TFFB p. 47)
  - B.        “Jesus Christ our Lord and God. What cannot be said of anyone else who ever lived, that he is himself in his own right God and Lord...may be seen by all who have attained to even a small portion of the truth.” Irenaeus of Lyons, 189 A.D. (TFFB p. 47)
  - C.        Jesus is both “man and God.” Tertullian, 210 A.D. (TFFB p. 47)
  - D.        “Although he was God, he took flesh and having been made man, he remained what he was : God.” Origen. (TFFB p. 47)
  - E.        Before the Nicene Creed was written we thus have a long tradition, both from scripture and the Church Fathers teaching that Jesus the Son is God.
- III        The Arians challenged this tradition. They agreed Jesus was “God from God, light from light” but they placed him lower than the Father, not on the same level or tier with the Father. Consequently, the Creed then proclaims “true God from true God”. Here the Arians could not agree since this placed Jesus on the same level as the Father. “To emphasize that the Son is not a creature, the Creed adds ‘begotten, not made.’” (TFFB p. 47)

- A. To this point the Creed “sticks to biblical language. {Now} the Creed departs from biblical terminology to deal with Arianism on its own terms-using the word *consubstantial*, or ‘one in being’- because Arius taught that the Son is a creature, not like or of the same ‘substance’ as the Father, and that there had to be a time when he did not exist.” (TFFB p. 47)  
 Consubstantial is a philosophical term used by the bishops at the Council of Nicea to correct a distortion of the Arians.
- IV Through Jesus all things were made. This claim of the Creed countered the Arian belief that Jesus was one of the things created as part of creation. The bishops went back to St. Paul who in his letter to the Colossians says, “In him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities-all things were created through him and for him” (Col. 1: 16). Therefore Jesus existed before all things were created and cannot be one of the things created. (TFFB p. 49)
- A. “All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1: 3).
- B. “The Son, through whom creation is made bears ‘the very stamp; of God’s nature (Heb. 1: 3) and is eternal (Heb. 1: 8-12). (TFFB p. 49)
- V All of the above had to be balanced by the equal truth that Jesus “became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man.” (CCC 464) “The Church thus confesses that Jesus is inseparably true God and true man. He is truly the Son of God who, without ceasing to be God and Lord, became a man and our brother: ‘What he was, he remained and what he was not, he assumed,’ sings the Roman Liturgy.” (CCC 469 citing the Antiphon for Morning Prayer; cf. St. Leo the Great)

## Article Four of the Nicene Creed

*For us men and our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*

- I “The Psalms are filled with pleas for God to come down and save mankind.” (Ps. 14: 7, Ps. 144: 5, Ps. 80: 2). Yet are we even worthy? “What is man that thou are mindful of him, and the son of man that thou dost care for him?” (Ps. 8:4) The Psalmist knows that he needs salvation because of his sin, which is too heavy for him to bear (Ps. 51: 1-3); he is a worm (Ps. 22:6) and despised (Ps. 119: 141), yet God notices him (Ps. 138; 139) How do we rate on this very small planet? (TFFB p. 50)
- A. Why God became man? Four reasons given in the CCC. “The Word became flesh for us **in order to save us** by reconciling us with God, who ‘loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins’: ‘the Father has sent his Son as the Savior of the world,’ and ‘he was revealed to take away our sins.’” (CCC 457)
- B. The meaning of the Incarnation: “It means that the second Person of the eternal Trinity, who is called the ‘Word’ of God (Jn. 1: 1-3), became ‘flesh’ (Jn. 1: 14), that is, added our human nature (body and soul) to his divine nature some two thousand years ago and was called ‘Jesus’”. (CC p. 70.7)
- C. “The Word became flesh so that thus **we might know God’s love**: ‘In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him’. (1 Jn. 4:9) ‘For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.’” (Jn. 3: 16) (CCC 458)
- D. “The Word became flesh **to be our model of holiness**: ‘Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me.’ ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but by me.’ (Mt. 11: 29; Jn. 14: 6) On the mountain of the Transfiguration, the Father commands: ‘Listen to him!’ (Mk. 9: 7) Jesus is the model for the Beatitudes and the norm of the new law: ‘Love one another as I have loved you.’” (Jn. 15: 12) (CCC 459)
- E. “The Word became flesh **to make us ‘partakers of the divine nature.**’ (2 Pet. 1: 4) ‘The only-begotten Son of God, wanting to make us sharers in his divinity, assumed our nature, so that he, made man, might make men gods.” (St. Thomas Aquinas) (CCC 460)

- F. "People reciting the Creed used to kneel briefly {at the above words of this article of the Creed} while today we still bow our heads." We do this because of the amazing event and mystery of the Incarnation. "Belief in the true Incarnation of the Son of God is the distinctive sign of Christian faith: 'By this you know the Spirit of God' every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God. Such is the joyous conviction of the Church from her beginning whenever she sings 'the mystery of our religion': 'He was manifested in the flesh.'" (CCC 463)
  - G. "The Son is not part God and part man but 100 percent God and 100 percent man." (TFFB p. 53) See the CCC 464-472 for more historical information on the heresies of Gnosticism, Docetism, of Arius, Nestorius, Apollinarius and the Monophysites.
- II "The Annunciation to Mary inaugurates 'the fullness of time', the time of the fulfillment of God's promises and preparations." (CCC 484) "The mission of the Holy Spirit is always conjoined and ordered to that of the Son. The Holy Spirit, 'the Lord, the giver of Life,' is sent to sanctify the womb of the Virgin Mary." {Mary conceives the} 'eternal Son of the Father in a humanity drawn from her own." (CCC 485)
- A. "When Gabriel the archangel spoke to Mary, he used language that reminds us of 'the beginning' in Genesis: the Holy Spirit 'overshadowed' Mary just as he did the waters in the first creation (Luke 1: 35; cf. Gen. 1: 1-2). A new creation is coming about." (TFFB p. 53)
  - B. "God sent forth his Son, 'but to prepare a body for him he wanted free cooperation of a creature. For this, from all eternity God chose for the mother of his Son a daughter of Israel, a young Jewish woman of Nazareth in Galilee..." (CCC 488)
  - C. See the CCC for material on The Immaculate Conception, Mary's divine motherhood and Mary's virginity. (CCC 490-511)

## Article Five of the Nicene Creed (Two Parts)

### Part One

*For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried.*

- I “The Paschal mystery of Christ’s cross and Resurrection stands at the center of the Good News that the apostles, and the Church following them, are to proclaim to the world. God’s saving plan was accomplished ‘once for all’ by the redemptive death of his Son Jesus Christ.” (CCC 571)
  - A. “From the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry, certain Pharisees and partisans of Herod together with priests and scribes agree together to destroy him. (Mk. 3: 6; 14: 1). Because of certain of his acts-expelling demons, forgiving sins, healing on the Sabbath day, his novel interpretation of the precepts of the Law regarding purity, and his familiarity with tax collectors and public sinners, some ill-intentioned persons suspected Jesus of demonic possession. He is accused of blasphemy and false prophecy, religious crimes which the Law punished with death by stoning.” (CCC 574)
  - B. “In the eyes of many in Israel, Jesus seems to be acting against essential institutions of the Chosen People:
    - submission to the whole of the Law in its written commandments and, for the Pharisees, in the interpretation of oral tradition;
    - the centrality of the Temple at Jerusalem as the holy place where God’s presence dwells in a special way;
    - faith in the one God whose glory no man can share.” (CCC 576)
  - C. “[Jesus] demanded total commitment from his disciples, even above family ties or life itself (Matt. 10: 37-39). And he claimed the authority to interpret the covenant (Matt. 5-7) because he himself was the fulfillment of the law (Mark 1: 14-15): ‘Before Abraham was, I am’ (John 8: 58). Such claims eventually led to his crucifixion and death.” (TFFB p. 54-55)
    1. “Some early Christians held to wild speculations about Jesus’ death. Some said it was actually God the Father who suffered on the cross (the heresy of patripassianism) or that the divinity of Christ separated from his humanity at the last moment (because God cannot die) or that Jesus merely swooned on the cross and recovered after three days. The

crucifixion and death of Jesus is a historical event, attested to by non-scriptural documents. The Creed affirms that the second Person of the Trinity was crucified, actually died, and was buried.” (TFFB p. 55)

- D. “Among the religious authorities of Jerusalem, not only were the Pharisee Nicodemus and the prominent Joseph of Arimathea both secret disciples of Jesus, but there was also long-standing dissension about him, so much so that St. John says of these authorities on the very eve of Christ’s Passion, ‘many...believed in him,’ though very imperfectly.” (CCC 595) “The religious authorities in Jerusalem were not unanimous about what stance to take toward Jesus. (Jn. 9: 16, 10: 19) The Pharisees threatened to excommunicate his followers. The Sanhedrin having declared Jesus deserving of death as a blasphemer but having lost the right to put anyone to death, hands him over to the Romans, accusing him of political revolt, a charge that puts him in the same category as Barabbas who had been accused of sedition. The high priest also threatened Pilate politically so that he would condemn Jesus to death.” (CCC 596)
- E. “Jews are not collectively responsible for Jesus’ death.” (CCC 597)
- F. “ All sinners were the authors of Christ’s Passion.” (CCC 598)
- G. “Jesus’ violent death was not the result of chance in an unfortunate coincidence of circumstances, but is part of the mystery of God’s plan, as St. Peter explains to the Jews of Jerusalem in his first sermon on Pentecost” ‘This Jesus [was] delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God.’” (CCC 599) “The Scriptures had foretold this divine plan of salvation through the putting to death of ‘the righteous one, my Servant’ as a mystery of universal redemption, that is, as the ransom that would free men from the slavery of sin. Citing a confession of faith that he himself had ‘received,’ St. Paul professes that ‘Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures.’” (CCC 601)
- I. “Jesus freely accepted his Passion and death: ‘No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.’” (CCC 609) “At the Last Supper Jesus anticipated the free offering of his life”. He tells his apostles ‘This is my body which is given for you.’ ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.’” (CCC 610) He also prays to his Father asking, ‘if it be possible, let this cup pass from me...’ “Thus he expresses the horror that death represented for his human nature.” (CCC 612)
- J. “In his plan of salvation, God ordained that his Son should not only ‘die for our sins’ but should also ‘taste death,’ experience the condition of death, the

separation of his soul from his body, between the time he expired on the cross and the time he was raised from the dead.” (CCC 624)

- K. Baptism, especially immersion, “signifies the descent into the tomb by the Christian who dies to sin with Christ in order to live a new life.” (CCC 628)

### **Article Five of the Nicene Creed (Continued)**

#### Part Two

*And rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures*

- I “The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ, a faith believed and lived as the central truth by the first Christian community; handed on as fundamental by Tradition; established by the documents of the New Testament; and preached as essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross.” (CCC 638)
  - A. “The mystery of Christ’s resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. In about A.D. 56, St. Paul could already write to the Corinthians: ‘I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and 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...’ (1 Cor. 15: 3-4) The Apostle speaks here of the living tradition of the Resurrection which he had learned after his conversion at the gates of Damascus.” (CCC 639)
  - B. “Why do you seek the living among the dead: He is not here, but has risen. (Lk 24: 5-6) The first element we encounter in the framework of the Easter events is the empty tomb. It itself it is not a direct proof of the Resurrection; the absence of Christ’s body from the tomb could be explained otherwise. (Jn. 20: 13; Mt. 28: 11-15) Nonetheless the empty tomb was still an essential sign for all. Its discovery by the disciples was the first step toward recognizing the very fact of the Resurrection.” (CCC 640)
  - C. “Mary Magdalene and the holy women....were the first to encounter the Risen One. Thus the women were the first messengers of Christ’s Resurrection for the apostles themselves. They were the next to whom Jesus appears: first Peter, then the Twelve. Peter had been called to strengthen the faith of his brothers, and so sees the Risen One before them; it is on the basis of his testimony that the community exclaims: ‘The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!’” (CCC 641) “As witnesses of the Risen

One, [the apostles and Peter in particular] remain the foundation stones of his Church. The faith of the first community of believers is based on the witness of concrete men known to the Christians and for the most part still living among them. Peter and the Twelve are primary ‘witnesses to his Resurrection,’ but they are not the only ones – Paul speaks clearly of more than five hundred persons to whom Jesus appeared on a single occasion and also of James and of all the apostles.” (CCC 462)

- D. “Given all these testimonies, Christ’s Resurrection cannot be interpreted as something outside the physical order, and it is impossible not to acknowledge it as an historical fact. The shock provoked by the Passion was so great that at least some of the disciples did not at once believe in the news of the Resurrection. Far from showing us a community seized by a mystical exaltation, the Gospels present us with disciples demoralized and frightened. For they had not believed the holy women returning from the tomb and had regarded their words as an ‘idle tale.’ When Jesus reveals himself to the Eleven on Easter evening, ‘he upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they had not believed those who saw him after he had risen.’” (CCC 643) “Even when faced with the reality of the risen Jesus the disciples are still doubtful, so impossible did the thing seem: they thought they were seeing a ghost. ‘In their joy they were still disbelieving and still wondering.’ (Lk. 24: 38-41) Therefore the hypothesis that the Resurrection was produced by the apostles’ faith (or credulity) will not hold up. On the contrary their faith in the Resurrection was born, under the action of divine grace, from their direct experience of the reality of the risen Jesus.” (CCC 644)
- E. “This is concrete evidence, not abstract myth. The Resurrection did not come from the apostles’ faith; their faith came from the Resurrection. It was not some inner mystical experience. If Christ did not rise, then those who say he did – his apostles and the five hundred other witnesses – were not telling the truth. They either knew their story was untrue, or they did not. If they knew, they were deliberate liars, deceivers; if not, they were deceived. But liars do not suffer and die for a lie as they did; nothing proves sincerity like martyrdom. And if they were deceived rather than deceivers, they must have been hallucinating or projecting their subjective faith onto objective reality. But they had touched the risen Christ. He had eaten food. He had had long conversations with many men at the same time. He had been seen by all who were present, not just some. No hallucination in history ever behaved like that. And no hallucination every had such power to transform lives and to give love, joy, peace, hope, and meaning to millions of men for thousands of years. Pascal asks the simple question: ‘If Christ was not risen and present, who made the apostles act as they did?’” (CC p. 79.22)
- F. “Nothing more concretely and conclusively proves Christ’s divinity than his Resurrection. No one but God can conquer death. And no one but the One who can conquer death can conquer sin. We cannot be saved by a dead Savior. The difference the Resurrection makes is nothing less than this: our hope of salvation.” (CC p. 80.23)

“If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and our faith is in vain.” (1 Cor. 15: 14)

- G. “Christ’s Resurrection was not just a resuscitation, like the raising of Lazarus. For Christ rose with a new kind of body, ‘not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills’ (CCC 645). And this resurrection body can no longer die. This is the kind of body he promises us. We will have immortal bodies like his.” (CC p. 80.24)
- H. “The New Testament says Jesus was raised by the Father (Rom. 10: 9) and by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8: 11), but it also says that Jesus rose under his own power (Luke 24: 34; 1 Thess. 4: 14). The whole Trinity was involved.” (TFFB p. 57)
- I. “Christ’s Resurrection is the fulfillment of the promises both of the Old Testament and of Jesus himself during his earthly life. The phrase ‘in accordance with the Scriptures’ (Cf. 1 Cor. 15: 3-4) indicates that Christ’s Resurrection fulfilled these predictions.” (CCC 652)
- J. “The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life.” (CCC 654) (See this paragraph for more on “justification”).

## Article Six of the Nicene Creed

*He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.*

- I “Luke tells the story of the Ascension twice (Luke 24: 51; Acts 1: 9-11). Mark also mentions it (Mark 16: 19). Using parallel events, Luke connects the Ascension with the Resurrection: Two angels ask the disciples why they are staring up into heaven looking for Jesus just as two angels asked the women at the tomb why they sought Jesus among the dead (Luke 24: 5). Paul also mentions the Ascension (I Tim. 3: 16) and focuses on its meaning (Eph. 4: 8-10)” (TFFB p. 57-58).
- A. “So then the Lord Jesus, after he had spoken to them, was taken up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.” (Mk. 16: 19) “Christ’s body was glorified at the moment of his Resurrection, as proved by the new and supernatural properties it subsequently and permanently enjoys. His glory remains veiled under the appearance of ordinary humanity. Jesus’ final apparition ends with the irreversible entry of his humanity into divine glory, symbolized by the cloud and by heaven, where he is seated from that time forward at God’s right hand. Only in a wholly exceptional and unique way would Jesus show himself to Paul ‘as to one untimely born,’ in a last apparition that established him as an apostle.” (CCC 659)
- B. The CCC speaks of “a difference in manifestation” between the glory of risen Christ as seen by his disciples after the Resurrection and that of the exalted Christ in heaven. “The veiled character of the glory of the Risen One during this time is intimated in his mysterious words to Mary Magdalene: ‘I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to my brethren and say to them, I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’ This indicates a difference in manifestation between the glory of the risen Christ and that of Christ exalted to the Father’s right hand, a transition marked by the historical and transcendent event of the Ascension.” (CCC 660)
- C. The Ascension is linked to the Incarnation, his descent from heaven with his Ascension to heaven. “Only the one who ‘came from the Father’ can return to the Father: Christ Jesus. (Jn 16: 28) No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. (Jn. 3: 13; Eph. 4: 8-10) Left to its own natural powers humanity does not have access to the ‘Father’s house,’ to God’s life and happiness.” (Jn 14: 2) (CCC 661) Only Christ can open to us, his followers, heaven, giving us confidence that we can go where he has gone.
- D. The CCC connects Jesus lifted up on the cross with the Ascension. “And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” (Jn. 12: 32) “The lifting up of Jesus on the cross signifies and announces his lifting up by his Ascension into haven, and indeed begins it. “ (CCC 662) Jesus is in the presence

of God the Father on our behalf. (Heb. 9: 24) “There Christ permanently exercises his priesthood, for he ‘always lives to make intercession’ for ‘those who draw near to God through him.’” (CCC 662)

- E. “By ‘the Father’s right hand’ we understand the glory and honor of divinity, where he who exists as Son of God before all ages, indeed as God, of one being with the Father, is seated bodily after he became incarnate and his flesh was glorified.” (CCC 663) “Being seated at the Father’s right hand signifies the inauguration of the Messiah’s kingdom....After this event the Apostles become witnesses of the ‘kingdom [that] will have no end.’” (CCC 664)

## Article Seven of the Nicene Creed

*He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end.*

- I “As Lord, Christ is also head of the Church, which is his Body. Taken up to heaven and glorified after he had thus fully accomplished his mission, Christ dwells on earth in his Church. Though already present in his Church, Christ’s reign is nevertheless yet to be fulfilled ‘with power and great glory’ by the king’s return to earth. This reign is still under attack by the evil powers, even though they have been defeated definitively by Christ’s Passover. Until everything is subject to him, ‘until there be realized new heavens and a new earth in which justice dwells, the pilgrim Church, in her sacraments and institutions, which belong to this present age, carries the mark of this world which will pass, and she herself takes her place among the creatures which grown and travail yet and awaits the revelation of the sons of God.’” (CCC 670, 671)
- A. “Before his Ascension Christ affirmed that the hour had not yet come for the glorious establishment of the messianic kingdom awaited by Israel which, according to the prophets, was to bring all men the definitive order of justice, love and peace. According to the Lord, the present time is the time of the Spirit and of witness, but also a time still marked by ‘distress’ and the trial of evil which does not spare the Church and ushers in the struggles of the last days. It is a time of waiting and watching.” (CCC 672)
- B. “Since the Ascension Christ’s coming in glory has been imminent, even though ‘it is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has fixed by his own authority.’ (Acts 1: 7; Mk. 13: 32) (CCC 673) “The quantity of years between his first and second comings is irrelevant; the quality of this time is the point. We are now living in the ‘last hour’ (1 John 2: 18). The final age of the world is with us now, whether it lasts ten years or ten million. The most important event in history has already happened, the Incarnation, the First Coming, the event that divides all time into two, into B.C. (‘before Christ’) and A.D. (anno Domini, ‘in the year of our Lord’). Only one more Great Event will happen: his Second Coming. There will be no more Lords, no more revelations, no more Bibles, no more Churches, no more Saviors until the end of time. (CC 81.26)
- C. Before Christ’s second coming the Church must pass through a final trial that will shake the faith of many believers.” (CCC 675) The persecution will include ‘religious deception’ offering an apparent solution to man’s problems but require a denial of the truth. “The supreme religious deception is that of the Antichrist.” (CCC 675) See CCC 676 for more on “millenarianism.”
- D. “The Church will enter the glory of the kingdom only through this final Passover, when she will follow her Lord in his death and Resurrection. The kingdom will be fulfilled, then, not by a historic triumph of the Church through a progressive ascendancy, but

only by God's victory over the final unleashing of evil, which will cause his Bride to come down from heaven. God's triumph over the revolt of evil will take the form of the Last judgment after the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world." (CCC 677) "Scripture promises that this last age will not be one of sheer progress and goodness but will also be one of great evil and 'tribulation' (Jn. 16: 33), of spiritual warfare between the Spirit of Christ and the spirit of Antichrist (2 Thess. 2: 3-12; 1 Jn.2:18). All Christians now live in two worlds, two kingdoms: the world and the Church, the flesh and the spirit, 'the old man' and 'the new man' (Rom. 6: 6; Eph. 4: 22; Col. 3: 9), what St. Augustine called 'the City of the World; and 'the City of God.'" (CC 82.26)

- E. "Following in the steps of the prophets and John the Baptist, Jesus announced the judgment of the Last Day in his preaching. Then will the conduct of each one and the secrets of hearts be brought to light. Then will the culpable unbelief that counted the offer of God's grace as nothing be condemned. Our attitude about our neighbor will disclose acceptance or refusal of grace and divine love. On the last day Jesus will say: 'Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these brethren, you did it to me.'" (Mt. 25: 40) (CCC 678)
- F. "Christ is Lord of eternal life. Full right to pass definitive judgment on the works and hearts of men belongs to him as redeemer of the world. He 'acquired' this right by his cross. The Father has given 'all judgment to the Son.' Yet the Son did not come to judge, but to save and to give the life he has in himself. By rejecting grace in this life, one already judges oneself, receives according to one's works, and can even condemn oneself for all eternity by rejecting the Spirit of love." (CCC 679)
- G. The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation may be mentioned here for the CCC states when a sinner approaches this sacrament he "anticipates in a certain way the judgment to which he will be subjected at the end of his earthly life. For it is now, in this life, that we are offered the choice between life and death, and it is only by the road of conversion that we can enter the Kingdom, from which one is excluded by grave sin. In converting to Christ through penance and faith, the sinner passes from death to life and 'does not come into judgment.'" (Jn. 5: 24) (CCC 1470)
- H. Jesus promised he would return (Lk. 21: 27-28) and he keeps his promises. "One of the reasons the early Christians lived in such great hope and expectation was their faith in this promise". They saw a future of light and golden glory. (CC p. 81.26)
- I. The Last Things of particular judgment, heaven, purgatory, hell and Last Judgment will be covered in Article Twelve.

## Article Eight of the Nicene Creed

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.*

I “No one can say ‘Jesus is lord’ except by the Holy Spirit.” “...to be in touch with Christ, we must first have been touched by the Holy Spirit. By virtue of our Baptism, the first sacrament of the faith, the Holy Spirit in the Church communicates to us, intimately and personally, the life that originates in the Father and is offered to us in the Son. (CCC 683) “Through his grace, the Holy Spirit is the first to awaken faith in us and to communicate to us the new life, which is to ‘know the Father and the one whom he has sent, Jesus Christ.’ But the Spirit is the last of the persons of the Holy Trinity to be revealed. St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the Theologian, explains this progression in terms of pedagogy of divine ‘condescension’: *The Old Testament proclaimed the Father clearly, but the Son more obscurely. The New Testament revealed the Son and gave us a glimpse of the divinity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit dwells among us and grants us a clearer vision of himself. It was not prudent, when the divinity of the Father had not yet been confessed, to proclaim the Son openly and, when the divinity of the Son was not yet admitted, to add the Holy Spirit as an extra burden, to speak somewhat daringly....By advancing and progressing ‘from glory to glory’ the light of the Trinity will shine in ever more brilliant rays. (CCC 684)*

A. “To believe in the Holy Spirit is to profess that the Holy Spirit is one of the persons of the Holy Trinity.” (CCC 685) “The Spirit is not something vague and ethereal and abstract, like ‘the spirit of the times; or ‘the spirit of democracy’ or ‘school spirit.’ He is a Person. He is Almighty God.” (CC 85.2) “The Holy Spirit is at work with the Father and the Son from the beginning to the completion of the plan for our salvation.” (CCC 686) “The Bible begins with the presence of the Holy Spirit. In the beginning ‘the Spirit of God’ was moving over the face of the waters (Gen. 1: 2). By his word (which requires breath) and through his Spirit, Yahweh creates—he orders the chaos (PS. 33.6), and by his breath transforms lifeless dust into Man—a living soul (Gen. 2: 7). Human beings have life because the Spirit of God breathes life into them (Job 33: 4; Is. 57: 16). (TFFB p. 61-62) “When we breath, the air actually enters our lungs and becomes one with us. When the Spirit comes, he enters into us and becomes one with us. For this reason, he is not visible as an external object. He is also invisible because he is spirit, not matter, of course. He is within. He is too intimate, too close to see.” (TFFB p. 85.4)

- B. “The Church, a communion living in the faith of the apostles which she transmits, is the place where we know the Holy Spirit:
- in the Scriptures he inspired;
  - in the Tradition, to which the Church Fathers are always timely witnesses;
  - in the Church’s Magisterium, which he assists;
  - in the sacramental liturgy, through its words and symbols, in which the Holy Spirit puts us into communion with Christ;
  - in prayer, wherein he intercedes for us;
  - in the charisms and ministries by which the Church is built up;
  - in the signs of the apostolic and missionary life;
  - in the witness of saints through whom he manifests his holiness and continues the work of salvation.” (CCC 688)
- C. The Holy Spirit is inseparable from the Father and Son yet all three are distinct. “When the Father sends his Word, he always sends his Breath. To be sure, it is Christ who is seen, the visible image of the invisible God, but it is the Spirit who reveals him.” (CCC 689) “When Christ is finally glorified, he can in turn send the Spirit from his place with the Father to those who believe in him: he communicates to them his glory, that is, the Holy Spirit who glorifies him.” (CCC 690)
- D. “The term ‘Spirit’ translates the Hebrew word *ruah*, which, in its primary sense, means breath, air, wind. (CCC 691)
- E. Titles of the Holy Spirit
- Paraclete, advocate, consoler, Spirit of truth, Spirit of promise, Spirit of adoption, Spirit of Christ, Spirit of the Lord, Spirit of God and Spirit of Glory. (CCC 692-693)
- F. Symbols of the Holy Spirit
- Water, Anointing, Fire, Cloud and light, The Seal, The hand, The finger and The dove. (CCC 694-701)
- G. “Two prophetic lines were to develop, one leading to the expectation of the Messiah, the other pointing to the announcement of a new Spirit”. (CCC 711-716)
- H. The role of St. John the Baptist, who was ‘filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother’s womb’ (Lk. 1: 15, 41), by Christ himself, whom the Virgin Mary had just conceived by the Holy Spirit. Mary’s visitation to Elizabeth thus became a visit from God to his people.” (CCC 717) In John “the Holy Spirit completes the work of [making] ready a people prepared for the Lord.” (CCC 718) In John “the Holy Spirit concludes his speaking through the prophets. John completes the cycle of prophets begun by Elijah.” (CCC 719)

- I. Mary and the Holy Spirit (CCC 721-726)
- J. Jesus and the Holy Spirit (CCC 727-730) “Jesus does not reveal the Holy Spirit fully, until he himself has been glorified through his Death and Resurrection. Nevertheless, little by little he alludes to him...to the multitudes, to Nicodemus, to the Samaritan woman and to his disciples.” (CCC 728)
- K. The Spirit and the Church in the Last Days (CCC 731-747)
- L. “The Spirit of God fills the pages of the Old Testament. The Spirit typically appears as a force sent by Yahweh. Like wind parting the Red Sea (Ex. 14: 21) and moving God’s chariot (Ezek. 1: 4-20), the Spirit also breaths life into a field of dry bones (Ezek. 37: 1-14) and is detectible in quiet breezes (1 Kgs. 19: 11-12). Like fire, the Spirit guides and protects (Ex. 13: 21-22), consumes sacrifices (Gen. 15: 17; 1 Kgs. 18: 38), purifies the heart (Is. 6: 5-7; Mal. 3: 2-3) , and whisks saints to heaven (2 Kgs. 2: 11-13). And, like water flowing out of the temple, the Spirit sustains both trees and fish in the desert (Ezek. 47: 1-10). (TFFB p. 62)
- M. “The New Testament mentions the Holy Spirit more than 240 times.” (TFFB 63)  
 “The human writers of Scripture, after all, were only the secondary authors, the instruments. [The primary Author is the Spirit]. That is why Scripture has such a wonderful unity, though it is written by many different authors, with different personalities, issues, problems, presuppositions, limitations, times, places, and situations.” (CC p. 87.9)
- N. The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord. (CCC 1831) (Isa. 11: 1-2) These are permanent dispositions that make us docile to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. The traditional list is derived from Isaiah 11: 1-3. (CCC Glossary) The twelve fruits of the Holy Spirit: (CC 1832)

## Article Nine of the Nicene Creed

### *I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church*

- I “The word ‘Church’ (Latin *ecclesia*, from the Greek *ek-ka-lein*, to ‘call out of’) means a convocation or assembly...usually for a religious purpose.” (CCC 751) “In Christian usage, the word ‘church’ designates the liturgical assembly, but also the local community or the whole universal community of believers. These three meanings are inseparable. ‘The Church’ is the People that God gathers in the whole world. She exists in local communities and is made real as a liturgical, above all a Eucharistic, assembly. She draws her life from the word and the Body of Christ and so herself becomes Christ’s Body.” (CCC 752)
- A. For symbols of the Church, as sheepfold, as cultivated field, as the building of God, that Jerusalem above and our mother, see (CCC 753-757).
- B. ‘The Father...determined to call together in a holy Church those who should believe in Christ.’ (Lumen gentium, LG, CCC 759) “This family of God is gradually formed and takes shape during the stages of human history, in keeping with the Father’s plan. This Church was prepared in marvelous fashion in the history of the people of Israel...it will be brought to glorious completion at the end of time.” (CCC 759)
- C. “Christians of the first centuries said, ‘The world was created for the sake of the Church.’ God created the world for the sake of communion with his divine life, a communion brought about by the ‘convocation’ of men in Christ, and this ‘convocation’ is the Church. The Church is the goal of all things....” (CCC 760)
- D. “It was the Son’s task to accomplish the Father’s plan of salvation in the fullness of time. Its accomplishment was the reason for his being sent. The Lord Jesus inaugurated his Church by preaching the Good News, that is, the coming of the Reign of God....” (CCC 763, LG).
- E. “The Lord Jesus endowed his community with a structure that will remain until the Kingdom is fully achieved. Before all else there is the choice of the Twelve with Peter as their head.” (CCC 765)
- F. “The Church is in history, but at the same time she transcends it.” (CCC 770) The Church includes the faithful on earth, the saints in heaven and the souls being purified in purgatory.
- G. “The one mediator, Christ established and ever sustains here on earth his holy Church, the community of faith, hope and charity, as a visible organization through which he communicates truth and grace to all men.” (CCC 771) The Church is hierarchical, visible

and spiritual, human and divine.... (CCC 771) "It exists on two levels: a visible and a mystical, invisible reality." (TFFB p. 76)

H. The Church as the universal Sacrament of Salvation (CCC 774), People of God (CCC 781-786), Body of Christ (CCC 787-796), Temple of the Holy Spirit (797-801).

II One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic: "These four characteristics, inseparably linked with each other, indicate essential features of the Church and her mission. The Church does not possess them of herself; it is Christ who through the Holy Spirit, makes his Church one, holy, catholic, and apostolic, and it is he who calls her to realize each of these qualities." (CCC 811)

A. "The Church is one because of her source", i.e. "the unity in the Trinity of Persons." "The Church is one because of her founder: the Word made flesh; one because of her soul: the Holy Spirit. Unity is the essence of the Church" (CCC 813) "In 1980 David Barrett identified over 20,800 Christian denominations worldwide. By 2000, the number had increased to 33,820 denominations. While even Catholics often refer mistakenly to the Church as a denomination, it is not—it is the *Church*." (TFFB p.76-77)

B. While the Church is "marked by a great diversity," "charity binds everything together in perfect harmony." This unity is also "assured by visible bonds of communion:

a. profession of faith received from the Apostles;

b. common celebration of divine worship, especially the sacraments;

c. apostolic succession through the sacrament of Holy Orders..." (CCC 814-815)

C. "The Church is Holy...because Christ, the Son of God, who with the Father and the Spirit is hailed as 'alone holy,' loved the Church as his Bride, giving himself up for her to sanctify her; he joined her to himself as his body..." (CCC 823) The Church is sanctified by Christ and she becomes sanctifying, all her activities being toward her end, "the sanctification of men in Christ and the glorification of God." It is in the Church that we acquire holiness. (CCC 824) The sanctity of the Church is real but imperfect. "In her members holiness is something yet to be acquired." (CCC 825) "Charity is the soul of the holiness to which all are called." (CCC 826) The Church is holy with sinners in her midst. (CCC 827) "The Church is both a haven for holy ones and a hospital for sinners." (TFFB p. 81)

D. The word "catholic" means universal. "First the Church is catholic because Christ is present in her. 'Where there is Christ Jesus, there is the Catholic Church.' (St. Ignatius of Antioch) In her subsists the fullness of Christ's body..." with 'the fullness of the means of salvation, correct and complete confession of faith, full sacramental life, and ordained ministry in apostolic succession. (CCC 830) "Secondly, the Church is catholic because she has been sent out by Christ on a mission to the whole of the human race." (CCC 831) "The Church is catholic because it welcomes and embraces all peoples." (TFFB p. 82)

- E. The Church is apostolic because she is founded on the apostles in three ways:
- a. Built on the foundation of the apostles and sent on mission by Christ;
    - i. The Lord built his Church on Peter, the Rock, and gave him the keys of authority to govern and care for the flock.” (TFFB p. 85)
  - b. Hands on the teaching of the apostles;
    - i. “The Church doesn’t invent truth or create doctrines, but under the protective guidance of the Holy Spirit supports and defends the written and oral Tradition, handing it on intact from age to age.” (TFFB p. 85-86)
  - c. Taught, sanctified and guided by the apostles through their successors, the college of bishops in union with the successor of Peter. (CCC 857)
    - i. “Some Christians ask, ‘But what is the big deal about apostolic succession?’ It is a big deal because it is God’s plan to maintain the unity and integrity of Christian truth and worship. Genuine apostles don’t send themselves; they are ordained and sent by the Church.” (TFFB p. 86)
    - ii. “Not only the bishops, the successors of the apostles, but ‘the whole Church is apostolic....All members of the Church share in this mission though in various ways.’” (CC p. 116.40, CCC 863)

## Article Ten of the Nicene Creed

*I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.*

- I “Our Lord tied the forgiveness of sins to faith and Baptism: ‘Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved.’ (Mk. 16: 15-16) Baptism is the first and chief sacrament of forgiveness of sins because it unites us with Christ, who died for our sins and rose for our justification, so that ‘we too might walk in newness of life.’” (CCC 977) “Through Baptism we are freed from sin and reborn as sons of God; we become members of Christ, are incorporated into the Church and made sharers in her mission...” (CCC 1213)
- A. “To baptize means to ‘plunge’ or ‘immerse’; the ‘plunge’ into the water symbolizes the catechumen’s burial into Christ’s death, from which he rises up by resurrection with him, as ‘a new creature.’” (CCC 1214)
- B. For “prefigurations of Baptism in the Old Covenant” see (CCC 1217-1222), and the blessing of the baptismal water.
- C. “All the Old Covenant prefigurations find their fulfillment in Christ Jesus. He begins his public life after having himself baptized by St. John the Baptist in the Jordan. After his resurrection Christ gives this mission to his apostles: ‘Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.’” (CCC 1223, Mt 28: 19-20 cf. Mk. 16: 15-16)
- D. “From the very day of Pentecost the Church has celebrated and administered holy Baptism. Indeed St. Peter declares to the crowd astounded by his preaching; ‘Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’ ( Acts 2: 38) Always, Baptism is seen as connected with faith: ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household,’ St. Paul declared to his jailer in Philippi. And the narrative continues, the jailer ‘was baptized at once, with all his family.’” (CCC 1226, Acts 16: 31-33)
- E. “Baptism is performed in the most expressive way by triple immersion in the baptismal water. However, from ancient times it has also been able to be conferred by pouring the water three times over the candidate’s head.” (CCC 1239)
- a. “The anointing with sacred chrism, perfumed oil consecrated by the bishop, signifies the gift of the Holy Spirit to the newly baptized...” (CCC 1241)

- b. “The white garment symbolizes that the person baptized has ‘put on Christ,’ has risen with Christ. The candle, lit from the Easter candle, signifies that Christ has enlightened the neophyte.” (CCC 1243)
- F. “Since the beginning of the Church, adult Baptism is the common practice where the proclamation of the Gospel is still new. (CCC 1247) “The practice of infant Baptism is an immemorial tradition of the Church. There is explicit testimony to this practice from the second century on, and it is quite possible that, from the beginning of the apostolic preaching, when whole ‘households’ received baptism, infants may also have been baptized.” (CCC 1252) “Every person not yet baptized and only such a person is able to be baptized.” (CCC 1246) “The faith required for Baptism is not a perfect and mature faith, but a beginning that is called to develop.” (CCC 1253-1255)
- G. “The ordinary ministers of Baptism are the bishop and priest and, in the Latin Church, also the deacon. In case of necessity, anyone, even a non-baptized person, with the required intention, can baptize, by using the Trinitarian baptismal formula. The intention required is to will to do what the Church does when she baptizes.” (CCC 1256)
- H. “The Lord himself affirms that Baptism is necessary for salvation. (Jn. 3: 5) He also commands his disciples to proclaim the Gospel to all nations and to baptize them. (Mt. 28: 19-20) Baptism is necessary for salvation for those to whom the Gospel has been proclaimed and who have had the possibility of asking for the sacrament. (Mk. 16: 16) (CCC 1257)
- I. “By Baptism all sins are forgiven, original sin and all personal sins, as well as punishment for sin. “ (CCC 1263) “Baptism seals the Christian with the indelible mark (character) of his belonging to Christ. No sin can erase this mark, even if sin prevents Baptism from bearing the fruits of salvation. Given once for all, Baptism cannot be repeated.” (CC 1272)
- J. “Yet the grace of Baptism delivers no one from all the weakness of nature. On the contrary, we must still combat the movements of concupiscence that never cease leading us into evil.” (CCC 978) “If the Church has the power to forgive sins, then Baptism cannot be her only means of using the keys of the Kingdom of heaven received from Jesus Christ. The Church must be able to forgive all penitents their offenses, even if they should sin until the last moment of their lives.” (CCC 979)
- K. We need forgiveness because we are sinners. “Sin is life’s greatest problem, for sin is separation from life’s greatest solution, God, the source of all goodness and life and joy.” (CC p. 118.2) “Actual sin is something we do; original sin is something we have, like a disease. Actual sin means particular acts, choices to obey our own will when it conflicts with God’s will as revealed in God’s law, the moral law that is written both in the Ten Commandments and in our own hearts and consciences.” (CC 119.5) “Original

sin could be called 'original selfishness'. Our instincts are selfish. We are born with the selfishness principle in us by nature. (CC p. 120.6)

- L. "There can be no forgiveness without Christ. The Pharisees recognized his claim to forgive sins as a claim to divinity and objected, 'Who can forgive sins but God alone?'" (CC 122.9, Mk. 2: 7)

## Article Eleven of the Nicene Creed

*I look forward to the resurrection of the dead.*

- I “We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives for ever, so after death the righteous will live with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day. Our resurrection, like his own, will be the work of the Most Holy Trinity: *If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to our mortal bodies also through his Spirit who dwells in you.*” (CCC 989, Rom. 8: 11) “Belief in the resurrection of the dead has been an essential element of the Christian faith from its beginnings. ‘The confidence of Christians is the resurrection of the dead; believing this we live.’ (Tertullian in CCC 991) “How can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain....But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.” (1 Cor. 15: 12-14)
- A. “God revealed the resurrection of the dead to his people progressively. In their trials, the Maccabean martyrs confessed: ‘The King of the universe will raise us up to an everlasting renewal of life, because we have died for his laws. One cannot but choose to die at the hands of men and to cherish the hope that God gives of being raised again by him.’ (CCC 992, 2 Mac 7: 9, 2 Mac 7; 14)
- B. “The Pharisees and many of the Lord’s contemporaries hoped for the resurrection. Jesus teaches it firmly.” (CCC 993) (See Mk. 12: 24, 27; Jn. 11: 24) “Jesus links faith in the resurrection to his own person: ‘I am the Resurrection and the life.’” (CCC 994, Jn. 11: 25) “Already now in this present life he gives a sign and pledge of this by restoring some of the dead to life, announcing thereby his own Resurrection, though it was to be of another order.” (CCC 994)
- C. “From the beginning, Christian faith in the resurrection has met with incomprehension and opposition. ‘On no point does the Christian faith encounter more opposition than on the resurrection of the body.’ (CCC 996, St. Augustine)
- a. “What happens at death is not extinction. Souls cannot be destroyed as bodies can.
- b. What happens at death is not reincarnation.
- c. What happens at death is not a change into an angel.
- d. What happens at death is not a change into a ghost.” (CC p. 136.7)

“The immortality of the soul is not an idea that is unique to Christianity. Most religions teach it. But the resurrection of the body, foretold by Jewish prophets, came true only in Christ.” (CC p. 137.9) “Christ’s Resurrection bestows new dignity on our bodies by revealing to us a new, unexpected, and glorious eternal destiny for them. In most religions (such as Hinduism), only spirit is immortal. In some (such as Gnosticism), only spirit is good. In some (such a Buddhism), only spirit is real. But for Christians, the body is real, good, and immortal. No religion exalts matter and the body as Christianity does.

- a. God created it and declared it good;
  - b. God united man’s body with his immortal soul to make one substance, one being.
  - c. And therefore he made the body immortal like the soul, through resurrection.
  - d. In sexual intercourse, he uses a material act to make new immortal souls.
  - e. And he kept his human body forever. Christ did not ‘un-incarnate’ when he ascended.
  - f. He now uses matter to save souls in Baptism and the Eucharist.” (CC p. 140.16)
- D. “In death, the separation of the soul from the body decays and the soul goes to meet God, while awaiting its reunion with its glorified body. God, in his almighty power, will definitively grant incorruptible life to our bodies by reuniting them with our own souls, through the power of Jesus’ Resurrection.” (CCC 997) “All the dead will rise, ‘those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment.” (CCC 998, Jn. 5: 29)
- E. “Christ is raised with his own body: ‘See my hands and my feet, that it is myself.’ So in him ‘all of them will rise again with their own bodies which they now bear,’ but Christ ‘will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body,’ into a ‘spiritual body.’” (CCC 999 Lk. 24: 39; Phil. 3: 21)
- a. “Our participation in the Eucharist already gives us a foretaste of Christ’s transfiguration of our bodies; ‘Just as bread that comes from earth, after God’s blessing has been invoked upon it, is no longer ordinary bread, but Eucharist, formed of two things, the one earthly and the other heavenly; so too our bodies, which partake of the Eucharist, are no longer corruptible, but possess the hope of resurrection.’” (CCC 1000 St. Irenaeus)
- F. The resurrection will occur ‘at the last day,’ ‘at the end of the world.’ “Indeed, the resurrection of the dead is closely associated with Christ’s Parousia: ‘For the Lord himself will descend from heaven, with a cry of command, with the archangel’s call, and

with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.” (CCC 1001, I Thess. 4: 16)

- G. “Death is the end of earthly life. Our lives are measured by time...remembering our mortality helps us realize that we have only a limited time in which to bring our lives to fulfillment.” (CCC 1007) “Death is a consequence of sin. Death entered the world on account of sin. Even though man’s nature is mortal, God had destined him not to die. Death was therefore contrary to the plans of God the Creator...” (CCC 1008) “Death is transformed by Christ.” (CCC 1009) “In death, God calls man to himself. Therefore the Christian can experience a desire for death like St. Paul’s: “My desire is to depart and be with Christ. He can transform his own death into an act of obedience and love towards the Father, after the example of Christ.” (CCC 1011)

## Article Twelve of the Nicene Creed

*The life of the world to come. Amen.*

- I “Death puts an end to human life as the time open to either accepting or rejecting the divine grace manifested in Christ. (2 Tim. 1: 9-10) The New Testament speaks of judgment primarily in its aspect of the final encounter with Christ in his second coming, but also repeatedly affirms that each will be rewarded immediately after death in accordance with his works and faith. The parable of the poor man Lazarus and the words of Christ on the cross to the good thief, as well as other New Testament texts speak of a final destiny of the soul—a destiny which can be different for some and for others.” (CCC 1021) “Each man receives his eternal retribution in his immortal soul at the very moment of his death, in a particular judgment that refers his life to Christ: either entrance into the blessedness of heaven—through a purification or immediately, or immediate and everlasting damnation. ‘At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love.’” (St. John of the Cross) (CCC 1022)
- A. “The life story of any individual or community gets its meaning, point and purpose from its end. So to know what kind of story we are in, to know what is the ‘meaning of life’ we must know our end. The Church tells us our end. It is one with our origin. In the words of the old Baltimore Catechism, ‘God made me to know him, love him and serve him in this world and to be happy with him forever in the next.’” (CC p. 142.1)
- B. Heaven: “Those who die in God’s grace and friendship and are perfectly purified live for ever with Christ. They are like God for ever, for they ‘see him as he is’, face to face. (CCC 1023) “Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfillment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness.” (CCC 1024) “By his death and Resurrection, Jesus Christ has ‘opened’ heaven to us.” (CCC 1026)
- a. “Heaven is our home, our destiny, our fulfillment, our completion. Whatever else it will be, whatever else it will feel like, it will feel like home, for it is the place we were made for, designed for.” (CC p. 150.13)
- C. Purgatory: “All who die in God’s grace and friendship, but still imperfectly, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.”

(CCC 1030) “The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent.” “This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: ‘Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin.’ (2 Macc. 12: 46) (CCC 1032) The Church honors the memory of the dead and offers prayers for them, especially the Eucharistic sacrifice, and “commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead.” (CCC 1032)

- a. “Purgatory exists because God is both just and merciful.” (CC p. 149.a)
- b. “At the moment of death, most of us are not completely sanctified (purified, made holy)...” necessary for heaven, “therefore, for most of us, there must be some additional change, some purification, between death and heaven. This is purgatory. Purgatory is like heaven’s porch, or heaven’s incubator, or heaven’s washroom. Unlike heaven or hell, purgatory is only temporary.” (CC p. 149.c)
- c. Two principles: “At death many of us are still imperfect (1 John 1: 8) and that in heaven we will all be perfect (Mt. 5: 48; Rev. 21: 27). Put these two together and purgatory necessarily follows.” (CC p. 150.12)
- d. “Scripture also teaches us to pray for the dead, ‘that they might be delivered from their sin’ (2 Mac. 12: 46)-which is impossible for those in hell and already finished for those in heaven.” (CC p. 150. 12)
- e. “Scripture also distinguishes sins that cannot be forgiven either before or after death from sins that can be forgiven after death (see Mt. 12: 31-32).” (CC p. 150.12)
- f. “The Church, which Scripture calls the ‘the pillar and bulwark of the truth’ (1 Tim. 3: 15), has always taught and has solemnly and officially defined purgatory as a divinely revealed dogma (Councils of Florence and Trent.)” (CC p. 150.12)

- D. Hell: “We cannot be united with God unless we freely choose to love him. But we cannot love God if we sin gravely against him, against our neighbor or against ourselves: ‘He who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life

abiding in him.’ (1 J. 3: 14-15) Our Lord warns us that we shall be separated from him if we fail to meet the serious needs of the poor and the little ones who are his brethren. (Mt. 25: 31-46) To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God’s merciful love means remaining separated from him for every by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called ‘hell.’” (CCC 1033) “The chief punishment of hell is eternal separation from God, in whom alone man can possess the life and happiness for which he was created and for which he longs.” (CCC 1035) “God predestines no one to go to hell, for this, a willful turning away from “God (a mortal sin) is necessary, and persistence in it until the end”. (CCC 1037)

a. “There is no doctrine which I would more willingly remove from Christianity than this, [Hell]....But it has the full support of Scripture, and, especially Our Lord’s own words....If the happiness of a creature lies in self-surrender, no one can make that surrender but himself (though many can help him to make it), and he may refuse.” (C.S. Lewis, The Problem of Pain), quoted in CC p. 146.7 “Hell is a real possibility because our will is free.” (CC 146.8)

E. The Last Judgment: “The resurrection of all the dead, ‘both the just and the unjust,’ will precede the Last Judgment.” (CCC 1038) See this paragraph for an extended scripture quote. “In the presence of Christ, who is Truth itself, the truth of each man’s relationship with God will be laid bare. The Last Judgment will reveal even to its furthest consequences the good each person has done or failed to do during his earthly life.” (CCC 1039) “The Last Judgment will come when Christ returns in glory. Only the Father knows the day and the hour...” (CCC 1040)

F. “At the end of time, the Kingdom of God will come in its fullness. After the universal judgment, the righteous will reign for ever with Christ, glorified in body and soul. The universe itself will be renewed.” (CCC 1042)

## **Index**

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