

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Almost all Catholics are familiar with the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed, two ancient and authoritative expressions of the Christian faith that are regularly used in the liturgies of the Church. There is, however, another ancient Creed with which many Catholics are not familiar: the Athanasian Creed. This Creed, also known by the Latin name *Quicumque Vult* (from its opening words "whoever wants"), dates from around the end of the fifth century. It confesses Catholic doctrine regarding the Holy Trinity and Christology in great and precise detail. It is named after the great defender of Trinitarian orthodoxy, St. Athanasius of Alexandria who died in the year 373, although it was probably not composed completely by him.

The Athanasian Creed was formerly recited at the Office of Prime on Sundays, but since Vatican II it is no longer used liturgically, although it is still accepted as an authoritative Creed by the Church. On this Trinity Sunday it is appropriate that we should reflect on the words of this Creed, and embrace its confession of faith as our own.

Fr. Richard Ballard
Parochial Vicar

Athanasian Creed (*Quicumque Vult*)

Uncreated is the Father; uncreated is the Son; uncreated is the Spirit.
The Father is infinite; the Son is infinite; the Holy Spirit is infinite.
Eternal is the Father; eternal is the Son; eternal is the Spirit:
And yet there are not three eternal beings, but one who is eternal;
as there are not three uncreated and unlimited beings, but one who is uncreated
and unlimited. Almighty is the Father; almighty is the Son; almighty is the Spirit:
And yet there are not three almighty beings, but one who is almighty.

Thus the Father is God; the Son is God; the Holy Spirit is God: And yet there are not
three gods, but one God. Thus, the Father is Lord; the Son is Lord;
the Holy Spirit is Lord: And yet there are not three lords, but one Lord.
As Christian truth compels us to acknowledge each distinct person as God
and Lord, so catholic religion forbids us to say that there are three gods or lords.

The Father was neither made nor created nor begotten; the Son was neither made nor
created, but was alone begotten of the Father; the Spirit was neither made nor
created, but is proceeding from the Father and the Son.
Thus there is one Father, not three fathers; one Son, not three sons;
one Holy Spirit, not three spirits.

And in this Trinity, no one is before or after, greater or less than the other;
but all three persons are in themselves, coeternal and coequal; and so we must
worship the Trinity in unity and the one God in three persons.

Whoever wants to be saved should think thus about the Trinity.
It is necessary for eternal salvation that one also faithfully believe that our Lord Jesus
Christ became flesh.

For this is the true faith that we believe and confess: That our Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, is both God and man. He is God, begotten before all worlds from the being of the Father, and he is man, born in the world from the being of his mother — existing fully as God, and fully as man with a rational soul and a human body; equal to the Father in divinity, subordinate to the Father in humanity.

Although he is God and man, he is not divided, but is one Christ. He is united because God has taken humanity into himself; he does not transform deity into humanity. He is completely one in the unity of his person, without confusing his natures. For as the rational soul and body are one person, so the one Christ is God and man.

He suffered death for our salvation. He descended into hell and rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

At his coming all people shall rise bodily to give an account of their own deeds. Those who have done good will enter eternal life, those who have done evil will enter eternal fire.

This is the catholic faith. One cannot be saved without believing this firmly and faithfully.