

Apostles' Creed

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The **Apostles' Creed** (Latin: *Symbolum Apostolorum* or *Symbolum Apostolicum*), sometimes titled **Symbol of the Apostles**, is an early statement of Christian belief, a creed or "symbol".^[1] It is widely used by a number of Christian denominations for both liturgical and catechetical purposes, most visibly by liturgical Churches of Western tradition, including the Latin Rite of the Roman Catholic Church, Lutheranism, the Anglican Communion, and Western Orthodoxy. It is also used by Presbyterians, Methodists, and Congregationalists.

The theological specifics of this creed appear to have been originally formulated as a refutation of Gnosticism, an early heresy. This can be seen in almost every phrase. For example, the creed states that Christ, Jesus, was born, suffered, and died on the cross. This seems to be a statement directly against the heretical teaching that Christ only appeared to become man and that he did not truly suffer and die but only appeared to do so. The Apostles' Creed, as well as other baptismal creeds, is esteemed as an example of the apostles' teachings and a defense of the Gospel of Christ.

The name of the Creed comes from the probably fifth-century legend that, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit after Pentecost, each of the Twelve Apostles dictated part of it.^[2] It is traditionally divided into twelve articles.

Because of its early origin, it does not address some Christological issues defined in the later Nicene and other Christian Creeds. It thus says nothing explicitly about the divinity of either Jesus or of the Holy Spirit. This makes it acceptable to many Arians and Unitarians. Nor does it address many other theological questions that became objects of dispute centuries later.

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Origin of the Apostles' Creed

The title, *Symbolum Apostolicum* (Symbol or Creed of the Apostles), appears for the first time in a letter from a Council in Milan (probably written by Ambrose himself) to Pope Siricius in about 390: "Let them give credit to the Creed of the Apostles, which the Roman Church has always kept and preserved undefiled".^{[3][4]} But what existed at that time was not what is now known as the Apostles' Creed but a shorter statement of belief that, for instance, did not include the phrase "maker of heaven and earth", a phrase that may have been inserted only in the seventh century.^[5]

The legend that this creed, the forerunner and principal source of the Apostles' Creed,^[6] had been jointly created by the Apostles under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, with each of the twelve contributing one of the articles, was already current at that time.^[4]

The earlier text evolved from simpler texts based on Matthew 28:19 (<http://bibref.hebtools.com/?book=%20Matthew&verse=28:19&src=!>).^[4] and it has been argued that it was already in written form by the late second century (circa 180 AD).^{[7] [4] [8]}

While the individual statements of belief that are included in the Apostles' Creed – even those not found in the Old Roman Symbol – are found in various writings by Irenaeus, Tertullian, Novatian, Marcellus, Rufinus, Ambrose, Augustine, Nicetus, and Eusebius Gallus,^[9] the earliest appearance of what we know as the Apostles' Creed was in the *De singulis libris canonicis scarapsus* ("Excerpt from Individual Canonical Books") of St. Priminus (Migne, *Patrologia Latina* 89, 1029 ff.), written between 710 and 714.^[10] This longer Creed seems to have arisen in what is now France and Spain. Charlemagne imposed it throughout his dominions, and it was finally accepted in Rome, where the Old Roman Creed or similar formulas had survived for centuries.^[4] It has been argued nonetheless that it dates from the second half of the fifth century, though no earlier.^[11]

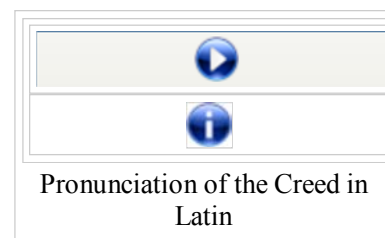
Some have suggested that the Apostles' Creed was spliced together with phrases from the New Testament.^[12] For instance, the phrase "descendit ad inferos" ("he descended into hell") echoes Ephesians 4:9 (<http://bibref.hebtools.com/?book=%20Ephesians&verse=4:9&src=NIV>) , "κατέβη εἰς τὰ κατώτερα μέρη τῆς γῆς" ("he descended into the lower, earthly regions").

This phrase and that on the communion of saints are articles found in the Apostles' Creed, but not in the Old Roman Symbol nor in the Nicene Creed.

Text of the Creed in Latin

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 inferos, tertia die resurrexit a mortuis, ascendit ad caelos, sedet ad dexteram Patris omnipotentis, inde venturus est iudicare vivos et mortuos.

Credo in Spiritum Sanctum, sanctam Ecclesiam catholicam, sanctorum communionem, remissionem peccatorum, carnis resurrectionem, vitam aeternam.
Amen.^[13]



English translations

The Roman Catholic Church

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* gives the following English translation of the Apostles' Creed.^[14] In its discussion of the Creed,^[15] the Catechism maintains the traditional division into twelve articles, the numbering of which is here added to the text.

1. I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
 2. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
 3. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
 4. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
 5. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again.
 6. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
 7. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
 8. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 9. the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints,
 10. the forgiveness of sins,
 11. the resurrection of the body,
 12. and the life everlasting.
- Amen.

The Church of England

In the Church of England there are currently two authorized forms of the creed: that of the *Book of Common Prayer* (1662) and that of *Common Worship* (2000).

Book of Common Prayer^{[16][17][18]}

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,

Common Worship^[19]

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
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 Catholick Church;
 The Communion of Saints;
 The Forgiveness of sins;
 The Resurrection of the body,
 And the Life everlasting.
 Amen.

suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died, and was buried;
 he descended to the dead.
 On the third day he rose again;
 he ascended into heaven,
 he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
 and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

The Presbyterian Church

The Presbyterian Church uses the same text as is in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, but with the modernized spelling "catholic" and some changes from upper to lowercase letters.

The Lutheran Church

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 Spirit,
 born of the virgin Mary,
 suffered under Pontius Pilate,
 was crucified, died and was buried.
 He descended into hell.
 On the third day He rose again from the dead.
 He ascended into heaven
 and sits at the right hand of God, the Father Almighty.
 From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the holy Christian Church,
 the communion of saints,
 the forgiveness of sins,
 the resurrection of the body,
 and the life everlasting.
 Amen.^[20]

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, the largest Lutheran denomination in the United States, uses the ELLC ecumenical version.^[21] The phrase "he descended to the dead" is footnoted to indicate the alternate reading: "or 'he descended into hell,' another translation of this text in widespread use". It does not

Lutheranism



Luther's Seal

Book of Concord

- Apostles' Creed
- Nicene Creed
- Athanasian Creed
- Augsburg Confession
- Apology of the Augsburg Confession
- Smalcald Articles
- Luther's Small Catechism
- Luther's Large Catechism
- Formula of Concord

alter the phrase "the holy catholic church". The ELLC version is also used in the *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, which is the primary worship resource for the ELCA^[22] and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.^[23]

The Danish National Church still uses the phrase "I renounce the devil and all his works and all his ways" as the beginning of this creed, before the line "I believe in God etc.". This is mostly due to the influence of Grundtvig. See (da).

The Unity of the Brethren

In the version recited by Unity churches, the only variation from the Lutheran Creed is "I believe in the holy Christian Church," instead of the "Catholic Church."

The United Methodist Church

The United Methodists commonly incorporate the Apostles' Creed into their worship services. The version which is most often used is located at #881 in the *United Methodist Hymnal*, one of their most popular hymnals and one with a heritage to John Wesley, founder of Methodism [2] (<http://catalystresources.org/issues/272yee.html>) [3] (<http://catalystresources.org/issues/312knight.html>) . It is notable for omitting the line "he descended into hell", but is otherwise very similar to the Book of Common Prayer version. The 1989 Hymnal has both the traditional version and the 1988 ecumenical version (see below), which includes "he descended to the dead."

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 Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, dead, and buried;
the third day he rose from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and sitteth at 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 Spirit,
the holy catholic church,^[24]
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

The *United Methodist Hymnal* also contains (at #882) what it terms the "Ecumenical Version" of this creed -- a version which is identical to that found in the Episcopal Church's current *Book of Common Prayer*. This form of the Apostles' Creed can be found incorporated into the Eucharistic and Baptismal Liturgies in the Hymnal and in *The United Methodist Book of Worship*, and hence

Word & Sacrament

- Justification
- Law and Gospel
- Sola gratia
- Sola scriptura
- Baptism
- Infant Baptism
- Lord's Supper
- Eucharist
- Sacramental union
- Confession
- Absolution
- Christology
- Sanctification
- Two Kingdoms
- Priesthood of all believers
- Divine Providence
- Theology of the Cross

Liturgy & Worship

- Divine Service
- Matins
- Vespers
- Easter Vigil
- Agenda
- Cantata
- Chorale
- Chorale prelude
- Common table prayer
- Confirmation
- Hymn of the day
- Postil
- Deutsche Messe
- Liturgical Calendar
- Sign of the Cross

Hymnody & Music

- A Mighty Fortress Is Our God
- Christ Jesus Lay in Death's Strong Bands
- God's Word Is Our

it is growing in popularity and use.

Ecumenical version of the English Language Liturgical Consultation

The English Language Liturgical Consultation (ELLC) is an international ecumenical group whose primary purpose is to provide ecumenically accepted texts for those who use English in their liturgy. In 1988 it produced a translation of the Apostles' Creed, distinguished among other things by its avoidance of the word "his" in relation to God. The text is as follows:[4] (http://www.renewingworship.org/resources/ELLC/texts/apostles_creed.html)

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

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

Liturgical use in Western Christianity

The liturgical communities in western Christianity that derive their rituals from the Roman Missal, including those particular communities which use the Roman Missal itself (Roman Catholics), the *Book of Common Prayer* (Anglicans / Episcopalians), the *Lutheran Book of Worship* (ELCA Lutherans), *Lutheran Service Book* (Missouri-Synod Lutherans), use the Apostles' Creed and interrogative forms of it in their rites of Baptism, which they consider to be the first sacrament of initiation into the Church.

Roman Catholic Rite of Baptism

An interrogative form of the Apostles' Creed is used in the Rite of Baptism (for both children and adults). The minister of baptism asks the following questions (ICEL, 1974):

Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

Great Heritage

- How Great Thou Art
- How Lovely Shines the Morning Star
- Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming
- In Thee alone, O Christ, my Lord
- O Lord, Look Down from Heaven
- Now Thank We All Our God
- O Sacred Head, Now Wounded
- Passion Hymns
- Passion music
- Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying
- Johann Sebastian Bach
- Dieterich Buxtehude
- Johann Crüger
- Paul Gerhardt
- Johann Heermann
- Felix Mendelssohn
- Johann Pachelbel
- Hallgrímur Pétursson
- Michael Praetorius
- Johann von Rist
- Johann Walter
- Catherine Winkworth

Globally

- Confessional Evangelical Lutheran Conference
- International Lutheran Council
- Lutheran World Federation
- List of Lutheran church-bodies

History

- Protestant Reformation

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

To each question, the catechumen, or, in the case of an infant, the parents and sponsor(s) (godparent(s)) in his or her place, answers "I do." Then the celebrant says:

This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it, in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And all respond: Amen.

Roman Catholic Profession of Faith at Mass

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed is given first place in the text of the Roman Missal; but "the baptismal symbol of the Church of Rome, called the Apostles' Creed" may be used in its place, "especially in Lent and Eastertide" (*Ordinary of the Mass*, 19). The latter Creed is generally preferred also at Masses for children.

Today, the Apostle's Creed is the official profession of Faith in the Philippines as decreed by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines.

Church of England

The Apostles' Creed is used in the non-Eucharistic services of Matins and Evening Prayer (Evensong). It is invoked after the recitation or singing of the Canticles, and it is the only part of the services in which the congregation is required to turn and face the High Altar, if they are seated transversely in the quire.

Episcopal Church (USA)

The Episcopal Church uses the Apostles' Creed as a Baptismal Covenant for those who are to receive the Rite of Baptism. Regardless of age, candidates are to be sponsored by parents and/or godparents. Youths able to understand the significance of the Rite may go through the ritual speaking for themselves. Younger children and infants rely on their sponsors to act upon their behalf.

1. The celebrant calls for the candidates for Baptism to be presented.
2. The catechumen or sponsors state their request for Baptism.
- 3a. If the catechumen is of age, the celebrant will ask him or her if he or she desires Baptism, to which the catechumen will respond: "I do."
- 3b. If the candidate relies on sponsors, the celebrant asks them if they will raise the child in "the Christian faith and life" (ECUSA BCP), and will raise the child through "prayers and witness to grow into the full stature of Christ" to which the

- The start of the Reformation
- Reformation in Denmark
- Reformation in Finland
- Reformation in Germany
- Reformation in Iceland
- Reformation in Norway
- Reformation in Sweden
- Lutheran Orthodoxy
- Gnesio-Lutherans
- Pietism
- Laestadianism
- Old Lutherans
- Neo-Lutheranism
- High Church Lutheranism
- Confessional Lutherans

Missionaries

- John Campanius
- Bartholomäus Ziegenbalg
- Hans Egede
- Paul Henkel
- John Christian Frederick Heyer
- Wilhelm Sihler
- F. C. D. Wyneken
- Hans Paludan Smith Schreuder
- Lars Olsen Skrefsrud
- Ludwig Ingwer Nommensen
- Onesimos Nesib
- Paul Olaf Bodding
- Walter A. Maier

Theologians

- Martin Luther

parents will state to each, "I will, with God's help."

4. A series of questions is then asked, to which the reply is always "I renounce them":

Do you renounce Satan and all the spiritual forces of wickedness that rebel against God?

Do you renounce the evil powers of this world which corrupt and destroy the creatures of God?

Do you renounce all sinful desires that draw you from the love of God?

5. The second half of the query is asked, to which the reply is always "I do":

Do you turn to Jesus Christ and accept him as your Savior?

Do you put your whole trust in his grace and love?

Do you promise to follow and obey him as your Lord?

6. The Apostle's Creed is then recited by candidates, sponsors and congregation, each section of the Creed being an answer to the celebrant's question, 'Do you believe in God the Father (God the Son, God the Holy Spirit)?'

Chinese language Protestant churches

The vast majority of the Chinese language Protestant churches under China Christian Council or underground in China, or overseas in various denominations, use the Chinese Union Version of the Bible translated in the 1910s, the Lord's Prayer as it is written in the Chinese Union Version and the **Apostles' Creed** in the weekly services. The Nicene Creed is rarely used, if at all.

See also

■ Related creeds:

- Athanasian Creed
- Chalcedonian Creed
- Nicene Creed
- Old Roman Symbol

■ Prayer books:

- Roman Missal
- Book of Common Prayer
- Lutheran Book of Worship
- Evangelical Lutheran Worship

■ Doctrines:

- Communion of Saints
- One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church

■ Other:

- Catholic Encyclopedia

References

- Wife:
 - Katharina Luther
- Philipp Melanchthon
- Johannes Bugenhagen
- Johannes Brenz
- Justus Jonas
- Lucas Cranach the Elder
- Hans Tausen
- Laurentius Petri
- Olaus Petri
- Matthias Flacius
- Johann Gerhard
- Abraham Calovius
- Johannes Andreas Quenstedt
- Johann Wilhelm Baier
- David Hollaz
- Henry Muhlenberg
- Lars Levi Læstadius
- Charles Porterfield Krauth
- C. F. W. Walther

Lutheranism portal

1. ^ Not in the sense that the word "symbol" has in modern English, but in the original meaning of the word, derived from "Latin *symbolum*, sign, token, from Greek σύμβολον, token for identification (by comparing with its counterpart), from συμβάλλειν, to throw together, compare" (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language) (<http://www.bartleby.com/61/74/S0957400.html>) .
2. ^ James Orr: *The Apostles' Creed*, in International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/apostles_creed_orr.html)
3. ^ St. Ambrose of Milan, Letter 42:5 (http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/ambrose_letters_05_letters41_50.htm#Letter42)
4. ^ *a b c d e* *Apostles' Creed* in Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (Oxford University Press 2005, ISBN 978-0-19-280290-3), p. 90
5. ^ Gardiner Mumford Day, *The Apostles' Creed: an interpretation for today* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=C4I9AAAAYAAJ&q=%22inserted+primarily%22&pgis=1>) (Scribner, 1963), p. 33
6. ^ Arthur Cushman McGiffert, *The Apostles' Creed: Its Origin, Its Purpose, and Its Historical Interpretation* (<http://books.google.com/books?id=woD7QYAjV3QC>) (2008 ISBN 0559851995), p. 42
7. ^ *Documents of the Christian Church*, 2nd edn, edited by Henry Bettenson (London, 1963), 23.
8. ^ Joseph Lynch, *The Medieval Church* (Longman: London and NY, 1992), 7.
9. ^ <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2.iv.i.i.v.html>
10. ^ J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds*, third edition, (London: Longman, Green & Co, 1972), 398-434
11. ^ Catholic Encyclopedia, Origin of the Creed. <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/01629a.htm>
12. ^ Wolfgang Trillhaas, "Creeds, Lutheran Attitude Toward" in **The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church** edited by Julius Bodensieck (Minneapolis: Augsburg, Vol. A-E, p. 629)
13. ^ Catechismus Catholicae Ecclesiae (http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism_lt/p1s1c3a2_lt.htm)
14. ^ English translation of the Apostles' Creed in the (<http://www.va/archive/catechism/p1s1c3a2.htm#credo>) Catechism of the Catholic Church
15. ^ Part I, Section II (http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P14.HTM)
16. ^ The Book of Common Prayer (original text) (<http://www.vulcanhammer.org/anglican/bcp-1662.pdf>)
17. ^ The Order for Morning Prayer (<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/bcp/texts/mpep/morning.html>)
18. ^ The Order for Evening Prayer (<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/bcp/texts/mpep/evening.html>)
19. ^ Creeds and Authorized Affirmations of Faith (<http://www.cofe.anglican.org/worship/liturgy/commonworship/texts/word/creeds.html>)
20. ^ *Lutheran Service Book*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 2006), 159, 175, 192, 207; *Lutheran Worship*, (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1982), 142, 167, 186; The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod has a slightly different text posted on their website[1] (<http://www.lcms.org/pages/internal.asp?NavID=3355>) , and the version used by the German Lutheran Trinity Church Melbourne (http://www.german-lutherans-melbourne.asn.au/en/16311e_confapost.shtml) is also slightly different.
21. ^ The Apostles Creed from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Web site (<http://www.elca.org/communication/creeds/apostles.html>)
22. ^ *Evangelical Lutheran Worship* webpage (<http://www.elca.org/Growing-In-Faith/Worship/Resources/ELCA-Worship-Books/ELW.aspx>)
23. ^ ELC Canada worship webpage (<http://www.worship.ca>)
24. ^ Understood by Methodists as referring to the Christian Church in general

External links

- *The Faith We Profess: A Catholic Guide to the Apostles' Creed* (<http://www.avemariapress.com/itemdetail.cfm?nItemid=917>) by Msgr. Peter J. Vaghi (2008)
- Extract from *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* Vol. 1 (<http://www.reformed.org/documents>)

[/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/apostles_creed_orr.html](#))

- Scholarly articles on the Apostles' Creed from the Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library (<http://www.wlsessays.net/subject/A/Apostles%27+Creed>)
- A website with the Creeds in a significant number of languages (<http://www.cprf.co.uk/languages.htm>)
- A website with prayers in many languages; a significant number of the languages also have the Apostles' Creed (http://www.marysrosaries.com/Rosary_prayers_in_different_languages.html)

English translations

- "ELLC translation". *ELLC Texts*. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. 2004. http://www.renewingworship.org/resources/ELLC/texts/apostles_creed.html. Retrieved June 21 2005.
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Categories: Book of Concord | Christian confessions, creeds and statements of faith | 4th-century Christian texts | Ancient Christian controversies

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