

## St Athanasius



The Athanasian Creed is traditionally ascribed to Saint Athanasius (296-373), from whom it takes its name. (It is also called the "Quicumque," which is the first word of the creed in Latin.) Like other creeds, such as the Apostles' Creed, it is a profession of the Christian faith; but it is also a full-fledged theology lesson, which is why it is the longest of the standard Christian creeds.

Saint Athanasius spent his life combating the Arian heresy, which denied the divinity of Christ by denying that there are three Persons in one God. Thus, the Athanasian Creed is very much concerned with the doctrine of the Trinity. Traditionally, it has been recited in churches on Trinity Sunday, the Sunday after Pentecost Sunday, though it is rarely read today.

Reading the Athanasian Creed privately or with your family is a good way to bring the celebration of Trinity Sunday home and to gain a deeper understanding of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

### **The Athanasian Creed:**

Whoever wishes to be saved, needs above all to hold the Catholic faith; unless each one preserves this whole and inviolate, he will without a doubt perish in eternity

But the Catholic faith is this, that we venerate one God in the Trinity, and the Trinity in oneness; neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance; for there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Spirit; but the divine nature of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one, their glory is equal, their majesty is coeternal.

Of such a nature as the Father is, so is the Son, so also is the Holy Spirit; the Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, and the Holy Spirit is uncreated; the Father is infinite, the Son is infinite, and the Holy Spirit is infinite; the Father is eternal, the Son is eternal, and the Holy Spirit is eternal; and nevertheless there are not three eternals but one eternal; just as there are not three uncreated beings, nor three infinite beings, but one uncreated, and one infinite; similarly the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, and the Holy Spirit is almighty; and yet there are not three almightys but one almighty; thus the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; and nevertheless there are not three gods, but there is one God; so the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Spirit is Lord; and yet there are not three lords, but there is one Lord; because just as we are compelled by Christian truth to confess singly each one person as God, and also Lord, so we are forbidden by the Catholic religion to say there are three gods or three Lords.

The Father was not made, nor created, nor begotten by anyone. The Son is from the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding.

There is, therefore, one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits; and in this Trinity there is nothing first or later, nothing greater or less, but all three Persons are coeternal and coequal with one another, so that in every respect, as has already been said above, both unity in Trinity, and Trinity in unity must be venerated. Therefore, let him who wishes to be saved, think thus concerning the Trinity.

But it is necessary for eternal salvation that he faithfully believes also the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Accordingly, it is the right faith, that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God is God and man. He is God begotten of the substance of the Father before time, and He is man born of the substance of His mother in time: perfect God, perfect man, consisting of a rational soul and a human body, equal to the Father according to His Godhead, less than the Father according to humanity.

Although he is God and man, yet He is not two, but He is one Christ; one however, not by the conversion of the Divinity into a human body, but by the assumption of humanity in the Godhead; one absolutely not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For just as the rational soul and body are one man, so God and man are one Christ.

He suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, on the third day arose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead; at His coming all men have to arise again with their bodies and will render an account of their own deeds: and those who have done good, will go into life everlasting, but those who have done evil, into eternal fire.

This is the Catholic faith; unless every one believes this faithfully and firmly, he cannot be saved. Amen.

