

The Apostles' Creed

Priest & People: (within sacred liturgy, like the Order of the Mass)

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
Creator 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 is seated at the right hand
of God the Father almighty;
from there 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 life everlasting. Amen.

Apostles' Creed:

The Church always believes as she prays. From the time of the apostles until the current age, the way the Church prays effects what she believes. Her prayer is most completely revealed within the liturgical life – the celebration of the Sacraments and other ritualistic actions. In the second century, the Church of Rome was using a baptismal formula, which had the catechumens (those to be baptized) declare their belief in the Triune God as well as the Church and the resurrection of the body via a series of questions. These questions, which find similarity to the baptismal rites of today, developed into the Apostles' Creed by the end of the seventh century.

As the Christian's creed or statement of belief began to develop, there were questions as to its real necessity. The Church was understood in her early history, as we believe today, to be a living and vibrant organism. And so, just as She grew in age and wisdom, so too it was argued, should the way in which She expresses what She believes. But as She grew in wisdom She learned that if She relied only on oral traditions, the authentic apostolic faith could become distorted. Anyone who has ever played the game *Telephone* understands that the farther away you get from the source the more likely the message is going to get garbled. In addition, by writing down Her faith and putting it into a creedal statement, it allowed Her to more accurately declare that which She believed and assisted Her in confronting heresies which threatened to do Her harm.

The 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal (implemented November 27, 2011 within the universal, Roman Catholic Church) calls for the Apostles' Creed to be used more regularly in the Church's liturgical life. No longer will the Apostles' Creed find itself reserved for use in Masses with children and for the praying of the Most Holy Rosary. The rubrics (rules governing the way the liturgy is celebrated) call for the Apostles' Creed to be used in place of the Nicene Creed during the seasons of Lent and Easter. Its use should remind us of our baptismal promises where we rejected Satan and the darkness of sin and profess faith in the One True God.

A quick mention should be made about the statement, "...descended into hell." This statement calls reference to the *Sheol*, or the place of the dead. Here the Church Fathers as well as early Christian iconography depict the Lord Jesus preaching salvation to those who died before his incarnation. It should not be thought of as the place occupied by the devil and his minions – as if Jesus would have been subjected to him.

(SR: <http://home.catholicweb.com/covingtonmessenger/index.cfm/NewsItem?id=310889>)