

## Nicene Creed

*Priest & People:*

(within sacred liturgy, like the Order of the Mass)

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

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

God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

*[At the words that follow up to and including 'and became man,' all bow.]*

and by the Holy Spirit  
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

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 believe in one, holy,  
catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one baptism  
for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come.

(Amen.)

## Nicene Creed – “Consubstantial”

<<*Lex orandi, lex credendi.*>> This simple Latin phrase is the driving force behind the Church’s understanding of liturgy. In English it means, “the law of praying, is the law of believing.” In other words, the manner in which the Church prays effects that which She believes.

As a summary of all that we believe as Christians the translation of the Creed has to be as accurate as possible. In some cases this means using words which are unfamiliar to most individuals – “consubstantial” being the most obvious. Accuracy within our language is very important, particularly in the Church’s prayer, for it can be the difference between orthodoxy and heresy.

When the early Church Fathers gathered in the Ecumenical Council at Nicaea in 325, they were confronted with the task of explaining the relationship between the Father and the Son. They had two Greek words at their disposal in order to explain this relationship — <<*homoousious*>> and <<*homoiousious*>>. <<*Homoousious*>> means that the Son (Jesus) is of the same essence or substance as the Father, while <<*homoiousious*>> means that the Son is of a similar essence or substance as the Father. The first makes Jesus God, the second does not. The first is the orthodox teaching of the Church, the second is heresy. There is only one iota of a difference between these two words — literally the letter “i”.

This Greek word <<*homoousious*>> is translated into Latin as <<*consubstantialem*>> and as we see in the revised English language Missal as “consubstantial.” As the Church prays together that Jesus is “consubstantial with the Father” we are expressing as clearly as our language will allow our belief that Jesus is God and in doing so confirming our belief in the Most Holy Trinity. While the Son (Jesus) is not the Father, He shares the same substance as the Father — here we have the beginning of our Trinitarian theology.

To understand the term “consubstantial” more readily, we must look to the preceding phrase where the Creed reminds us that Jesus Christ is “...the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages” as well as to a corresponding analogy. I am my father’s son. Through the love of my parents I have been begotten of them. While I am not my father, I share in the same essence, the same substance, the same human nature as he does. I am consubstantial with my father.

Finally, the phrase, “born of the Father” can be confusing if we think within the context of time. But remember, God exists outside of time. To say that Jesus was “born of the Father” might suggest that there was a time when He was not, when He did not exist; and this would certainly be true if we omitted the second part of the phrase, “before all ages.” The second half of the phrase reminds us that Jesus is begotten within the framework of eternity — outside of time. In other words, there has never been a time when He was not. He has always existed as the Son of the Father.

(SR: <http://home.catholicweb.com/covingtonmessenger/index.cfm/NewsItem?ID=317816>)