



THE CREED



THE SYMBOL OF OUR FAITH

The Creed of Faith is not a prayer but a short summary of our faith, of what we believe about God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

In the First Ecumenical Council held in Nicaea in 325AD, the Christian world was troubled by the great heresy of a priest named Arius. Arius had proposed that Jesus Christ was not a true God, but created from God.

The Emperor, Constantine the Great, called for a gathering of 318 Church Fathers to discuss this heresy where they decreed that Jesus Christ, the Word and Son of God is uncreated and Holy.

He is begotten and one and the same substance as God the Father. He is "True God of True God" and the uncreated, only-begotten Son of God who became man from the Virgin Mary (Theotokos) as Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Saviour of the world. The Church Fathers of this council issued the Nicene Creed of Faith which is the true confession of the Christian faith.

The Second Ecumenical Council was held in Constantinople in the year 381AD. This Council did not change the original Creed of Faith, however added reference to the Holy Spirit which was not included in the original Nicene Creed.

As Orthodox Christians, we first express our faith through our baptism and at every Divine Liturgy service. We cannot remain silent about what God has done for us. We need to know what we believe and in Whom we believe.

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

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages;

Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father through Whom all things were made.

Who for us, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human.

And was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried;

And rose on the third day, according to the Scriptures.

And ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father; And will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, Who proceeds from the Father,

Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, and Who spoke through the prophets.

In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

I expect the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.



☚ Godparent

A godparent (godfather or godmother) is someone who sponsors a child's Baptism and is the person who "receives in his or her arms" the newly baptized infant. The child is the godchild (godson or goddaughter).

☚ Prerequisites and Restrictions

In the Sacrament there is only one godparent, and that person must be a baptised member of the Orthodox Church only. There may be another person as a witness; and may sit in the front row with the parents in a place of honour, but unless they are undressing, dressing, or holding the child as the godparent puts oil on the child, they must otherwise be in their seat.

☚ Ceremony

The godparent is the one that stands as the sponsor of the infant, by giving the prescribed denunciations of Satan and affirmations of accepting Christ, and who finally recites the Creed signifying the personal belief of the candidate to Baptism.

Since baptizing a child creates a spiritual relationship for the godparent between him and his godchild, as well as with the child's family, the Orthodox Church by a tradition expressed in the rubrics accepts only one godparent, the one who takes part in the catechesis and anoints the infant with the blessed oil before Baptism.

After the baptismal service is finished, the godparent delivers the child into the arms of the mother in front of the congregation. As she receives the child, now baptized, sealed and illuminated, she kisses the hand of the godparent as a token of the spiritual relationship that is established between the godparent and the family. This is a Christian expression of gratitude and respect. By tradition the godparent will also provide the cross and a new white baptismal outfit for the infant; and usually the towel for the baby, a hand towel for the Priest; oil, soap and a candle.

After the Ceremony, the child is traditionally brought to Church for three consecutive Sundays, to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion, with the Baptismal candle. We do not however stop coming to Church to receive this blessed Mystery; this is the very centre of our faith and life for us Itself. "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood, abides in Me and I in him" [John 6:56] says our Lord. And, He also affirms, that if we do not, we "Have no life (in us) [John 6:53-54]."

On the third day after the Baptism (the day of Baptism is counted as day one) we can now wash the child and

the baptismal garments and towels. The water from the bath and towels is holy, so we treat it with solemnity. This is water mixed with the myrrh from the Baptism, so we return it to the Earth, in the garden if possible; somewhere we will not be stepping on.

☚ Obligations

Since the introduction of infant Baptism, the godparent has assumed the important obligation, together with the parents, of ensuring that the infant is brought up within the Orthodox Church and in the life of Christ. It is precisely on account of this obligation that the baptismal sponsor is called the 'parent-in-God'. The task of steering a child along the narrow path and bringing them up according to the law of God is perhaps the greatest of all things in life. St. Theophan the Recluse says that there is no holier act.

While it is an honour to be asked to be a godparent, one should make sure that the potential sponsor will be committed to the responsibility. The role must be honoured and not taken lightly. Every godparent will be accountable to God as to whether or not he or she has fulfilled their duties. Prospective godparents must know their faith, or at least be in the process of learning their faith and be committed to a life in Christ. One problem today is that people who are called upon to be godparents do not know their faith and are not regular participants in the life of the Church. This is also true for some parents. Consequently, a child who is baptized may never know anything about Jesus Christ and the Church. In the early Church heavy emphasis was placed on the educating of the faithful and those who desired to come into the Christian faith. As Christianity spread in a pagan world, the need to teach individuals before their baptisms became crucial. The systematic instruction, which was a preparatory stage for baptism was and is called "catechism."

Appropriate gift-giving honouring the occasion of the godchild's nameday, birthday or baptism day, could include such things as icons, a Bible, and religious books that will be helpful in building up the spiritual life of the child. These are the most important, but it is not wrong to give other gifts as well that the child would enjoy and make use of.

In addition, the godparent may also be the one who cares for the child if untimely demise is met by the parents.

Congratulations! May you always be worthy; God bless you!

