

The Nicene Creed

As approved in amplified form at the [Council of Constantinople \(381\)](#) , it is the profession of the [Christian Faith](#) common to the [Catholic Church](#) , to all the [Eastern Churches](#) separated from [Rome](#) , and to most of the [Protestant denominations](#) .

Soon after the [Council of Nicaea](#) new formulas of [faith](#) were composed, most of them variations of the Nicene Symbol, to meet new phases of [Arianism](#) . There were at least four before the [Council of Sardica](#) in 341, and in that council a new form was presented and inserted in the Acts, though not accepted by the council. The Nicene Symbol, however, continued to be the only one in use among the defenders of the [Faith](#) . Gradually it came to be recognized as the proper profession of [faith](#) for candidates for [baptism](#) . Its alteration into the Nicene-Constantinopolitan formula, the one now in use, is usually ascribed to the [Council of Constantinople](#) , since the [Council of Chalcedon](#) (451), which designated this symbol as "The Creed of the Council of Constantinople of 381" had it twice read and inserted in its Acts. The historians [Socrates](#) , [Sozomen](#)

, and
[Theodore](#)
do not mention this, although they do record that the
[bishops](#)
who remained at the council after the departure of the
[Macedonians](#)
confirmed the Nicene
[faith](#)
.
[Hefele](#)
(II, 9) admits the possibility of our present
[creed](#)
being a condensation of the "Tome" (Greek
tomos
) , i.e. the exposition of the doctrines concerning the Trinity made by the
[Council of Constantinople](#)
; but he prefers the opinion of
[Rémi Ceillier](#)
and
[Tillemont](#)
tracing the new formula to the "Ancoratus" of Epiphanius written in 374. Hort, Caspari,
Harnack, and others are of the opinion that the Constantinopolitan form did not originate at
the
[Council of Constantinople](#)
, because it is not in the Acts of the
[council of 381](#)
, but was inserted there at a later
[date](#)
; because
[Gregory Nazianzen](#)
who was at the council mentions only the Nicene formula adverting to its incompleteness
about the
[Holy Ghost](#)
, showing that he did not
[know](#)
of the Constantinopolitan form which supplies this deficiency; and because the
[Latin](#)
[Fathers](#)
apparently
[know](#)
nothing of it before the middle of the fifth century.

The following is a literal translation of the Greek text of the Constantinopolitan form, the
brackets indicating the words altered or added in the [Western liturgical](#) form in present use:

We [believe](#) (I [believe](#)) in one [God](#), the 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](#), and born of the Father before all ages. ([God](#) of [God](#)) light of light, [true God](#) of [true God](#)
. Begotten not [made](#), [consubstantial](#) to the Father, by whom all things were [made](#)
. Who for us [men](#) and for our [salvation](#) came down from [heaven](#)
. And was incarnate of the [Holy Ghost](#) and of the [Virgin Mary](#) and was made [man](#)
; was crucified also for us under [Pontius Pilate](#), suffered and was [buried](#)
; and the third day [rose again](#) according to the [Scriptures](#)
. And [ascended into heaven](#)

, sits at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with
[glory](#)
to judge the living and the dead, of whose
[Kingdom](#)
there shall be no end. And (I
[believe](#)
) in the
[Holy Ghost](#)
, the Lord and Giver of
[life](#)
, who proceeds from the Father (
[and the Son](#)
), who together with the Father and the Son is to be
[adored](#)
and glorified, who spoke by the
[Prophets](#)
. And one
[holy](#)
,
[catholic](#)
, and
[apostolic](#)
[Church](#)
. We confess (I confess) one
[baptism](#)
for the remission of
[sins](#)
. And we look for (I look for) the
[resurrection of the dead](#)
and the
[life of the world to come](#)
.
[Amen](#)
."

In this form the Nicene article concerning the [Holy Ghost](#) is enlarged; several words, notably the two clauses "of the
[substance](#)
of the Father" and "

[God](#)

of

[God](#)

," are omitted as also are the

[anathemas](#)

; ten clauses are added; and in five places the words are differently located. In general the two forms contain what is common to all the

[baptismal](#)

formulas in the early

[Church](#)

. Vossius (1577-1649) was the first to detect the similarity between the

[creed](#)

set forth in the "Ancoratus" and the

[baptismal](#)

formula of the

[Church](#)

at

[Jerusalem](#)

. Hort (1876) held that the

[symbol](#)

is a revision of the

[Jerusalem](#)

formula, in which the most important Nicene statements concerning the

[Holy Ghost](#)

have been inserted. The author of the revision may have been

[St. Cyril of Jerusalem](#)

(315-386). Various hypotheses are offered to account for the tradition that the Niceno-Constantinopolitan

[symbol](#)

originated with the

[Council of Constantinople](#)

, but none of them is satisfactory. Whatever be its origin, the fact is that the

[Council of Chalcedon](#)

(451) attributed it to the

[Council of Constantinople](#)

, and if it was not actually composed in that council, it was adopted and authorized by the Fathers assembled as a

[true](#)

expression of the

[Faith](#)

. The history of the

[creed](#)

is completed in the article

[Filioque](#)

. (See also:

[ARIUS](#)

;

[EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA](#)

)

[Source of the information](#)

