



# Did You Know?

November 28, 2021

Advent is a time of preparation – preparation for the celebration of Jesus coming at Christmas and preparation for when Jesus comes again. This Advent season, we are going to focus on the later by exploring the Creed.

Preparing ourselves for Jesus' second coming requires us to examine our hearts. If Jesus came today, are you ready? Is God a part of your life, or is he an afterthought? To help you either make God the center of your life, or to keep him there, I invite you to spend some time these four Sundays of Advent reflecting on what we say each week in the Creed.

While at Mass each Sunday, every Catholic stands and says a Creed – either the Apostles' or Nicene. But what exactly is a creed?

The word creed comes from the Latin word *credo* which means 'I believe'. As we stand together after the homily, we make a profession of faith – we state what it is we believe and hold to be true as a Christian people. We stand together as one faith community and recite the Creed together, yet we say 'I' believe. We each individually, yet together, profess the faith of the Church. The Catechism tells us, "*Whoever says 'I believe' says 'I pledge myself to what I believe.' Communion in faith needs a common language of faith, normative for all and uniting all in the same confession of faith.*" (CCC 185)

We each say 'I' because our faith is a choice. We have been created with free will. God gives us free will so that **we** make the choice to choose God. God does not force Himself on us.

So, we have established that when we profess the Creed, we are stating what it is we believe. Having said that, the Creed is not a single summary of the Catholic faith. Even the longer Nicene Creed, doesn't include a complete summary of all that we believe. For example, the source and summit of our faith, the Eucharist, is not mentioned. And while we profess about Jesus' birth and death, his teachings nor his

miracles are stated. Yet those are all things that we believe.

Though the Creed is a summary of the core or principle truths of the Church, it can be a great place to start for the faithful when you want to learn more about and/or deepen your faith. The Creed has often been used to introduce the Catholic faith when evangelizing and teaching the faith to those in RCIA.

The origins of the Apostles' Creed are not completely known. However, most theologians today believe as the Church grew, something needed to be put in place that stated what the Apostles' had taught to help the faithful stay on course. The Catechism states even though the apostles did not write it, "the Apostles' Creed is so called because it is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the apostles' faith." (CCC 194)

The Nicene Creed came out of the First Ecumenical Council held in Nicaea in 325 AD. It was convened to resolve the controversy of Arianism, a doctrine that held that Christ was not divine but was a created being. So the Council added lines to the Apostles' Creed to address Jesus' divinity.

In 381 AD, the Council of Constantinople focused on Jesus' humanity, expanded on the Holy Spirit, and added the Four Marks of the Church – one, holy, catholic (universal) and apostolic – giving the Church the Creed we recite today.

"This Creed is the spiritual seal, our heart's meditation and an ever-present guardian; it is, unquestionably, the treasure of our soul."  
St. Ambrose