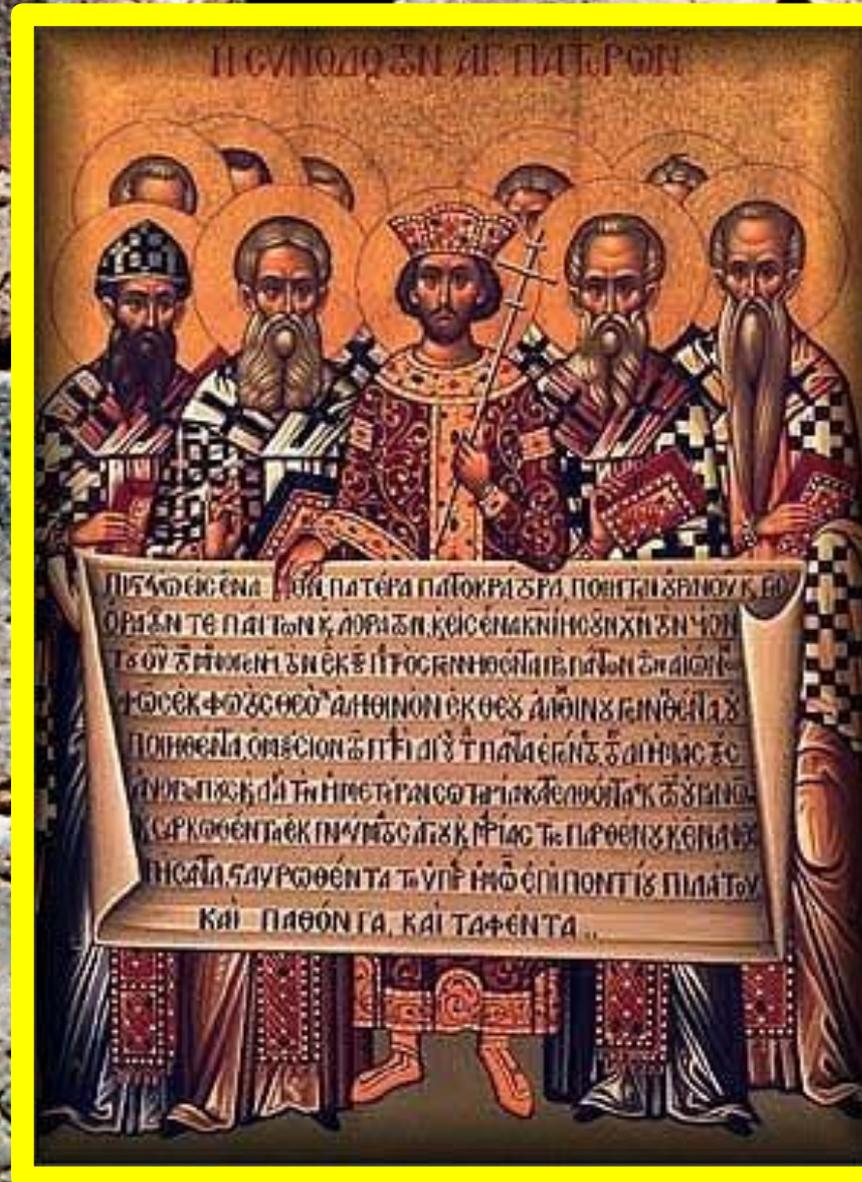


# The NICENE CREED



Icon depicting the Church Fathers of the First Council of Nicaea holding the Nicene Creed

# Background

The Nicene Creed is a most wonderful summary of our Christian Faith. It outlines the theological, dogmatic, and historical building blocks upon which our Faith is built. Sadly it has also been a major cause of division within the Church.

The formulation of the Nicene Creed began during the First Council of Nicea in 325AD. It was revised and expanded by the Bishops who attended the First Council of Constantinople in 381AD and it was here a final version was agreed upon.

The two main centres of the Church at this time were Rome in the West and Constantinople (*modern day Istanbul*) in the East. Sadly a split [schism] took place between these Churches in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. This was partly due to the "*filioque*" clause being added to Creed by the Western Church some time prior to this split taking place. More on this later.

Even so, to this day, the Nicene Creed, in its various forms, is revered and recited by Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and a large number of the Protestant Churches.

# Background, cont.

The aim of this presentation is to give an insight into the Nicene Creed, also called the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, due to the fact it was formulated over the course of two Church Councils.

We will explore the Roman Catholic version of the Creed which includes the "*filioque*" clause.

You will notice from the icon at the start of this presentation that the the original creed was written in Greek. This was the language of the eastern Mediterranean where both of the Councils [Nicea + Constantinople] took place.

For the text of this presentation I have borrowed heavily, with permission, from a fine primer on the Creed written by David Bennett. This primer examines the Creed section by section.

David's work is located at - <http://www.ancient-future.net/nicene.html>. It forms part of a wonderful website - <http://www.ancient-future.net> which I would recommend to you .

# Introduction

The Creed is very important in the RCIA process. The Creed is a wonderful framework around which the Period of the Catechumenate [Instruction] can be based.

During the Period of Purification and Enlightenment [Preparation] the Elect are presented with the Creed during the week after the first Scrutiny, preferably in the presence of the community i.e. in public.

After the homily a Deacon or other assisting minister says:

*“Let the elect now come forward to receive the Creed from the Church.”*

Before beginning the Creed the Celebrant addresses the Elect with these beautiful words: *“My dear friends, listen carefully to the words of that faith by which you will be justified. The words are few but the mysteries they contain are great. Receive them with a sincere heart and be faithful to them.”* [RCIA 147](#)

# I Believe in One God

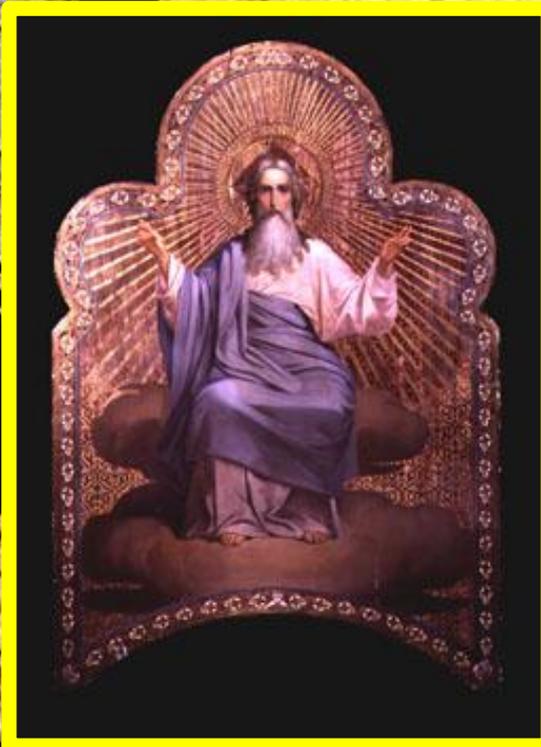
As Christians, we, like Jews and Muslims, believe that only one God exists. The Creed states the assumption of the Shema: *“Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.”*



God the Father,  
Michelangelo,  
The Sistine Chapel

# The Father Almighty

Jesus frequently calls God "*Father*" in the Scriptures, and this usage implies a loving God active within His creation. God the Father is the first person, or distinction, within the Godhead. The Father is in a sense the "*origin*" or "*source*" of the Blessed Trinity. God the Father is often called "*God Unbegotten*" in early Christian thought.



Russian icon of God  
the Father,  
origin = St Petersburg,  
Russia

# Maker of Heaven and Earth, of All Things Visible and Invisible

We believe that God created the visible and invisible elements of the cosmos. Thus, God created everything. Some early sects, the Gnostics and Marcionites, believed that God the Father created the spirit world, but that an "evil" god (called the demiurge) created the similarly evil material world. The Creed dispels such a notion.



An aerial, grayscale image of a city, likely Rome, showing a dense urban landscape with numerous buildings and a large, prominent stadium in the lower half of the frame. The stadium has a distinctive oval shape and a large, flat roof. The text is overlaid on the image in a yellow, outlined font.

The Roman Catholic  
RCIA Resource Site:

<http://www.catechumen.org.uk>  
email: [catholic@catechumen.org.uk](mailto:catholic@catechumen.org.uk)