

CATECHIST CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

3.7 THE CREED

Father Kevin F. X. Duggan
Pastor
Mary, Queen of Peace Parish, Sammamish

**THE CHRISTIAN BELIEF IN GOD
FIRST PRINCIPLES**

- The "via negativa" – the *apophatic* approach:
 - ❖ St. John Chrysostom – God is "the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable."
 - ❖ St. Augustine = "If it can be understood, it is not God."
 - ❖ St. Thomas Aquinas – "Concerning God, we cannot grasp what he is, but only what he is not. Whatever can be understood or thought of is less than God."
 - ❖ Martin Luther – "The human mind is an idol-making machine."
 - ❖ Lateran Council IV – "No similitude can be expressed without implying an even greater dissimilitude."

**THE CHRISTIAN BELIEF IN GOD
FIRST PRINCIPLES**

- The "via positiva" – the *kataphatic* approach:
 - ❖ God's existence can be known through natural reason alone
 - ❖ God himself can only be known through the aid of revelation which is perceived by the supernatural gift of faith
 - ❖ Though God transcends all created things, and though our knowledge of God and language about God are limited and imperfect, we can nevertheless truly name God using analogies and metaphors drawn from the many qualities of his creatures, which are likenesses of the infinitely perfect God

**THE APOSTLES' CREED AND THE
NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Apostles' Creed

- ❖ Old Roman baptismal interrogatory creed
- ❖ Hippolytus (*Apostolic Tradition*, c. 215)
- ❖ Presentation by Bishop Marcellus of Ancyra to Emperor Julius I (c. 430)
- ❖ Commentary by the monk, Tyrannius Rufinus (c. 404) relates that the Apostles' Creed was used at baptism in Aquileia

**THE APOSTLES' CREED AND THE
NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Apostles' Creed (cont'd)

- ❖ Charlemagne (742-814) imposes the recitation of the Apostles' Creed upon the empire
- ❖ Earliest text of the Apostles' Creed found in *Scarapus*, by Pirminius (or Priminus, c. 753)
- ❖ Apostles' Creed used in the Divine Office between seventh and ninth centuries in the West

**THE APOSTLES' CREED AND THE
NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

The Apostles' Creed (cont'd)

- ❖ By the Middle Ages, the Western Church is using the Apostles' Creed at baptisms
- ❖ At the Council of Florence (1438-45), representatives of the East state they have never heard of the Apostles' Creed

**THE APOSTLES' CREED AND THE
NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

- ❖ Council of Nicaea (325) condemns/contradicts the Arian heresy by declaring Jesus to be *homoousias* ("one in being") with the Father. Based upon baptismal creed from the church of Eusebius in Caesarea
- ❖ Council of Constantiople (381) affirms Nicaea, and expands it based upon baptismal formularies from Antioch and Jerusalem

**THE APOSTLES' CREED AND THE
NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (cont'd)

- ❖ Council of Chalcedon (451) affirms the "Nicene Creed" from the Council of Constantinople
- ❖ By the 6th Century, the Creed of Constantinople has become the formulary used at baptisms in the East
- ❖ Rome begins using Constantinopolitan version for its baptismal creed in the 6th Century. Other Western churches soon follow

**THE APOSTLES' CREED AND THE
NICENE-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED
HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed (cont'd)

- ❖ Emperor Justin II (568) ordains the use of the Constantinopolitan Creed in Eucharistic liturgies in the East
- ❖ The Council of Toledo III (589) introduces the Constantinopolitan Creed at the Mass
- ❖ Rome adopts this practice in the 11th Century
- ❖ The Latin West adds the word *filioque* ("and the Son") to the creed. This act contributes to the tension that produces the East-West Schism in the 1st Century

**THE CREED IN THE LITURGY
DIALOGUE – CALL AND RESPONSE**

**The Creed as our response of faith to the
Word of God**

- ❖Liturgy of the Word – Scripture readings and homily

- ❖Creed – our profession of faith in God and the Church
 - Who God is and what God is like
 - What God has done for us
 - Who we are called to be as God's people

**THE CREED IN THE LITURGY
DIALOGUE – CALL AND RESPONSE**

**The Liturgy as sign/symbol of what life is
and how it is to be lived**

- ❖God speaks and acts – revelation

- ❖We respond – faith (trust) expressed in lives of loving
gratitude/praise

**THE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY
OF JESUS**

Catholic belief and teaching, rooted in Sacred Scripture and subsequently expressed through creedal and dogmatic formulation in Sacred Tradition, asserts that Jesus Christ is both truly (fully) God and truly (fully) human, i.e., Jesus is the God-Man.

THE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY OF JESUS

Scriptural evidence indicating the humanity of Jesus

- ❖ Jesus use of the title "Son of Man" (Jewish idiom for a human being)
- ❖ Jesus grows in wisdom, age, and grace (Lk 2:51-52)
- ❖ Jesus' temptation in the wilderness (Mt 4:1-17, Lk 4:1-13)
- ❖ Jesus' fatigue and thirst on the journey through Samaria (Jn 4:5-42)

THE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY OF JESUS

Scriptural evidence indicating the humanity of Jesus

- ❖ Various incidents reported in the Gospels wherein Jesus' human emotions show forth (anger, sorrow, fear, distress, joy, longing, pity)
- ❖ The Gospel accounts of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross
- ❖ The Johannine assertion that "the Word became flesh" (Jn 1:14)
- ❖ Jesus is described as a high priest who is able to "sympathize with us in our weaknesses" (Heb 4:15)

THE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY OF JESUS

Doctrinal and creedal assertions of the humanity of Jesus

- ❖ The Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) profess Jesus as the one who "became man" and who "suffered, died, and was buried."
- ❖ The Council of Chalcedon (451), using terminology borrowed from Tertullian and Irenaeus, defined Jesus as being "perfect in humanity" and "truly man, composed of rational soul and body" and "one in being with us as to humanity."

THE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY OF JESUS

Scriptural evidence indicating the divinity of Jesus

- ❖ Virtually all the texts in the Gospels that support some sort of understanding and belief in the divinity of Jesus are found in the Gospel of John
 - "In the beginning was the Word (*logos*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." (Jn 1:1)
 - John employs "I AM" statements in which Jesus speaks of himself in ways that recall God's revelation of the divine name (identity) to Moses in the story of the burning bush (Ex 3:13-15), e.g., "Amen, amen, I say to you; before Abraham ever was, I am." (Jn 8:58)

THE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY OF JESUS

Scriptural evidence indicating the divinity of Jesus

- "The Father and I are one." (Jn 10:30)
- "I am in the Father, and the Father is in me." (Jn 14:10)
- Thomas profession of faith in the risen Jesus, "My Lord and my God." (Jn 20:22)
- ❖ Paul confesses in regard to Jesus that "His state was divine." (Phil 2:6)
- ❖ Christ is praised and confessed as being "the image of the unseen God." (Col 1:15-20)

THE HUMANITY AND DIVINITY OF JESUS

Doctrinal and creedal statements regarding the divinity of Jesus

- ❖ The Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople professed Jesus as "Lord," as "God from God," that "through him all things were made," and that he is "worshipped and glorified."
- ❖ The Council of Chalcedon taught that Jesus was "perfect in divinity," "truly God," and "one in being (Greek *homoousias*, Latin *consubstantial*) with the Father as to divinity."

ADULT FAITH FORMATION – THE CATHOLIC CREED
EARLY CHRISTOLOGICAL AND TRINITARIAN HERESIES

Gnostic Docetism

Gnosticism is a religion that viewed salvation as a matter of acquiring secret knowledge (Greek *gnosis*). Gnostic cults were heavily dualistic. They believed in the material and physical universe to be evil by nature and identified it with the realm of darkness. The spiritual (non-material) was regarded as good and identified with the realm of light. Docetism was the heresy that regarded Jesus as truly God, but human only in "appearance" (Greek *docens*). To the Gnostic docetists, Jesus was God in a human mask. Biblical texts such as the **First Letter of John**, and early Christian writers such as **St. Irenaeus**, countered the Gnostics by asserting the doctrine of the Incarnation of Christ and his crucifixion.

ADULT FAITH FORMATION – THE CATHOLIC CREED
EARLY CHRISTOLOGICAL AND TRINITARIAN HERESIES

Arianism

Arius was a bishop who denied the divinity of Christ. The Arian heresy viewed Jesus as less than God, but more than human – as a kind of 'superman'. The **Council of Nicaea (325)** condemned Arianism by proclaiming that Jesus was "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, one in being (Greek *homo-ousias*, Latin *consubstantial*) with the Father," and that he "became man."

Apollonarianism and Nestorianism

Monophysitism

Monothelitism

**DIFFERENT USES/
 TYPES OF LANGUAGE**

	Simple	Complex
Technical	Car manual Crib assembly instructions	Quantum Theory Aristotle or Neo-Platonism Paul Tillich or Karl Rahner
Poetic	Mother Goose Rhymes Grimm's Fairy Tales The Bible	Shakespeare T.S. Eliot

THE CREED – WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE AND WHY IT MATTERS
LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON

Creedal Christianity: The Creed as Definition – Boundaries, Not Barriers

- A. Identity – clear and communal sense of what it means to be Christian
- B. Challenges and places demands upon each member of the community by expressing what and how the Church believes better than any of us do individually
- C. Rule of Faith – Instrument of discernment and set of principles for shaping life
- D. By simplicity of expression

THE CREED – WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE AND WHY IT MATTERS
LUKE TIMOTHY JOHNSON

Reclaiming the Creed

- A. Communal self-examination – Do we profess the creed? Why? Why not?
- B. Study the Creed – What is the Creed, and why/how did it come to be and be used?
- C. Appropriation – Use the Creed for doing theological reflection in community.
- D. Use the Creed – To celebrate Baptism and Eucharist, to read Scripture, to guide reform.
- E. Celebrate and defend the Creed – As emblem of identity and coherent statement of life.

CATECHIST CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
3.7 THE CREED

Father Kevin F. X. Duggan
father.kevin@mcp.org
