

INTRODUCTION

1 The source of Christian life is faith in the risen Christ. This faith, formulated by the Church in the Nicene Creed, also known as the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith,¹ is expressed in her liturgical prayer. Through this liturgical prayer we become partakers of Christ's Passover—partakers of new life in Christ. In this new life, we grow by means of spiritual work and moral effort. Therefore, a coupling of the Symbol of Faith with the Anaphora of the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great forms the methodological key for the text of the Catechism Christ — Our Pascha.

A Symbol of Faith

- 2 Concerning faith in the risen Christ as the very source of Christian life, the apostle Peter preached the following: "Jesus of Nazareth ... God raised him up, having freed him from death, because it was impossible for him to be held in its power. ... This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:22-24, 32). The significance of the Resurrection for our salvation is affirmed by the apostle Paul: "If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile" (1 Cor 15:17). Thus, for almost two thousand years, the Church has unceasingly witnessed and preached the Resurrection of Christ in order that people may believe and be saved: "How are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ... So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ" (Rom 10:14, 17).
- 3 By its very name, Christ — Our Pascha, our Catechism already points to the Paschal foundations of faith: Christ has "trampled death by death," and by his Resurrection "has granted life eternal." Faith in the Resurrection of Christ leads us to faith in God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; for Christ, the Son of God, "one in the Holy Trinity," in the Holy Spirit has revealed God the Father to us. The Church solemnly

¹See COUNCIL OF NICAEA I, Symbol of Faith; COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE I, Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith.

professes this faith of the apostles in the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith:²

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died and was buried. On the third day he rose again in fulfilment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]. With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

- 4 The title Symbol [of Faith] signifies that every word of the Creed not only conveys a concept about God, but also leads us into the very Mystery of Divine Reality, revealing God for our response of faith: "The apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrine confirmed the Church's one faith, and wearing the garment of truth woven from theology that descends from on high, she rightly imparts the mystery of godliness and sings her glory."³
- 5 The profession of the Symbol of Faith is the prayerful contemplation of the Church, and the sign of unity of Christians in faith: "Let your [Symbol of Faith] be, as it were, a mirror to you. Therein see yourself, whether you believe everything you profess to believe, and so rejoice day by day in your faith."⁴

2 Liturgicon, The Divine Liturgy of our Holy Father Basil the Great, The Symbol of Faith; COUNCIL OF CONSTANTINOPLE I, The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Symbol of Faith.

3 Floral Triodion, Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, Kontakion.

4 AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament, VIII, 13: PL 38, 399.