

Following Jesus Christ is a spiritual journey while we are on this earth. Every Christian is in a different place on that journey. Some of us are just starting out. Some have been journeying for some time, but are progressing slowly. Others have travelled far and long, exploring much of God's way. But for each one of us, the Creed, be it the Nicene Creed or the Apostles' Creed, is at the very heart of our faith.

Where two or more Christians are gathered together, there are an equal number of opinions and interpretations about the Bible and how traditions should be practiced. There are differing opinions on what we should sing in church, whether we stand or kneel during the Eucharistic prayers or whether to dip your wafer or sip from the cup.

But I think we can all agree that we worship the same wonderful God, Jesus Christ his son and we do so through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Creeds are a concise statement of that fundamental belief that we all share. Something I did not realise until I researched the Creed is that there are 12 articles or elements in the Apostles' Creed – 12 apostles, 12 articles? Probably not a coincidence. Over the last few weeks we have explored these in more detail. Here is a brief summary:

1. **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.** This affirms that God exists, that he is three in one and that he created the universe.
2. **And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.** This attests that Jesus is the son of God and that he's most certainly divine.
3. **Who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.** Jesus is considered as both God and man, fully divine and fully human
4. **He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried.** The human nature of Christ could feel pain and actually die. Mentioning Pontius Pilate places the Crucifixion within human history.
5. **He descended into the dead. On the Third day he rose again.** Jesus came back from the dead of his own divine power. It wasn't just resuscitating a corpse, he was truly dead. He possessed a glorified and risen body.
6. **He ascended into heaven and is seated on the right hand of God.** The ascension reminds us that the human and divine natures of Christ could never be separated once united in the Incarnation. Where Jesus went, body and soul, into the heaven, the faithful hope one day to follow.
7. **He will come again to judge the living and the dead.** This affirms the second coming of Christ at the end of the world to be its judge.
8. **I believe in the Holy Spirit.** This reminds us that God exists in the Trinity: Father, son and Holy Spirit.
9. **The holy Catholic church and the communion of Saints.** Church is more than just a mere institution. It is an essential dimension and aspect of spiritual life.
10. **The forgiveness of Sins.** Christ came to save the world from sin.
11. **The resurrection of the body.** A human being is a union of body and soul. So death is just a momentary separation of these until Christ returns.
12. **And in life everlasting.** Death is the way that mere mortals cross from this life into the next to be with our Father in heaven.

When I started out on my Christian Journey, I would say the Lord's Prayer as a way of connecting to God during my quiet times. I found it very comforting and brought me closer to him. Now that I have learnt more about what the Creed means, I find a similar kind of comfort in it. Reading it through, I feel a sense of awe, of wonder at what a wonderful God it is that we serve. That he sent his only son to earth for us, that we can come to know him and walk with him and that we can hope for eternal life in his presence.

Every time we say the creed, we can be reminded of all these things, and no matter where we are in our journey with Christ, let our faith be strengthened and deepened by God's love for us.