

St. Nicholas Antiochian Orthodox Christian Cathedral
Fall 2021 Adult Study:
Orthodox Christian Faith and Practice

Instructor: Subdn. Seraphim Keshishian
(818) 300-8136 • siropkeshishian@gmail.com
With Fr. Andrew Andrews as In-class Resource

Wednesdays: 7:15 to 8:30 p.m.
2300 W 3rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90057
www.stnicholasla.org

TEXT: Hopko, Father Thomas. *The Orthodox Faith*. Four volumes. Revised and expanded by David C. Ford.
Available in print or online at The Orthodox Faith - The Symbol of Faith - Orthodox Church in America (oca.org).

Zoom Link to Join: <https://tinyurl.com/SNC-O101-2021>

Zoom Video Recording and Outline Texts located at: www.stnicholasla.com/adulteducation.

Oct. 20 The Symbol of Faith(Vol.1 pp. 34-60 new; Vol 1 pp 34-85 old)

Nicene Creed, the Father, Creation, Jesus Christ/ Incarnation, etc.

NOTES:

Nicene Creed

- The Nicene Creed, also known as Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, was formally drawn up in the first ecumenical council (325) and at the second ecumenical council in Constantinople (381)
- Creed: it comes from the Latin word “credo” which means I believe also called the Symbol of Faith: bringing together and the expression or confession of sins confirmation of faith

“I Believe in One God, The Father Almighty”

- Faith: the foundation of Christian life, it is personal and unique (why we say “I”)
- Abraham believed the Lord, and he counted it to him as righteousness” (Gen 15.6)
- Orthodox Christians believe only one God exists
- It is this God—the Yahweh of Israel—God Almighty is known as “Father”.
- He is the first person of the trinity.
- God is loving and merciful.

“Maker of Heaven and Earth all things visible and invisible”

- Creation: to make things out of nothing
- Visible: physical creation
- Invisible: nonphysical creation, the heavens or above the heavens, the incorporeal beings (the ranks of angels)
- God (The Father Almighty): He created everything: the visible world, the earth, humanity, etc., and the invisible world, angels and evil spirits, etc.
- In Christian prayers, we say “Our Father who art in heaven...” meaning God is everywhere on Earth and in all heavens
- Angels: messengers
- Sabaoth: armies or choirs or ranks of angels. Lord of Sabaoth means God is the ruler of all the powers of heaven.
- There are 9 ranks of bodiless powers:
 - Seraphim (seraph is singular)
 - Cherubim (cherub is singular)
 - Thrones
 - Dominions
 - Virtues
 - Powers
 - Principalities
 - Archangels
 - Angels
- Evil spirits: they are angels that rebel against God and do evil
- demons/devils: “they pull apart”
- Satan: the enemy of the adversary, leader of evil spirits against God, father of lies, prince of the world, fallen/evil angel

“And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-Begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages...”

- Lord means master, Adonai in Hebrew, Kyrios in Greek.
- Jesus Christ is The Lord of All, Son of God. Christ means Messiah, Anointed One.
- Jesus is One with God as God the Father’s Only-Begotten Son.
- Son of God also called The Word, “Logos” of God, before his birth in human flesh from the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem.
- Only-Begotten means the Only One born of God The Father.
- Begotten means born/generated

- The Son of God is born from the Father “before all ages”; that is, before creation,
- God the Father exists and his Logos/ Word exists before all ages; an eternal timeless existence without beginning or end
- Eternal: constant present, no beginning or end, timeless
- The Son comes forth **from** the Father, the Son shares the essential nature of God.

“Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten not made, of one essence with the Father, through whom all things were made;”

- “Light of Light..” For God is Light and what is born of Him must be Light. And God is True God, and what is born of Him must be True God.
- God the Son exists in relation to God the Father. The Son is **not** the Father but they both are God. As the torch lit one to another, the Father and the Son are separate but both light.
- “...True God of True God.” If God gives birth to a Son, then must be the same as the Father in all things.
- “Begotten not made”: born and not created, everything that exists beside God is created by him but the Son of God is not created he was born, generated from the nature and being of God. In Orthodox Faith, God is the eternal Father by nature and He should always have with Him his eternal uncreated Son.
- “One essence with the Father”: God the Father and God the Son are equally divine. The Father is eternal, the Son is eternal. The Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated. The Father is God and the Son is God. This is what men confess when they say “the only-begotten Son of God . . . of one essence with the Father.”
- Essence: what God the Father is the Son of God is
- “through whom all things were made.” : the Bible tells us through The Son, as the Word of God, the Logos, all things have been created *Gen. 1:3*

“Who for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven...”

- “This is the most critical biblical doctrine, that “God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn 3.16)
- “Because of His perfect love, God sent forth His Son into the world.”:
- “came down from heaven”: means the Son of God was always present in the world because he is the light of man

“And He was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and was made man...”

- Incarnation: enfleshment, taking on the wholeness of human nature, body and soul.
- The divine Son of God was born as a man from the Virgin Mary as the person of Jesus of Nazareth by the power of the Holy Spirit.
- God truly became human in Jesus Christ. The incarnation of God as Christ is the unlimited act of love. Rather than sending an angel or a good human to accomplish the redemption and restoration of creation, God himself became human as St. Paul letters to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:16)
- Even in the Old Testament, prophecies (Isaiah 7:14) said that a Virgin will conceive and his name will be Emmanuel
- The Savior of the world cannot be one of the flesh born of Adam. He must be not of this world, in order to save the world.
- Jesus Christ is indeed a real man, a whole and perfectly complete man with a human mind, soul, and body like all humans; however, he did not sin.
- Jesus of Nazareth is God, or, more accurately, the divine Son of God in human flesh.
- Jesus was tempted, but he did not sin. He was perfect in every way, absolutely obedient to God the Father; speaking His words, doing His works, and accomplishing His will.
- As a man, Jesus fulfilled his role perfectly as the Perfect Man, the new and final Adam.