

# The Credenda

The following document represents the statement of common belief held by those in the COJ. This statement is based upon the Apostles' Creed. Please note: It is not necessary that a member of the Order hold to every "jot and tittle" of this document without exception. We know that as an ecumenical order, there may be some areas of disagreement. When a person makes application to the Order, we simply ask that he or she read this document first, and then make known in writing the area(s) with which there is a disagreement or problem. At that time the Abbot General will determine whether or not the disagreement will prohibit fellowship with the Order.

## **We believe in God**

- God is a self-existent, personal Being, infinite in perfection, glory and beatitude, the Creator and Ruler of the whole world. We cannot see God because God is a Spirit. As Spirit, God transcends our concepts of male and female, but has revealed Himself as Father of all mankind. Jesus addressed God as Father, and so it appropriate for us to refer to Him as Father, using the male pronoun, while also recognizing that God is not male, per se.
- God is eternal: God always was, God is, and God will ever be.
- God is every place: There is no place where God is not. God is present in a special manner, in heaven, in the Blessed Sacrament, and in the souls of the just.
- God is immutable and unchangeable: God always remains the same by nature.
- God is Omniscient: all- knowing of the past, the present, and the future, and also our inmost thoughts.
- God is supremely wise: He knows how to direct everything for the best, in order to carry out His Will.
- God is almighty: He can do all that He wills by a mere act of His Will.
- God is supremely good: He loves His creatures and all His creation.
- God is patient beyond imagination: He leaves the sinner time for repentance and a change of life. God is patient with us. He has compassion on our weaknesses and desires conversion, not condemnation for the sinner.
- God is full of mercy and compassion: He readily forgives our sins when we are sincerely contrite and penitent.
- God is infinitely holy: He loves Good and hates Evil by virtue of His essential nature.
- God is infinitely and perfectly just: He rewards all good and punishes all evil deeds. Because of God's perfect justice, we have good reason to fear\* Him. This fear of God keeps us back from sin, and leads us to perfection. The fear of God is a special grace He gives to those who love Him. (\* By "fear" we mean a holy reverence and awe for God. We do not mean that God should terrify the Christian.)
- God is a God of perfect truth: all that He reveals to man is true.
- God is faithful: He keeps His promises, and carries out His threats.

## **We believe in the Blessed Trinity**

- There is one God, and one only.
- The Blessed Trinity is one God in three Divine Persons.

- God the Father is God, God the Son is God, and God the Holy Spirit is God.
- The Three are God, not in the oneness of a single Person but in the Trinity of one Substance: one God, one Lord in glory and majesty.
- Human understanding is not capable of grasping the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity: therefore it is called a Mystery.
- The nature, attributes and works of the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are common to all of Them.
- Christ Himself teaches man the mystery of the Blessed Trinity; and it was partly known in the time of the Old Testament.

**About God as Creator, and about Mankind, We believe:**

- God alone is the Creator of heaven and earth, and without God, nothing could be created.
- God made the world out of nothing, simply because it pleased Him to make it.
- God is the Creator of everything: seen and unseen.
- God preserves all His creatures in existence as long as He wills.
- God made the body of man out of dust, and breathed into him a living soul.
- Man's soul is made in the Image and likeness of God, and, like God, man's soul is a spirit, and is immortal.
- The sin of our first parents, with all its evil consequences, has passed on to their descendants.

**About Jesus, the Christ, We believe:**

- He is the Messiah, promised by God after the sinful fall of our first parents. Many prophets of the Old Testament foretold his coming.
- He is the Redeemer because all the Prophecies of Old have their fulfillment in Him.
- He is our Redeemer because Jesus proclaimed Himself the Redeemer.
- The angels announced Him as the Redeemer.
- He is the Son of God, called so by God the Father on two occasions, and Jesus solemnly proclaimed Himself the Son of God, while he stood before the high priest.
- He was conceived of the Blessed Virgin Mary through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.
- He proved His divine mission and the truth of His doctrine by His many miracles, by His knowledge of all things, and by the holiness of His life.
- On the evening of the day we now celebrate as Holy Thursday, Jesus ate the Pasch with His disciples, and, during this meal, instituted the Eucharist.
- On the next day, which we now call Good Friday, Jesus suffered torture and a cruel death by crucifixion under the hand of Pontius Pilate.
- Immediately upon His death, His Soul went down in triumph into the place of the dead.
- Before sunrise on the day we celebrate as Easter Sunday, Jesus Christ rose glorious from the tomb by His Own almighty power.
- By His resurrection, Jesus has freed man from the evil consequences of sin.
- Forty days after His resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives, and now sits at the right Hand of God the Father.

- At the end of the world, Jesus Christ will come again to judge all mankind.
- His Incarnation is a Mystery, which, while we cannot understand, we accept on faith.
- He is truly God and truly Man: in Him are two natures, human and divine, which despite their intimate union, are quite distinct.

#### **About the Holy Spirit We believe:**

- The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Blessed Trinity, and is therefore God Himself.
- The Holy Spirit came as tongues of fire upon the twelve apostles and the disciples on the fiftieth day after Jesus' resurrection - the day we call Pentecost.
- The Holy Spirit gives gifts to the Church to equip the Church for ministry. These gifts include but are not limited to wisdom, knowledge, discernment, faith, service, teaching, encouragement, giving, leadership, administration, mercy showing, healings, tongues and interpretation of tongues, miracles, prophecy, and visions.
- The fruit of the Holy Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

#### **About the Church We believe:**

- The Church was founded by Christ, and is both a visible institution, seen in its local expressions, and an invisible body of all True Believers, in which mankind is trained for heaven.
- The members of Christ's Church are called "Christians," and are the community of the faithful.
- The Lord and King of the Church is Christ Jesus.
- Christ laid the foundation of His Church when, in the course of His teaching, He gathered a number of disciples, and from them chose twelve Apostles to preside over the rest.
- The Church is indestructible; it will remain until the end of the world. Jesus assured us, in Matt, 16:18 that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
- The Church is ONE: the Church has at all times and all places only one Head: Jesus Christ.
- The Church is HOLY: it has been set apart for the Lord's own pleasure and Commissioned to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole world.
- The Church is CATHOLIC: that is, universal. It encompasses all Believers of all time who have ever named the Name of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- The Church is APOSTOLIC: the Church continues from the times of the Apostles, and the bishops have an unbroken line of succession from one or more of these Apostles.

#### **We believe that we receive grace through the Sacraments**

In accord with the traditional Anglican position regarding the sacraments, we acknowledge two Sacraments, and five 'sacramental rites':

- Baptism is the Sacrament by which we are adopted by God as His children, are made members of Christ's Church, infused with sanctifying grace, and begin receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- The Holy Eucharist, also known as the 'Blessed Sacrament', and 'Holy Communion', is truly and completely the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. In John's Gospel, we read Jesus' own words, "The bread I will give you is My Flesh. He that eats My Flesh, and drinks My Blood shall have everlasting life." It is through the mystery of this Sacrament that we receive

His Flesh under the appearance of bread, and His Blood under the appearance of wine. By this Sacrament we are partakers of Jesus Christ, as God and man, entirely and completely. The Holy Eucharist is indeed spiritual food for our souls, strengthening our faith and increasing God's grace.

- Confirmation, also called 'Chrismation', is the sacramental rite by which the Holy Spirit gives us spiritual courage and strengthens our faith.
- Penance, or Reconciliation, is the sacramental rite of God's forgiveness for our sins. It reunites us with the Church. Our contrition and penitence are pleasing in God's Eyes. He has an unlimited bounty of mercy and love for us.
- Unction or Anointing of the sick is the sacramental rite which helps supply us with spiritual healing, and, if it be God's will, physical healing.
- Orders or Ordination is the sacramental rite whereby those, chosen by God, receive an infusion of the Holy Spirit so they can serve God's Church as bishops, priests, and deacons.
- Jesus specially blessed the sacramental rite of Matrimony by His Presence and first public miracle at the wedding feast of Cana. The married state and the celibate state are both equally holy estates.

#### **We believe in the Communion of Saints**

- The Communion of Saints consists not only of the current members of the church on earth, but also of the redeemed of all the ages, past, present, and future, both living and departed.
- We honor the Angels and Saints, especially the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Benedict of Nursia, by asking them for their intercession on our behalf. Through them and our own petitions, we pray for both the living and the dead.

#### **We believe in the Resurrection of the body**

- While on earth, Jesus raised Lazarus from was dead.
- At Jesus' death, Scripture tells us many tombs were opened and the dead appeared to many in the city.
- On the last day, Christ will raise the bodies of all mankind who have died, and unite them with their soul forever.
- Jesus' own resurrection is proof He can and will do this.

#### **We believe in life everlasting**

- Resurrection Life is the goal all Church members strive for. It is life forever, unto the ages of ages, in the wonderful majestic Presence of God, for the rest of time.
- Our hope, as Christians, is to dwell forever in the New Heaven and Earth in one of the "many mansions" promised by Jesus.