

Credo

For other uses, see [Credo \(disambiguation\)](#).

A **credo** (pronounced [ˈkreːdoː], Latin for “I Believe”) is a statement of religious belief, such as the [Apostles’ Creed](#). The term especially refers to the use of the [Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed](#) (or less often, the [Apostles’ Creed](#)) in the Mass, either as spoken text, or sung as [Gregorian chant](#) or other musical settings of the Mass.

1 History

After the formulation of the [Nicene Creed](#), its initial liturgical use was in [baptism](#), which explains why the text uses the singular “I ...” instead of “we....” The text was gradually incorporated into the liturgies, first in the east and in Spain, and gradually into the north, from the sixth to the ninth century. In 1014 it was accepted by the Church of Rome as a legitimate part of the Mass. It is recited in the Western Mass directly after the [Homily](#) on all Sundays and [Solemnities](#); in modern celebrations of the [Tridentine Mass](#) as an extraordinary form of the Roman Rite, the Credo is recited on all Sundays, feasts of the I class, II class feasts of the Lord and of the Blessed Virgin, on the days within the octaves of Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost, and on the “birthday” feasts of the apostles and evangelists (including the feasts of St. Peter’s Chair and of St. Barnabas).^[1] It is recited in the [Eastern Liturgy](#) following the Litany of Supplication on all occasions.

Probably because of its late adoption, and the length of the text (the longest in the [Ordinary of the Mass](#)), there are relatively few chant settings of it. What is identified as “Credo I” in the *Liber Usualis* was apparently widely considered the only authentic Credo, and it is the element of the ordinary that was most strongly associated with a single melody. The *Liber Usualis* contains only two other settings, designated as “Credo V” and “Credo VI,” which is far fewer than for other settings of the Ordinary.

In musical settings of the Credo, as in the [Gloria](#), the first line is intoned by the celebrant alone (*Credo in unum Deum*), or by a soloist, while the choir or congregation joins in with the second line. This tradition continued through the [Middle Ages](#) and [Renaissance](#), and is even followed in more recent settings. In [Stravinsky's Mass](#), for example, a soloist intones the first line, which is from the plainchant Credo I. In Mass settings of the Baroque, Classical and Romantic period the Credo line is usually set for whole choir, such as in the *Symbolum Nicenum*

([Nicene Creed](#)) of [Bach’s Mass in B minor](#), where the composer uses plainchant as the theme for a fugue, in the later Masses of [Haydn](#), and the *Missa Solemnis* of [Beethoven](#).

The melody of Credo I first appears in eleventh-century manuscripts, but it is believed to be much older, and perhaps Greek in origin. It is almost entirely syllabic, probably because of the length of the text, and consists of a great deal of repetition of melodic formulas.

In polyphonic settings of the Mass, the Credo is usually the longest movement, but is usually set more homophonically than other movements, probably because the length of the text demanded a more syllabic approach, as was seen with chant as well. A few composers (notably [Heinrich Isaac](#)) have set Credos independently from the rest of the ordinary, presumably to allow their insertion into *missae breves* or their omission where a said or chanted Credo is the custom.

2 Credo as section of the Mass ordinary

See also: [Mass ordinary § III. Credo](#)

2.1 Text

See also: [Nicene Creed](#)

Credo in unum Deum, Patrem omnipotentem,

I believe in one God, the Father
Almighty

factorem caeli et terrae, visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

Maker of heaven and earth, of all
things visible and invisible:

Et in unum Dominum, Jesum Christum,

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ,

Filium Dei unigenitum, et ex Patre natum ante omnia saecula.

the only-begotten Son of God, born
of the Father before all ages;

Deum de Deo, Lumen de Lumine, Deum verum de Deo vero,

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God;

genitum non factum, consubstantialem Patri;

begotten, not made, consubstantial
with the Father,

per quem omnia facta sunt.

by Whom all things were made;

Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de caelis.

Who for us men and for our salvation
came down from Heaven.

Et incarnatus est de Spiritu Sancto ex Maria Virgine, et homo factus est.

and was incarnate by the Holy
Ghost out of the Virgin Mary, and
was made man:

Crucifixus etiam pro nobis sub Pontio Pilato passus, et sepultus est,

He was also crucified for us under
Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was
buried:

et resurrexit tertia die, secundum Scripturas,

And on the third day rose again according
to the Scripture:

et ascendit in caelum, sedet ad dexteram Patris.

And ascended into Heaven, and sits
on the right hand of the Father:

Et iterum venturus est cum gloria, iudicare vivos et mortuos,

And He shall come again, with
glory, to judge the living and the
dead:

cuius regni non erit finis;

Of His Kingdom there shall be no
end;

Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum et vivificantem,

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the
Lord, and Giver of Life,

qui ex Patre Filioque procedit.

Who proceeds from the Father and
the Son

Qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur:

Who, with the Father and the Son,
is together adored and glorified,

qui locutus est per prophetas.

Who has spoken through the
Prophets.

Et unam, sanctam, catholicam et apostolicam Ecclesiam.

And I believe in One, Holy,
Catholic, and Apostolic Church,

Confiteor unum baptismum in remissionem peccatorum.

I confess one Baptism for the remission
of sins.

Et expecto resurrectionem mortuorum,

And I await the Resurrection of the
Dead:

et vitam venturi saeculi. Amen.

And the Life of the world to come.
Amen.

2.2 Musical settings

See also: [Mass \(music\) § III. Credo](#)

Settings of alternative texts as a Credo outside the Mass, as a motet, are extremely rare. The first published polyphonic settings of the [Symbolum Apostolorum](#) were settings by the French composer Le Brung in 1540, and two further settings by the Spanish composer Fernando de las Infantas in 1578.

3 See also

- [Creed](#)

4 References

[1] Prior to the reforms of the Tridentine Mass of Pope John XXIII, the Credo was also recited on the feasts of doctors of the Church, as well as on the feast of St. Mary Magdalen.

- Hoppin, Richard. *Medieval Music*. New York: Norton, 1978. Pages 136-138.

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5.1 Text

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