

# Everything for a Reason: Why We Say What We Say

*A Series on the Nicene Creed (Part 1)*

It seems to make sense to most that it is a good practice to profess our faith during the Liturgy, and it seems a convenient way to do this that we all pray the Nicene Creed. However, for the vast majority of us, we do not really know why we say the *specific words* of the Nicene Creed: why exactly do we call the Son '*God of God, Light of Light*'? Why do we add at the end of the Second Article that *His kingdom will have no end*? Who exactly are the *prophets* that the Holy Spirit speaks by?

As it is the 1700<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, we will be looking at these little phrases in the Nicene Creed that we happily, if somewhat thoughtlessly, recite every Sunday, and try to understand the history of the *reason* why those words were written for us to pray.

So let us begin with, well, the beginning!

## ***'I believe.'***

When the Creed was originally composed by the Nicene Fathers, it did not say '*I believe*' but '*We believe*,' since it was the statement of faith of all the clergy there gathered. However, very shortly after the Creed was accepted by all present, and began to be used in the Liturgy of the Church, the phrase was changed from the plural to the singular '*I believe*.' Why?

The reason is both simple and profound. The Fathers when they were meeting in the council spoke each for the congregation they represented, and thus spoke as a group of people when affirming their faith. However, in the context of the Church's worship, we are not a gathering of many separate people, but are rather One Body of Christ, One Holy Church joined to One Lord Jesus Christ, through One flesh and blood upon the Altar made our right by One birth in baptism.

Because of this, we pray the Creed not as many people separately, but as one, united, Christian person.

Therefore, every Sunday, *we confess that I believe.*