

# Debunking the Constantine Creed Myth

I was recently asked by a friend about the inherent antisemitism that Catholics partake in, specifically in regards to the so-called Constantine Creed being something we allegedly must swear to. I replied that this is a lie, as Catholics do not take such an oath or declaration of faith. She replied that she didn't know all the details, but that someone she knew had brought it to her attention. I asked her to find out where this claim came from. She soon provided me with a piece of paper with the creed, the work it allegedly came from, its author and publication date. I was later given a link to a website that explained how the Constantine Creed became part of the Catholic faith.

To give a brief background of these allegations, the claim is that Constantine, when he made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire, demanded key Church leaders to meet at Nicene, swear this oath, and then solidify Church doctrine under his guidance. As I delved deeper into this conspiracy's roots, I learned that the alleged motivation was that Constantine wanted to destroy the Jews, and therefore sought to weaponize the Christians against them. While left unsaid, this is apparently when the Catholic Church was created, as I've yet to find a Protestant that admits that the early Church was the Catholic Church. But I won't go off on that tangent here; I only state this here because all this was brought to my attention because this oath was presented as a *Catholic* problem, not a *Christian* problem. But as I did the research, even this statement was shown to be a lie, as the article has its origins in an anti-Christian website, not an anti-Catholic one.

Getting back to the main point, I researched all the original sources that the paper and website presented, plus tried a few different ways to find the Constantine Creed through my own independent research. All such personal efforts failed; they always brought me to either the Nicene Creed (which I'll include at the end so the gentle reader can see what was actually said during the council), or the fact that Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the empire (something no one disagrees with). With a good faith effort to find such information on my own finished, I will now address the "proof" given to me to justify the charge of antisemitism in the Catholic Church. First, I will address the book that the following quote supposedly came from: *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium*, Volume 1, page 105 by Stefano Assemani in 1748, and then get to the websites I was provided by my inquisitor.

I renounce all customs, rites, legalisms, unleavened breads and sacrifices of lambs of the Hebrews, and all the other feasts of the Hebrews, sacrifices, prayers, aspirations, purifications, sanctifications, and propitiations, and fasts, and New Moons, and Sabbaths, and superstitions, and hymns and chants, and observances, and synagogues.

Absolutely everything Jewish, every [TORAH] Law, rite and custom and if afterwards I shall wish to deny and return to Jewish superstition, or shall be found eating with Jews, or feasting with them, or secretly conversing and condemning the Christian religion instead of openly confuting them and condemning their vain faith, then let the trembling of Cain and the leprosy of Gehazi cleave to me, as well as the legal punishments to which I acknowledge myself liable. And may I be an anathema in the world to come, and may my soul be set down with Satan and the devils.

Stefano Assemani was a Syrian who became a bishop in the Catholic Church, and was then

placed in charge of the Vatican library. He translated many Syriac documents while serving in this role, and *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum Orientalium et Occidentalium* (The Acts of Martyrs in the East and West) is one of his two signature works. It consisted of two volumes, Volume 1 dealing with stories of martyrs *outside* the Roman empire, and Volume 2 with those persecuted by Roman Emperors. So, we know one important fact simply from the title of the book: Constantine did *not* formulate the creed! Furthermore, if he did indeed force it on the early Church, he took it from a little known martyr who lived *outside* the Roman Empire! And before we even get into what might be inside this book, notice that this work was printed in 1748 A.D.; over 1,400 years after Constantine died (337 A.D.) and the First Council of Nicaea (325 A.D.). I will address the lack of contemporary evidence for the conspiracy soon. Also note that the title claims this is a collection of stories of *martyrs*, not about church councils or a history of religion in Rome. And to reiterate, Volume 1, where this quote allegedly came from, is about the lives of martyrs *outside* the Roman Empire. Where exactly is the connection with this martyr inspiring Constantine to force his forsaken oath into the Roman Catholic faith?

Looking deeper, I was not able to find out if the timeline for Volume 1 was the same as Volume 2, but clearly it was within its scope to span from perhaps 33 A.D. to at least the reign of Constantine. This gives almost exactly a 300 year range for some group of Christians who were being hunted by Jews (something prophesied by Jesus and well documented in the Book of Acts of the Apostles and contemporary historians). Seeking to ensure Jewish spies were not among their group is a possible explanation for the creed, assuming it is authentic. This is just a theory of mine, but it is a lot more reasonable given what is so far known than to believe Constantine was inspired by an apparently little known martyr outside the Roman Empire. And in any case, this is not my argument, so I really shouldn't be trying to find reasons to justify it.

And if Volume 1 was *not* limited by Constantine's lifetime, then these stories could have theoretically taken place as late as the middle of the 18th Century when Assemani wrote the book. Indeed, Christian persecution still exists in the lands east of the former Roman Empire today. It is not possible for Constantine to have been inspired by a martyr born after Constantine's death. With the credibility of the conspiracy theorist being stretched past the breaking point so far, one has to wonder if this oath even exists. So we need to look into the book itself to determine if this oath is indeed real, and, if so, if there is any connection whatsoever between it and Constantine. This connection is critical, as this connection seems extremely unlikely *prima facie*.

Now, I was able to find a copy of this volume as a free download (<https://archive.org/details/ActaSanctorumMartyrumOrientaliumEtO/page/n3/mode/2up>), but it was a photocopy of a book with the original Syriac text of the stories and Assemani's Latin translation side by side on each page. Assemani did provide some notes to give the text context, but they were in Latin as well. As I cannot read either Syriac or Latin, I am unable to confirm the existence of the oath, much less the context in which it was said. Still, assuming it is true, we still need to know how Constantine came to learn of it, and if he did indeed desire it to be part of the Empire's new official religion. I feel I have made more than a good faith effort in this endeavor, and ultimately it is the responsibility of the conspiracy theorist to provide such an unlikely connection, not mine. This leaves me the web page (<https://apostolic-council.org/the-constantine-creed>).

The web page also failed to provide these necessary connections. It treated the idea that this oath came from Constantine as *a priori*, and that he forced those in attendance to swear by it before the council could convene. But we already know he did not create the creed. But even more importantly, one cannot simply change the empire's official religion without people of the empire taking notice, and this will remain a continuing problem in accepting the credibility of this conspiracy theory. How can

an entire culture be so radically changed in such a short time, and no records of the inevitable upheaval and confusion be recorded? But this web page did give four websites that it used for reference, so I need to address them as well.

One led me to an Access Forbidden notification, and another site appeared to be no longer active. So half of its references were not useful. Wikipedia was the third source, but Wikipedia only supported the conspiracy on one point: that the Council of Nicaea took place in 325 AD. No one disagrees with this point, so it was not useful in giving any credibility to the conspiracy theory. Wikipedia did show that Constantine *asked* the Church leaders to convene to solidify their teachings, but gives absolutely no evidence that he told them what to do once they did. As his personal interference is at the very heart of the conspiracy, the reference again fails to help the author. So this left only one reference to explore: The Creator's Calendar, and its article "Constantine's Creed: the Forgotten Foundation of ALL Christian Churches." Note that its very name accuses all Christians of being antisemitic, not just Catholics. So this is not a "Catholic" problem after all.

This site has many conspiracy theory articles, many specifically addressing the paganization Constantine forced on the Church, and most of the titles are what one might expect to find for a tabloid which cared to attack Christianity. Of course, this doesn't prove what is written there is wrong, but one has to wonder why a serious student of history would write like a yellow journalist instead of a respected historian. How one writes usually indicates which type of audience one wants to read one's works. That being said, I will now discuss what this particular article has to say, as it is the one and only reference left that might support the alleged antisemitism of the Catholic Church. It was a long article, with many sub-articles that were only somewhat related to the main point. So I'll only address the first one, which was specifically about the Constantine Creed.

First of all, the author made it clear, even in the title, that all Christians are antisemitic. The Catholics, he claimed, are the worst, but none have anything to be proud of. But it is said in such a way that a Protestant can still feel proud of his antisemitism because he is, at least, not a Catholic. In reality, any Protestant who uses this article to prove the antisemitism of Catholics is a hypocrite. The author clearly states that all Protestants are guilty of incorporating this oath in their beliefs to some degree, even if they don't realize it.

I would have liked to see, in addition to the oath, records from either the imperial palace and/or the records from the Council of Nicaea showing that Constantine did indeed make this mandate. At the very least, journals of Constantine's enemies, or contemporary historians discussing the results of such an oath. I do believe this is not only a reasonable request, but should be expected. After all, it was an extremely high profile event for both the Empire and Christianity! How would the citizens of the Roman Empire know that Jews were now religious enemies of the state if they were not told so? And how could they be told without a simply massive media effort taken empire-wide? But all this article did was state that Constantine forced all those present to swear to the oath in question. Why should I accept the credibility of the author 1,900 years after the fact when there is no indication that anyone living at the time was aware of it? Furthermore, the author of this article claimed that Assemani's book was written in *Greek* and Latin, which makes me wonder if he even researched *Acta Sanctorum Martyrum Orientalium at Occidentalium* at all. Earlier I provided the link so the gentle reader can see for himself that it was written in *Syriac* and Latin, not Greek.

Getting back to the original article I saw (apostolic-council.org), we see that it is really just an executive summary of this longer article from The Creator's Calendar. So unoriginal is this article that I believe The Creator's Calendar could file a plagiarism charge. But that is not my concern; I only want

to point out that this whole accusation seems to follow a familiar pattern of someone creating a lie about Catholics, and no one ever challenging it. Including, it appears, many Catholics. Its credibility, therefore, comes from *pathos* (passion and emotion) rather than *logos* (fact, logic and reason).

I want to end my assessment of the accusation that while many Christians have indeed departed from their Jewish roots, Catholic teachings have not. While many Christians today are looking closely at Messianic Jews for inspiration, Catholics do so for other reasons. Non-Catholics look to Messianic Jews for guidance on how Christianity ought to look; Catholics look to Messianic Jews for *why* they are doing what they have been doing all along. Catholic rituals have been faithful to their Jewish heritage, but the explanation behind the rituals has been lacking. In other words, Catholics seek to know why they do what they do, whereas non-Catholics seek to know what to do. Indeed, as Jews no longer have a temple or a functioning priestly class, Catholics, in many ways, are more Jewish than Jews. While a full list of what I mean could justify a book of considerable proportions, I want to address some of the ones that Protestants freely admit Catholics do. But while Protestants look at these things as heresy, they are actually Jewish traditions and beliefs in action.

To begin with, let us look at the way the Catholic Church is structured with a Pope, Council of Bishops, priests and deacons. Moses, with the guidance of God, established a priestly hierarchy of the High Priest, High Priest Class, priests and levites. The Catholic priestly hierarchy is modeled after the Jewish model.

Next, the Catholics believe in Purgatory. Jews believed in redemption after death at least since the first temple era, and nascent evidence of their version of Purgatory can be found in the biblical stories of King Saul and even Moses. Belief in redemption after death survived the Jewish reorganization in 170 A.D. and is part of Jewish beliefs today. Such a belief was demonstrated in great detail in 2 Maccabees 12:38-46, a book Martin Luther felt compelled to remove from Protestant Bibles. Yet Revelation 20 also shows redemption of souls after death.

Jews believed that forgiveness was necessary for restoration, yet forgiveness did not deny the need for restoration. Consider Nathan's prophecy of David's first son by Bathsheba having to die despite David being forgiven (2 Samuel 12:1-25), and how the restoration years (Sabbatical Year, *Shmita*, and Year of Jubilee, *Yovel*) only happened eight times in a fifty-year period, yet atonement (*Yom Kippur*) was a yearly event. Catholics recognize the forgiveness of sins through Jesus' sacrifice, yet we also believe that restoration for damage done must still take place (penance, Purgatory, indulgences, etc.). Most Protestants deny this Jewish teaching.

The Jews had a tradition of the Queen Mother (*gebirah* in ancient Hebrew), a word mentioned 15 times in the *Tanakh* (what Christians call the Old Testament). All 15 times are in books Martin Luther approved of: Genesis 16:4, 8, 9, 1 Kings 11:19 (used for the Egyptian queen); 15:13; 2 Kings 5:3; 10:13; 2 Chronicles 15:16; Psalm 123:2; Proverbs 30:23; Isaiah 24:2; 47:5, 7; Jeremiah 13:18; 29:2. While I am sure different translations may have a slightly different mix of English words, the New American Bible translates this word as "queen mother" five times, "mistress" seven times, "sovereign mistress" twice, and simply "queen" once. On two occasions (1 Kings 15:13 and 2 Chronicles 15:16), the woman mentioned is explicitly identified as the mother of the king, which removes any question of interpretation.

Continuing with the Virgin Mary, Catholics also see a parallel between her and the Arc from Moses' time. We know that the Arc of the Covenant carried God, the Decalogue, the Bread of the

Presence, and the Staff of Aaron. In the time of David, it stayed three months in the hill country, that it was met by David with leaping, and that it was not to be touched by man per Numbers 4:15 (as Uzzarh found out the hard way in 2 Samuel 6:6-11 and 1 Chronicles 13:9-11). The Virgin Mary carried God, the Word of God, the Bread of Life, and the ultimate High Priest. She stayed three months in the hill country with her relative Elizabeth, and she was met with leaping by Saint John the Baptist while he was still in the womb.

Catholics also believe that she was never touched by man in a sexual way. This comes from the ancient Jewish idea of Holiness, which meant "set aside for God." This is best shown in the books of Leviticus and Numbers. People, places, food and even time are divided into the holy, clean and unclean (Leviticus 10:10, first the sacred is separated from the profane, and then the profane is divided into clean and unclean). From there, different degrees of holiness, cleanliness and uncleanness are frequently defined throughout the *Torah*.

Jews had memorials for their dead, especially for the patriarchs, kings and prophets. This is testified by Jesus Himself (Luke 11:47-51). Most notably, the memorial of Rachel is well represented in the Bible, and is mentioned at least four times (Genesis 35:20, 48:7, 1 Samuel 10:2 and Jeremiah 31:15)! Catholics remember the saints with various tokens and holy places. Jews were directed to eat the sacrificed lamb during *Seder*; Catholics do this by consuming the Eucharist, which is the actual body of the Lamb of God. Jews had to eat the Bread from Heaven daily while sojourning in the wilderness; Catholics are encouraged to partake in the Eucharist daily while sojourning in this world.

Most of what has been said above is in direct violation of the oath Catholics are allegedly supposed to swear to, and the list goes on even further. Catholics use unleavened bread as a sacrifice for the Eucharist. Catholics recognize Jesus as the Lamb of God (John 1:29 and 36), so in consuming the Eucharist we are eating the perfect sacrificial lamb as part of the final Jewish Passover. Jewish Psalms (which are prayers) are recited at every Catholic mass as part of the liturgy. Jewish purification and sanctification traditions take place with the Catholic sacraments of Baptism, Confession and Extreme Unction. Catholics fast during lent. All these Jewish traditions that Catholics keep, however, are looked upon as idolatry by most Protestants.

If Catholics are antisemitic because they reject Jewish tradition and beliefs as described and demonstrated in the Bible, then they have failed in a truly epic fashion. Yet it is the Catholic fidelity to its Jewish roots that is the source of the biggest and most common attacks on Catholics by many Protestants. Indeed, the Protestant argument is that Jesus' sacrifice made so many of these Jewish traditions obsolete. So the Catholic has found himself caught up in the absurd argument that Catholics are antisemitic because they deny Jewish traditions while at the same time Catholics are idolatrous because they engage in Jewish traditions. In either case, Catholics are clearly in massive violation of the Constantine Creed they are allegedly supposed to take.

To conclude, the oath in question (assuming it is real) appears to come from a martyr of non-imperial origin, yet is attributed to Emperor Constantine with no explanation as to how or why he was inspired by it. Furthermore, there is no supporting evidence from official sources, records from political enemies of Constantine, nor commentary from contemporary historians to suggest this culture changing event ever took place. That Constantine did anything more to influence Catholic formation than to simply ask Catholic leaders to formalize their faith remains unproven.

We know of only three other times in history such a radical change was attempted: Akhenaten in Egypt, Zoroaster in Central Asia, and Julian the Apostate who sought to reverse Constantine's Christian

religion. Only Zoroastrianism survived the death of the king who initiated it, and even then it underwent such major changes in his own lifetime as to end with a fundamentally different religion than originally imagined. Yet somehow an even more radical change to an empire's culture not only went completely unnoticed in pagan Rome, but has thrived ever since. Unfortunately for the conspiracy theorist, records show that Catholic beliefs today are fundamentally the same as what was believed in the first two centuries A.D., long before the birth of Constantine. I have to conclude that this theory is a boldface lie, made deliberately and maliciously to divide today's Christendom even more than it already is. Sadly, these types of attacks on Catholicism are common.

Below is the creed that actually *was* used at Nicea. Note that the emphasis is on claiming that Jesus was fully God and fully man. The primary concern at Nicea was the Arian heresy, which claimed Jesus was not God. The particulars of Jewish faith and traditions are not mentioned at all.

### **The Nicene Creed:**

I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;  
through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,  
and became man.  
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.  
He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,  
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,  
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.  
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins  
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Raymond Mulholland

Original Publication Date: 17 July 2025