St. Athanasius, known as the "champion of orthodoxy," was born about the year 297, in Alexandria [Egypt]. Athanasius received an excellent education, not only in Christian doctrine, but also in Greek literature and philosophy, rhetoric, and jurisprudence. He knew the Scriptures thoroughly, and learned theology from teachers who had been confessors during the terrible persecutions under Maximian. In youth he appears to have formed friendships with several hermits of the desert, especially with the great Antony, whose biography he was to write. He was reader to the patriarch, and in 318 became his secretary. During this period he wrote a discourse, <Against the Gentiles>, in which he attempted an explanation of the Incarnation and the doctrine of the Trinity.

It was probably about the year 323 that one Arius, a priest of the church of Baucalis, began to teach that Jesus, though more than man, was not eternal God, that he was created in time by the Eternal Father, and could therefore be described only figuratively as the Son of God. The patriarch demanded a written statement of these doctrines. With only two dissenting voices the bishops condemned them as heresy, and deposed Arius, together with eleven priests and deacons of Alexandria. Arius retired to Caesarea, where he continued to propagate his ideas, enlisting the support of Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia and other Syrian prelates. In Egypt he had already won over many of the metaphysicians, as well as Meletius, bishop of Lycopolis, and leader of a dissident group. Theology being the topic which most deeply engaged men's minds, the Arian controversy interested all classes of the population. The heretical propositions were publicized in the form of songs set to popular tunes, and these were chanted in the forums and carried by sailors from port to port.

Though exiled five times during his life, (all surrounding the Arian Heresy and his defense of Christ’s Divinity and Orthodoxy) his last years were peaceful. He died in Alexandria on May 2, 373. His body was twice removed, first to Constantinople, and then to Venice.

While the theological controversies which marked this period were an important milestone in the history of the Church, Athanasius rendered an outstanding service. The statement of Christian doctrine known as the Athanasian Creed [See below] was probably composed during his life, but not actually by him. In his works there is deep spiritual feeling and understanding, and as Cardinal Newman said, he stands as "a principal instrument after the Apostles by which the sacred truths of Christianity have been conveyed and secured to the world."

Short Video of the life of St. Athanasuis (same as in the e-mail): [St. Athanasius HD - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsiOJxynVc4&list=PL58g24NgWPIzvBk2IQVES_xC4WTm6-CDI)

Athanasius Creed

*“Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the Catholic faith. Which faith unless every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the Catholic faith is this: that we worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons, nor dividing the Essence. For there is one Person of the Father; another of the Son; and another of the Holy Ghost. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the Glory equal, the Majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is; such is the Son; and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreated; the Son uncreated; and the Holy Ghost uncreated. The Father unlimited; the Son unlimited; and the Holy Ghost unlimited. The Father eternal; the Son eternal; and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet they are not three eternals; but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated; nor three infinites, but one uncreated; and one infinite. So likewise the Father is Almighty; the Son Almighty; and the Holy Ghost Almighty. And yet they are not three Almighties; but one Almighty. So the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Ghost is God. And yet they are not three Gods; but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord; the Son Lord; and the Holy Ghost Lord. And yet not three Lords; but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity; to acknowledge every Person by himself to be God and Lord; So are we forbidden by the Catholic religion; to say, There are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none; neither created, nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made, nor created; but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten; but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this Trinity none is before, or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three Persons are coeternal, and coequal. So that in all things, as aforesaid; the Unity in Trinity, and the Trinity in Unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved, let him thus think of the Trinity.*

*Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation; that he also believe faithfully the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right Faith is, that we believe and confess; that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and Man; God, of the Substance [Essence] of the Father; begotten before the worlds; and Man, of the Substance [Essence] of his Mother, born in the world. Perfect God; and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead; and inferior to the Father as touching his Manhood. Who although he is God and Man; yet he is not two, but one Christ. One; not by conversion of the Godhead into flesh; but by assumption of the Manhood into God. One altogether; not by confusion of Substance [Essence]; but by unity of Person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man; so God and Man is one Christ; Who suffered for our salvation; descended into hell; rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from whence he will come to judge the living and the dead. At whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies; And shall give account for their own works. And they that have done good shall go into life everlasting; and they that have done evil, into everlasting fire. This is the Catholic faith; which except a man believe truly and firmly, he cannot be saved.”*

**Primer Questions**

**Biblical:** On page 1 (lines 15-17) our Saint refutes Arius and the heretical bishop Eusebius (and followers) with two key notes from Scripture (Colossians 1:17 and John 1:3). He earlier reframes the Arian heresy which presupposes that by “All things were delivered to Me by my Father…” the Lord meant the Lordship of Creation, stating that the Lordship of Creation cannot be true, rather it is meant to reveal the incarnation of God (for our salvation). Our modern translation of Col 1:17 reads, “His is before all things, and in him all things hold together”. In the Douay Rheims the same verse is translated as, “And he is before all: and by him all things consist.” Does the fact St. Athanasius points to the binding unity needed for healing of a broken world hold weight with you? When combined with John 1:3 “all things were made through him, and without out him not anything was made” which ties the complete trinity (notice the use of the plural “Let us make man in our own image…” [Gen 1:26] to creation not by only God the Father but by the entire Trinity. Making the argument Arian presupposition that the Lordship of Creation was only the work of the Father (and thus the transfer of the “Lordship of Creation”) and its subsequent logical extension – Christ was less than the Father or not Divine- Materially and factually untrue. Do you agree with Athanasius, Why or why not?

**Catechetical:** In CCC430 and CCC432, the church tells us that, In Jesus, God recapitulates all of his history of salvation on behalf of men” [CCC430] and that “…Jesus united himself to all men through his Incarnation [CCC432] from Acts 4:12 and Jas 2:7. Our Saint tells us on lines 42-44 that “He delivered to Him man, that the Word Himself might be made Flesh, and by taking the Flesh, restore it [our sinful world broken at the fall] wholly.” This tells us that the Eternal Son, transcends linear time to heal all sin by sacrificing himself for men (His image and likeness) opening the doors of heaven once closed and barred at the fall. Does this deepen your devotion to God the Father, God the Son and or God the Holy Spirit? Why or why not?

**Spiritual:** In lines 145-150, Our Saint tells us about the inseparable nature and being of the Holy Trinity having the attributes of Everlastingness, Eternity and Immortality. And since we are created in His likeness and image, though with an independent will, we are call to unity of our personhood, body and soul, to God. That permanence of that unity (everlasting eternity), we are called to seek, to emulate the Relationship of Holy Trinity. Does this seem like a venture worth undertaking? Knowing that God is really the instrument that makes this possible, are you willing to cooperate with Him to achieve the unification that God seeks for all souls? Does anything hold you back? If so, what? If not, can you explain what mindset change is necessary for you to achieve such a level of unity with the Lord?