



| *“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Hebrews 13:8)*

Introduction: When the Faith Hung by a Thread

In the 4th century, Christianity—barely beginning to consolidate after centuries of persecution—faced one of its deepest crises. It wasn’t an external threat, but an internal heresy that questioned the very heart of the faith: **Is Jesus Christ truly God?**

The battle that ensued wasn’t fought with swords, but with theological arguments, councils, and personal suffering. At the heart of this storm stood a towering, courageous, and tireless figure: **St. Athanasius of Alexandria**, bishop, theologian, and defender of the true faith against Arianism.

Today, when many voices relativize Christ’s divinity or reduce Him to a mere “moral teacher,” Athanasius’ struggle becomes uncannily relevant again. His witness is not just history: **it is a beacon for Christians who want to stand firm in the authentic faith amid contemporary confusion.**

What Was Arianism?

Arianism is named after Arius, a priest of Alexandria who, in the early 4th century, began teaching that **Jesus Christ was not truly God**, but rather an exceptional creature, preceding all other creation, yet **inferior to the Father**.

In other words, for Arius, the Son of God was **not eternal** nor of the **same nature** as the Father. His infamous slogan was: *“There was a time when the Son did not exist.”*

This went directly against the Gospel of John:

| *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)*



To deny the full divinity of Christ is not a mere academic mistake; **it is spiritual poison that disfigures the face of the Savior**. If Christ is not God, **He cannot save us**, for only God can redeem us. If Christ is not eternal, **He cannot be the Alpha and the Omega** (Revelation 22:13). If He is not consubstantial with the Father, **the Holy Trinity collapses**.

St. Athanasius: Champion of Orthodoxy

St. Athanasius was born around 295 AD in Alexandria (Egypt), and from a young age, he was known for his intellectual brilliance and pious life. He served as deacon to Bishop Alexander during the **Council of Nicaea** in 325 AD, where Arianism was officially condemned and the Church proclaimed that Christ is **“true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.”**

When Athanasius was elected bishop of Alexandria in 328 AD, his life became a true theological martyrdom. He was **exiled five times**, lived in hiding, was slandered, and threatened with death. Yet, **he never yielded to the pressure of emperors or Arian bishops**, who dominated much of the clergy at the time.

It was said: *“Athanasius against the world”* (*Athanasius contra mundum*), and it wasn't an exaggeration. Despite the loneliness and adversity, **he upheld the faith in Christ's divinity with heroic firmness**.

The Theological Battle: Who Is Jesus Christ?

St. Athanasius defended the belief that **the Word of God is eternal, uncreated, and fully God**. His most well-known work, *Against the Arians*, is a theological monument to Christology.

For Athanasius, to deny Christ's divinity was to **deny our salvation**:

“*The Word became man so that we might be made divine*” (*On the Incarnation of the Word*)



Christ did not assume human flesh merely to give us an example, but to **redeem it from within**, unite it to divinity, and heal what was wounded by sin. This is only possible if He is truly God.

Why Is This Relevant Today?

Many Christians today **repeat similar errors to Arianism**, though under different names. People claim Jesus was “a great prophet,” “a spiritual leader,” “an admirable sage,” but shy away from proclaiming that He is **God incarnate**, Lord of the universe, and Judge of the living and the dead.

Moreover, modern ideologies tend to relativize truths of faith, reducing religion to social ethics or subjective feelings. The witness of Athanasius **invites us back to the essential: Christ as true God, the absolute center of the faith.**

Practical Applications: Living the Faith Like St. Athanasius

□ 1. **Proclaim Christ as Lord Without Fear**

Don't be ashamed to declare that Jesus Christ is God, even if others ridicule you. Remember: **truth is not negotiable.**

□ 2. **Form Yourself in the Faith**

Study the Creed, read the Gospel of John, strive to understand the Catholic doctrine about Christ. Ignorance is fertile ground for error. Formation is both shield and sword in times of confusion.

□ 3. **Pray with the Words of True Faith**

Make traditional Christological prayers your own, such as the Gloria, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, or the Angelus. These prayers contain a deep synthesis of what Athanasius defended with his life.



□ 4. Be Courageous Against the Pressure of the World

Are you criticized for your faith? Pressured to stay silent or conform? Remember St. Athanasius: **better to be in the minority with the truth than in the majority with error.**

□ 5. Support Faithful Shepherds

Today there are also “Arian bishops” who dilute or deny essential truths. Pray for your priests and faithful bishops, support them, and be a voice of clarity in your community.

A Pastoral and Theological Guide for the 21st Century

□ Keys to Discern True Faith Today:

1. **Total Christocentrism:** If a teaching sidelines Christ or diminishes Him, **it is not Catholic.**
2. **Fidelity to the Creed:** The Symbol of Faith is not optional; **it is the core of what we believe.**
3. **Reading the Church Fathers:** St. Athanasius, St. Augustine, St. Basil, and others are pillars. Their writings fortify the faith.
4. **Sacramental Life:** Only if Christ is God, **is the Eucharist truly His Body and Blood.** Denying His divinity empties the Mass of its meaning.
5. **Courageous Love of Truth:** Feeling good is not enough; we must **love truth even unto sacrifice.**

Conclusion: An Example for Our Times

St. Athanasius was not a “radical” nor a fanatic. He was **a man of God, a faithful shepherd, a courageous theologian.** His legacy is not a museum piece of ancient history: **it is a compass for every Christian who wants to remain firm in the truth of Christ.**

In times when many dilute or distort the face of Jesus, Athanasius reminds us that **faith is not negotiable**, and that **true love for God requires the clear defense of His divinity.**



“No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also.” (1 John 2:23)

Today, you and I are called to fight the same battle. Not with hatred, but with love and truth. Not with violence, but with prayer, formation, and courage.

May St. Athanasius intercede for us, so that, like him, we may defend with firmness and joy that Jesus Christ is true God and true man, our Savior, our Lord, our everything.

Want to go deeper? Here are some recommendations:

- *Against the Arians*, by St. Athanasius
- *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraphs 422–682 (Christology)
- Lectio divina with chapter 1 of the Gospel of John

Did this article inspire you? Share it with someone who needs to be reminded of who Jesus truly is. Faith is passed on through witness, and **you can be that witness.**

☐ **St. Athanasius, pray for us!**