



Archdiocese of New York + 2011

THE NICENE CREED

The Creed is a Profession of Faith: A “creed” is a clear statement of the essential beliefs of a religious group. The way in which these basic truths are expressed has taken several forms in the history of the Roman Catholic Church. The earliest forms of the Creed were a part of the rite of Baptism, in which those to be baptized would make a declaration of faith just before their baptism with water. Later, the Creed was expanded by Church Councils to include more specific truths that made clear what the Church believed in the face of heretical teachings. The most prominent of these forms are the Apostles’ Creed and the Nicene Creed.

The Profession of Faith in the Mass: Our Profession of Faith at Mass is a ringing assertion of our belief in the basic truths that unite us as one body in Christ. The Creed is proclaimed on Sundays and major feasts called Solemnities. It may also be used at Masses on other solemn occasions. The Creed follows the Readings and the Homily and is understood by the Church to be a response in faith to what we have heard proclaimed in the Sacred Scripture and explained to us in the Homily. It is also the moment when we call to mind the great truths of our faith before we enter into the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Nicene Creed: The Nicene Creed dates back to the fourth century in the history of the Church. An expansion of the earlier Apostles’ Creed, it was developed in 325 at the Council of Nicea as a clear declaration of the beliefs of the Church in the face of the Arian Heresy which denied that Christ was

truly God and truly man. In 381, this Creed was further refined by the Council of Constantinople and was first introduced into Mass in the following century.

Changes in the Translation of the Nicene Creed: In most cases the current changes to the translation of the Nicene Creed were made for reasons similar to the changes made in the *Gloria* that is, because the earlier translation sometimes employed paraphrases rather than more literal wording. Following the norms of *Liturgiam Authenticam* the new translation provides a more precise rendering of the Latin, seen to be critically important in the Creed, which is a liturgical statement of the beliefs held by the Church. In addition to this reason for change which affects several phrases in the Nicene Creed, two other changes should be particularly noted:

1. In place of *We believe in one God* the translation now reads *I believe in one God*. The Latin term *Credo* with which the Creed begins is literally translated *I believe*. The newer translation emphasizes that there can be no *we believe* unless one can first say *I believe*. This translation also emphasizes that the proclamation of the Creed at Mass comes from the one Body of Christ, an understanding reflected in the words of St. Thomas Aquinas who wrote that the Church proclaims the Creed as a single person, made one by faith.
2. Another change in the language of the Nicene Creed is the use of the word *consubstantial* in place of the

phrase *one in being*. The term *one in being* was adopted by the Anglican Church in the translation of the Creed by Thomas Cranmer at the time of the separation of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church. Following the Second Vatican Council, as part of collaborative ecumenical efforts to come to an agreement on some texts to be used in their liturgical celebrations, this translation, i.e. *one in being* was accepted by participating Christian churches, including our own for use in the

Nicene Creed. However, as the accuracy of translations was examined in light of *Liturgiam Authenticam*, it was decided that the Roman Church would adopt the direct translation of *consubstantialem Patrem*, i.e. *consubstantial with the Father*. The reason for this is that, from the standpoint of theology, *one in being* does not accurately reflect the full meaning of *consobstantialem*, i.e. that Christ is of one nature, not simply one in being, with his Father.

The new text of the *Nicene Creed* reads:

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,

[*At the following words, up to and including : and became man, all bow.*]

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