

### **Symbolon Summary for Session 4-The Story of Salvation**

Have you ever stopped to think about why churches are decorated with statues, pictures, and mosaics? These objects are like pages out of a great book that help to tell the story of salvation. This is a story that we are called to be active participants in and not just casual bystanders. Unfortunately, in today's day and age, we are beginning to lose the narrative thread of our lives. We fill ourselves with constant business, to distract us from the sense that our lives are going nowhere and seem to mean nothing. Fortunately, though, there is hope. We find that hope in the story of salvation. This story of salvation, which we recall through the words of the Creed, reminds us that there is a reason for our existence. Each one of our lives is part of a much bigger story. By seeing our lives as part of that narrative we begin to discover our purpose.

God, who is all powerful and loving, gave each of us this life and provides for us in it. He has a plan for each one of our lives, and all of our lives make sense together. The fact that God made us and provides for us is known as Providence. God, in His self-outpouring love, created human persons to share in His love with Him. We were created in a united family, with our first parents Adam and Eve, to live in harmony with God. (In the story of salvation this is known as Creation.) However, that harmony was broken when Adam and Eve were tempted. (In the story of salvation this is known as the Fall.) As a result, we now have the inclination to sin. Sin makes it harder to follow God. It breaks our relationship with God on the vertical level and hurts our bond with each other on the horizontal level. Every decision we make draws us closer to God and heaven or closer to sin and eternal damnation. Thus, we are living in the middle of this great story. God knows this and sees the battles that we face. Therefore, He sent His son, Jesus, to destroy this "death" and restore us to new life again as sons and daughters of God. Jesus, who is God became man, has the ability to repay the infinite debt of sin that we ourselves cannot repay. Jesus pays the debt of sin to God by His death on the cross and offers us new eternal life through His resurrection. Jesus does not want to save us individually separate from each other. (In the story of salvation this is known as Redemption.) As a result of this, He establishes one worldwide Church that gathers all humanity back into the one united family of God. This Catholic (meaning universal) Church has been handing on the teachings of Jesus Christ, and through the sacraments the graces that He won for us on the cross, so that we might be equipped to live like Him and with Him forever in heaven. The Church is meant for the salvation of the whole world. So, at the end of time as this final stage of His Kingdom of Love is ushered in, how do you want your life to be judged... your choice of love of self or love of God? "Freedom consists not in doing what we like, but in having the right to do what we ought."-Pope John Paul II