

Dear Parish Family,

So, we are up to the Creed and the Prayers of the Faithful. They represent the end of the Liturgy of the Word.

After the homily we recite the Creed. Why do we recite the Creed? You might be surprised to find out that many Protestant denominations reject the Creed because it is not directly from Scripture. However, the Creed is a summary of all Sacred Scripture. Thus, the Church believes the Creed properly summarizes what was proclaimed in the reading of Scripture. As Nicholas Lash states, *"What the Scriptures say at length, the creed says briefly."*

The Creed, both the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed, are more than just a list of doctrinal assertions of what we believe. When we "profess our faith" it is meant to shape our very identity and our daily lives.

The Creed we recite on Sunday is a baptismal creed. At our baptism, a series of questions based almost word for word from the Apostle's creed is used to affirm what we believe and what the parents of the child being baptized are agreeing to teach their child. The Creed is a baptismal covenant we make with God. When we recite the Creed, we recommit ourselves to God. We solemnly pledge to worship Him, to love Him, and to obey Him. What do we get in return? Eternal life!

We profess our belief in One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Creed, following in our belief in the Trinity, begins with three parts: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. First, we acknowledge God is the creator of all things, visible and invisible. Then we recognize that Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father. Consubstantial? Consubstantial means the same substance or essence. Yeah, that doesn't help does it? What we mean by "begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father" is that Jesus is pre-existent, coeternal, and uncreated. What the Father is, the Son is. They share a life and nature so completely that they are one in the same.

We recognize in the Creed that Jesus is both fully human and fully divine. This is what we mean when we say that He became "incarnate of the Virgin Mary." Millions and millions of words, pages, and books have been written to explain why God became a human being. I like simple, so in one sentence or less, I would say God took on human nature so ~~that~~ human beings could share in His divine nature. God made us to share in His divine life and through Jesus Christ that is now possible.

The Creed expresses our belief that the Holy Spirit is one with the Father and the Son and was with the Father and the Son from the beginning of creation. It is through the Holy Spirit that we continue God's work here on Earth. We participate with the Holy Spirit in the work begun by the Apostles given to them by Jesus.

The Creed's final section deals with the Church, how we become members of the Church, and the promise God makes to us. The characteristics of the Church are that it is: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. We become a member of the Church at our baptism. We affirm our belief in God's promise of the forgiveness of our sins, the resurrection of the dead and life eternal with God in heaven.

The Creed closes with one of the most powerful words in all of history. AMEN! Jesus signed God's covenant with us in His blood on the Cross. We sign our covenant with God with our AMEN.

The Prayer of the Faithful concludes the Liturgy of the Word. Here we offer our petitions to God. As we offer these prayers all those assembled at the Mass are fulfilling our priestly role. All of God's people – ordained priests, religious, and laity – when they offer prayers to God are participating in the priestly role given them at their baptism.

Next week we will begin our discussion of the Liturgy of the Eucharistic.

AMDG,

Fr. Tom