



THE MASS

I. INTRODUCTORY RITES

- Entrance
- Veneration of the Altar
- Greeting
- Penitential Rite
- "Lord, Have Mercy"
- "Glory to God in the Highest"
- Opening Prayer

II. THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

- Scripture Readings
- Homily

PROFESSION OF FAITH <

- Prayers of the Faithful

III. THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

- Preparation of the Gifts
- Prayer Over the Gifts
- Eucharistic Prayer
 1. Preface
 2. Acclamation Sanctus
 3. Epiclesis
 4. Consecration
 5. The Mystery of Faith
 6. Anamnesis
 7. Offering
 8. Intercessions
 9. Final Doxology & Amen
- Communion Rite
 1. Lord's Prayer
 2. Rite of Peace
 3. Breaking of Bread
 4. Communion
 5. Prayer After Communion

IV. CONCLUDING RITES

- Announcements
- Blessing
- Dismissal
- Veneration of the Altar
- Personal Thanksgiving

All that Christ has come to teach us, we do believe with all the strength of our soul. Such is the summary of the Creed (a word that comes from the first words of a creed in Latin *Credo*--I believe). The Creed expresses our response and assent to what we have just heard in the readings and in the homily. In the Liturgy of the Word, the Word of God, now Incarnate, has spoken to men. He will come to offer himself upon the altar in the Liturgy of the Eucharist. The Creed thus becomes a wonderful link between these two parts of the Mass.

From its early usage in the baptismal liturgy, the Creed later became an instrument to curb the heresy that threatened the principles of the faith. There arose the need to state these principles in precise and definite terms. The symbols of the faith contained the concrete propositions of the faith in brief affirmations. However, the familiar statements of the Apostles' Creed did not measure up to the degree of precision needed. So a more elaborate statement of belief or Creed was drawn up at the Council of Calcedon (451 A.D.). It combined the truths of the faith professed by the two earlier councils, one held in Nicea (325), the other at Constantinople (381). It is this Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, basically, that we find in our Sunday Masses.

Usage of the Creed in the liturgy began in Antioch and Constantinople. Then it spread to Spain, where it was adopted in the Council of Toledo (589). The council specified that the Creed should be recited before the Lord's Prayer. The Creed thus became, together with the Lord's Prayer, a preparation for Communion. From Spain, it passed to Western Europe, where it was placed after the Gospel. Rome itself did not adopt it in the Mass until the year 1014.

Today, the Profession of Faith by the priest and the people is obligatory on Sundays and solemnities. It may be said also at special, more solemn celebrations.

We can distinguish three parts in the Creed:

A confession of faith in God, the Father, our Creator, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

A confession of faith in Christ, our Lord. He is God, who by the power of the Spirit became incarnate from the Virgin Mary and was made man. (At these words, all bow as a sign of reverence for the mystery). Then we focus on Christ's passion and death on the cross; his resurrection, ascension, and participation in the judgment to reign forever, as it was announced by the angel to the Virgin Mary (Lk 1:33).

A confession of faith in the means of salvation, supplied by God, the Holy Spirit, the giver of supernatural life. We declare how he works through the Church.

HOW TO BOW DURING THE CREED



When we pray the Creed, we make a profound bow (bowing at the waist) at these words:

"by the power of the Holy Spirit, he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man."

At Christmas and at the solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, we genuflect rather than bow, commemorating the act of God lowering himself to become man.

We believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. *Catholic* means "universal"--a reminder that the Church exists throughout the world and embraces the entire revelation of God. Those who accepted only a part of it were called heretics (from *haireisis*, "to take a choice," "to join a sect"). The Church is *apostolic* because she traces her origins back to Christ through the apostles and always teaches the message the apostles received from him.

It is worthwhile putting our lives on the line, giving ourselves completely, so as to respond to the love and confidence that God has placed in us. It is worthwhile, above all, to decide to take our Christian life seriously. When we recite the Creed, we state that we believe in God the Father Almighty, in his Son, Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life. We affirm that the Church--one, holy, catholic, and apostolic--is the body of Christ enlivened by the Holy Spirit. We rejoice in the forgiveness of sins and in the hope of the resurrection.

But do those words penetrate to the depths of our own heart? Or do they remain only on our lips? The divine message of victory, the joy and the peace of Pentecost, should be the unshakeable foundation of every Christian's way of thinking and acting and living.

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