

Year of the Eucharist

October 2004 to October 2005

Part 20 in a series on
The Year of the Eucharist
from
The Office of Rites and Sacraments
Department of Worship & Spiritual Life
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The Structure of the Mass

The Liturgy of the Word *The Profession of Faith*

After the homily, a brief period of silence is observed. Then all stand for the Profession of Faith, or Creed. Although we typically think of a Creed as a list of beliefs, the Creed professed during the Celebration of the Eucharist, or Mass, is much more.

The placement of the Profession of Faith after the Scripture readings and the homily is deliberate. Following a period of silence, we rise to our feet to respond and give assent to God's word just proclaimed. Having received God's word, we respond now with renewed faith specifically in the *Triune* God. In the Creed, it is to Father, Son and Holy Spirit that we respond.

Many Catholics could "recite" the Creed without much thought. But to "profess" our faith in the context of the liturgy, conscious of the words we say, is to enter into the mystery of the love of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Whenever we profess what we believe with our whole hearts, our faith is deepened and our commitment to living what we believe is strengthened.

In the Rite of Christian Marriage, the bride and groom "profess" their commitment in the exchange of vows. In the presence of the Church, they declare their solemn promise of love with the words, "I will love you and honor you all the days of my life." Their words are a declaration of love that flow from hopeful hearts. They have tasted of a life for which they long and they are entering more deeply into that life with renewed dependence on God to help them remain faithful to their promises.

If we are attentive to the words we profess in the Creed, we could liken the character of this profession, or declaration, to the declaration of the bride and groom.

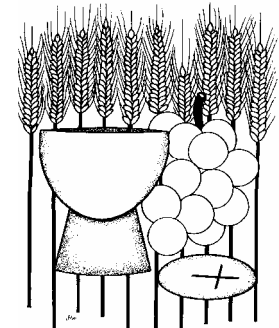
It is with full hearts that we are called to profess our belief in one God the Father, the Almighty maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

Moved by deep gratitude for the sacrifice of his life, we tell the story of God's only Son, our one Lord, Jesus Christ, who was eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in being with the Father... We continue with the story of Jesus' conception, birth, crucifixion, death and resurrection.

With joy we profess our belief in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life... and then finally in the one holy catholic and apostolic Church, the forgiveness of our sins and our own resurrection from the dead.

Like the marriage vows, our profession of faith is made in the company of the family of believers, those who will help each other to live this Creed. Like the marriage vows, this sacred Creed is lived daily.

What might our Profession of Faith be when we gather on Sunday if we took time to pray each phrase privately during the week?



FROM THE GENERAL INSTRUCTION ON THE ROMAN MISSAL...

#67. The purpose of the *Symbolum* or Profession of Faith, or Creed, is that the whole gathered people may respond to the word of God proclaimed in the readings taken from Sacred Scripture and explained in the homily and that they may also call to mind and confess the great mysteries of faith by reciting the rule of faith in a formula approved for liturgical use, before these mysteries are celebrated in the Eucharist.

Text: Judy Gray
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