

NICENE CREED

WHAT IS THE NICENE CREED? The Creed is an affirmative statement of what we believe as Catholics. It is a summary of Definitive Declarations of Revealed Truth. Not only does the Creed help to teach us about the infallible dogmas of our faith, but it also helps to defend against false teachings of heresy.

WHERE DID IT COME FROM? The Nicene Creed was developed at the Council of Nicea in 325AD. It draws authority from the first two ecumenical councils in the Church and it remains as a common declaration of faith between the Great Churches of the East and West.

WHY IS IT RECITED IN THE LITURGY? The Creed is recited (or sung) following the readings of God's word and the homily. It is the response of the faithful to the word of God. Together we state before one another, "I believe!" The Creed also serves to remind us of our baptismal vows which are binding on us for our entire existence. We pledge ourselves to what we believe.

WHAT ARE THE PARTS OF THE CREED? There are 4 parts to the Creed:

1. The Father
2. The Son (Incarnation, Sacrifice, Glory)
3. The Holy Spirit
4. The 4 Marks of the Church & Resurrection

WHY CHANGE FROM "WE BELIEVE" TO "I BELIEVE?" While it's true that we are baptized into the collective Body of Christ, we receive the Sacraments individually and so it is important to profess and affirm our own belief.

WHY DO WE SAY "CONSUBSTANTIAL WITH THE FATHER?" Consubstantial means that Jesus is of the same substance as the Father. He is more than "one in Being with the Father" as if there were two beings that were simply joined together. This philosophical term has rich theological implications meaning that the Father and Son are of the same essence.

WHY DO WE BOW? Making a profound bow (from the waist) is a physical liturgical action in which the body joins the voice in professing our faith. Some of have traced this bow to St. Louis of France who would genuflect during the Nicene Creed to show reverence to the incarnation of Christ. During the crusades, the king's practice became widespread and eventually part of the rubrics of Holy Mother Church. Our actions show reverence for the Mystery of the Incarnation which is one of the most significant acts in the history of all creation! The bow is not considered to be optional.

WHY THE CHANGE FROM "ACKNOWLEDGE" TO "CONFESS?" The word "confess" is a much stronger word than a simple acknowledgement. It is to profess, proclaim and to declare publicly our belief in the importance of baptism.

Translation from the new 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal:

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

And 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 words that follow 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.

And 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.

And 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.