

Bulletin Article #17

The Creed – (*Why every week?...B/C it's a PRAYER of trust/faith*)

If someone stood up by themselves in the middle of a Sunday Mass, and they declared “I believe that when we die as human beings, we become superheroes in an alternate universe with whatever powers we desire to possess!,” we would be rightly shocked by such a bold statement. Even if this hypothetical person was confident in such a claim, even confident with every fiber of their being, they would be wrong about the truth of reality. There can only be one thing that is true about reality, about who God is, about the meaning of life, about what happened at Christmas, and about what happens to us when we die. This is one of the main reasons why, the Church requires every Catholic to recite the Creed together every single Sunday Mass (and Holy Day) of the year. We are confident about the meaning of life, about the truth of who God is, about the story of human history, and about what happens to us when we die. The Creed is the summary of what the Early Church compiled as the essential, fundamental, or foundational beliefs of every Christian, every follower of Jesus Christ! We truly believe in God the father, we truly believe in God the Son, who also became a man in the person of Jesus at Christmas, and we truly believe in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Catholic Church. Whether it is 12 apostles and a few hundred disciples when most of the world is pagan, or whether it is the current percentage of the world that is Catholic nowadays, we proclaim to all people when we say the Creed every Sunday – this is the fullness of truth about reality, about God, about Jesus, about the Church, and about the meaning of life! Please consider joining us in belief and in practice of our Catholic Faith! This is the witness and the invitation we give every time we say the Creed, and this is one of the main reasons why the Creed is said every single Sunday at the Catholic Mass.

In light of Christmas, one little temptation when we say the Creed is to maybe recite it without thinking about it too much, or to say it without much reflection or much of our hearts involved. For this reason, the Church encourages us to do two things. First, we are encouraged to remember that the Creed is a prayer. “I believe *in one God, the Father Almighty...*”. The statement *I believe* is more than an academic statement, and that is because we ultimately believe in a Divine Person. We believe, and entrust ourselves in faith to God. We don't simply believe in a human institution as a religion, we believe that God Himself became a man, established a church, worked through imperfect human beings, and continues to work through them within the Catholic Church even today. Faith is not just blind assent, it is the totality of our humanity assenting to Divine Persons, to God the Father, to Jesus, and to the Holy Spirit as well. Faith and belief in this sense is a prayer.

Finally, the second encouragement from the Church to help us to get the most out of the Creed every Sunday is to perform a particular movement/action in the middle of this prayer. When each person starts to say the words, “and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate by the Virgin Mary, and became man,” they are asked to bow at their waist in reverence to God. But Fr. Ben! This is just awkward! Not everyone bows, so people will look at me weird! The reason we are supposed to bow, is to help us make it a prayer, and to specifically pray to understand the depth of God's love for us in becoming a man. This point is chosen for bowing because the infinite God becoming a man doesn't make sense very easily. How is this possible? How can the infinite power of God be contained in our limited, fragile, mortal human nature? But that is exactly the point, God makes himself small, he allows Himself to be limited, he unites Himself to our broken humanity in order to be born as a small child, and eventually suffer and die for our sins; conquering death by rising from the tomb. It is all for us! At Christmas, we don't just bow, we actually genuflect or kneel in reverence during this part of the Creed because Christmas is this exact celebration. May we not just recite the Creed this Christmas, but may we pray the Creed. And may we not just go through the motions this Christmas, let us enter into the beauty, truth, and goodness of the Mass for the purpose of encountering the infinite love of God for us in Jesus Christ. It is the truth of all reality, and HE is present to us more powerfully than we can imagine at every single Mass we attend!

