

### **The Creed – Part 2 (*Persecution, Martyrdom, and Family*):**

When we pray the Creed at every Sunday Mass, I often think back to a very impactful homily I heard a number of years ago on this very part of the Catholic Mass. The Priest reflected very humbly but power-fully on the millions of Christians and specifically Catholics around the world who are actively persecuted for their faith. In a real way, there are so many Catholic Christians who would be arrested for saying the Creed outloud in public. Certainly in some countries the punishment could be even worse, and you are not even allowed to say the Creed in private either. His point was that, you can imagine the feeling of those Catholics when they say the Creed during Mass. They are risking their lives in saying the Creed, but so many of them still proclaim it with all their hearts and souls. When they say those words it is not only in defiance of being persecuted and perhaps martyred for their faith, it is especially said with great humility, confidence, faith, and trust in God because of asking for His help and for His grace to persevere for love of Him under those circumstances. We can pray on their behalf every Sunday; we can pray the Creed for them and unite ourselves to their sufferings. We can be inspired by their example and pray it with the same fullness of heart, praying for our enemies, and offering the prayer in confidence of what we believe and in love of God, no matter what may happen to us. Lastly on the topic of the Creed, it is a great moment to remember that we are united in prayer and belief with all Catholics around the world during the Mass. We are the very body of Christ, and that union is fullest and most complete at Mass and through our reception of the Eucharist. The Creed helps us remember that we believe everything that the Catholic Church teaches (I believe in the Holy Catholic Church) and being united in those essential beliefs is Jesus' desire for His Church as well (see for example, John 17:22-23). We should think of the Church as a united family around the world, especially during this Holy Family Sunday. Our prayer is always for the family of the Church to be sanctified and re-deemed to become what it was always meant to be in union with Christ. The Creed is a beautiful prayer of trust and faith in a person, it is a resistance and prayer for enemies of the faith around the world, and it is a reminder and a source of unity that can help us remember Jesus' love for us and His invitation. The invitation to become more fully a member of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church in union with Jesus Himself. Amen.