

## Joining Together in Prayer: Creed

We hear the story of salvation, of God at work in human history. When Moses asks God's name, the answer comes in verbs, in the promise of deeds. God is the One who sees his people's suffering, who hears their cries, who comes to save them. This, like the good news proclaimed by the heavenly host on the night of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, is our story. And it, too, requires a response.

We respond with a resounding "Yes," a clear statement of who we are and the One we follow. This affirmation, of belief and practice, is personal, but not private. It is a statement each of us makes in, and with, the church.

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

The demands of each man and woman's baptism are emphasized by the change in the new translation from the first person plural to the first person singular. As we are bold to ask for God's mercy in the Gloria, so we are bold to publicly profess our belief in the merciful God in the Creed.

The change from "We believe" to "I believe," renders more accurately the Latin "credo." Perhaps more importantly, it brings English speakers into closer communion with those Catholics, such as native Spanish speakers, who have used the singular ever since the Mass was first translated into the vernacular.

Everything flows from that initial affirmation, "credo," "I believe." Who am I? I am a member of the Body that acknowledges "one Lord, Jesus Christ." I acknowledge with my lips and with my life, the unique place of Jesus Christ in the eternal order as,

*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.*

Before time, Jesus was. Before time, Jesus dwelt in and with the Father. Before time, the Father and the Son are one, in everlasting communion. This is what we mean when we declare Jesus "consubstantial with the Father." Jesus is not created, as each of us was created, a gene from one side of the family, a trait from the other. We know a brown-eyed mother can have a blue-eyed son. They are close, but not one. Jesus is begotten of the Father. He and the Father share a single substance, or essence. Jesus describes this eternal sharing in John's gospel. He tells his disciples, "Who has seen me has seen the Father." (Jn 14:9b) In this eternal relationship there is no difference, no distance and no division.

This is the Christ, who comes to us through Mary's womb. In her womb, by the Holy Spirit, he was incarnate, or became man. We bow before this mystery, this extravagant expression of God's love.

*For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,  
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate  
of the Virgin Mary, and became man.*

Jesus' becoming man is no literary device. He lived in history, at the time Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of Judea. It was under Pilate's rule that Jesus suffered death, a phrase that combines all the elements of the passion, from Jesus' betrayal at the hands of a friend to his death on the cross.

But death will not have its way with life. Jesus rose from the dead, as the Old Testament prophesied and the New Testament proclaims. "He ascended into heaven"—hear the echoes of the Gloria—"and is seated at the right hand of the Father." We are the people who look for him to

*Come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.*

We are the people who know God to be eternal and everlasting community, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, whose "kingdom will have no end." As we sang in the Gloria, this is the Three-In-One we adore and glorify.

Together we confess, or declare, in what we say and in what we do, that there is one baptism, one cleansing flood, in which we are washed and made whole, sons and daughters of God. Because we have been baptized in Christ, we can look forward to a share in his victory, "the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come."