

PREPARING FOR THE NEW TRANSLATION

HOMILY AND THE NICENE CREED (PT. I)



In this installment, we will look briefly at what the New Translation of the *Third Typical Edition of the Roman Missal* has to say about the homily and then begin examining the Nicene Creed.

The New Translation is much more precise in those areas where the wording has changed, although certain adaptations for the English language still exist. These will be pointed out as we progress through the Creed. There is no room here to explain in full the significance of each article of the Creed; that's the job of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and one could write volumes on the significance of the Nicene Creed. Below you will find the entire Creed presented, and then we will pass through phrase by phrase pointing out the changes in the translation and commenting on their significance.

Current Translation	New Translation
<i>A homily shall be given on all Sundays and holy days of obligation; it is recommended for other days.</i>	<i>Then follows the homily, which is to be preached by a Priest or Deacon on all Sundays and holy days of obligation; on other days, it is recommended.</i>

The homily is where the Word of God proclaimed in Scripture is to be broken open, and this most properly belongs to the bishop, who is responsible for the instruction of the flock entrusted to his care. The specification that the homily be given “by a Priest or Deacon” was added to the Latin rubrics in the Third Typical Edition of the Roman Missal presumably to halt an abuse that had arisen wherein a liturgical abuse had arisen. The ministerial priesthood of Christ is not limited to the role of sanctification (e.g. the words of consecration in the Eucharistic Prayer) but also involves the responsibility of teaching and governing. Although certain laymen and women may very well be better public speakers or more knowledgeable in areas of theology or Sacred Scripture, the giving of the homily is a participation in this teaching role of the ministerial priesthood, and there is a sign value of the one ordained to act in the person of Christ the head of the Church breaking open the Word that is to be respected.

THE CREED

On all Sundays and Solemnities, the “Symbolum” (Symbol) Profession of Faith or Creed is either sung or said. This is a summary of the orthodox faith, and as we prepare to enter into the sacred mystery of the Eucharist to become one in Christ we call to mind the mysteries of our faith that we share as one. The text of the Creed goes back to the first two Ecumenical Councils of Nicaea I (325) and Constantinople I (381) where a precise wording that does not violate the mysteries of our Apostolic was agreed upon. The words enshrine the mystery of God and of Christ. It is through faith that we are united with God through a share of his self-knowledge that comes to us in a manner accessible to the human intellect. Since salvation comes through faith, the Church has always jealously guarded how that faith is articulated.

Current Translation	New Translation
We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all that is seen and unseen.	I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, 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. Through him all things were made.	I believe 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:	For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,
<i>All bow during these two lines.</i>	<i>At the words that follow up to and including and became man, all bow.</i>
by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.	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, **died**, and was buried. On the third day he rose again in **fulfillment** of 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.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he is **worshipped** and glorified. **He spoke** through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. **We acknowledge** one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. **We look for** the resurrection of the dead, and life of the world to come. Amen

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.

I believe 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.

I believe in 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.

a version of the Creed that is in the first-person singular (“I” instead of “we”) since the sixth century.

Why would the Church do this? One possible explanation is that the “I believe” is a reminder to each person present that the entire faith must be professed in a personal manner. In baptism each person makes a profession of faith personally before being initiated into Christ’s death and resurrection, before becoming a member of His body. Here we reaffirm that faith.

Current Translation	New Translation
We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all that is seen and unseen .	I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible .

COMMENTARY

Visible and Invisible: The One God in Three Divine Persons (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) is revealed in a certain way through His works. All created things, in so far as they exist, are good. To be or to exist is good, and this is a reflection of God’s very essence, which is being. Every created thing has an origin and a cause that points to something that came before and was responsible for its coming into being. God is the cause of all causes, as St. Thomas Aquinas teaches, and not simply one among a handful of other causes.

To speak about God as the maker of “**all things visible and invisible**” is to state a belief in something beyond pure materialism; one acknowledges the creation of a spiritual order as well. This belief is not communicated by the words “**seen and unseen**”. If I am in the sacristy before Mass, I am “unseen” by the congregation but by no means am I “invisible.” The angelic realm is both created and invisible as are our immortal souls. Replacing “**unseen**” with “**invisible**” removes the possibility of a strictly materialistic understanding of the created order from our profession of faith as rendered into the English language.

COMMENTARY

The first thing that you will notice in the New Translation, as compared to the Current Translation, is that the use of the first-person singular pronoun, “I”, has replaced the first-person plural pronoun, “we”, in each occurrence. The approved Latin typical text, from which all translations come, begins with the word “Credo.” This is a first-person singular (“I”) conjugation of the Latin verb *credere* (to believe). The Greek texts as they come from the early councils do begin with “We believe,” but for liturgical use both the eastern Byzantine liturgy and the Latin Roman liturgy have used

