

PREPARING FOR THE NEW TRANSLATION THE NICENE CREED (PT. III)



This week we continue our look at the New Translation of the Nicene Creed.

Current Translation	New Translation
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.	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.

COMMENTARY:

These final articles of the Creed show only a couple minor differences between our Current Translation and the New Translation. The first difference regards the translation of the Latin word *passus*, from which we get the word “Passion” as used in “Our Lord’s Passion.” As used here, the Latin word can mean suffer, endure, allow, undergo, or permit. The context is certainly that of Christ’s sufferings from the Garden of Gethsemani to his death on the Cross, which He *endured, permitted, allowed, underwent, and suffered*. Here is found his total gift of self for our salvation and the vivid cost of the sinfulness of humanity. The word in Latin indicates suffering; *unto death* is understood. The Current Translation rendered this by two distinct actions; the New Translation tries to unite more closely the suffering and death into one total action to reflect the fact that only one participle is being translated and not two. The second change regards the use of the words “**accordance with**” in reference to the Scriptures and Christ’s rising from the dead. “**In fulfillment of** the Scriptures” is a statement that harmonizes with our faith but “**in accordance with** the Scriptures” is a more literal translation that is still quite understandable.

Current Translation	New Translation
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 has spoken through the Prophets.	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.

COMMENTARY: ADORED VS. WORSHIPPED

The articles of the Creed that describe our faith in the Holy Spirit undergo only one word change; **adored** replaces **worshipped** from the Current Translation. [The issues surrounding the use of “We” versus “I” as well as their repetition at various places throughout our English translations of the Nicene Creed were discussed in at the beginning of the creed.]

The infinite perfection found in God is the source and perfection of all goodness and perfection; both reason and justice (giving to the other what is due to him) call forth from rational beings (angels and the human race) an acknowledgment of this *ineffable* perfection (this perfection that is beyond words). Adoration is a *form* of worship (as are the confessing of one’s sins, prayers of petition, et al) that recognizes God’s infinite perfection and dominion and the adorer’s dependence on Him. Catholic theology recognizes adoration in the strict sense (the recognition of God’s incomprehensible perfection and one’s self-abasement before this reality) as belonging solely to the One God, the Holy Trinity. The word *latría* is used to describe this as opposed to the honor given to the Mother of God (*hyperdulia*) or the other saints (*dulia*). Only God is worthy of worship and adoration.

Both “**worshipped**” and “**adored**” point to the belief in the Divinity of the Holy Spirit. Adoration is a specific type of worship. Furthermore, **adored** looks much more like the underlying Latin word *adoratur* found in the *Third Typical Edition* of the *Roman Missal*.

Along with the Gloria, the Sanctus (Holy, Holy, Holy), and the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God), the Second Vatican Council’s *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* instructed that “*Steps should be taken so that the faithful may also be able to say or sing*

together in Latin those parts of the ordinary of the Mass which pertain to them” (paragraph 54 of *Sacrosanctum Concilium*). Beyond the subtle distinction between **worshipped** and **adored**, the use of English words that aid in the fulfillment of this instruction of the Second Vatican Council helps explain the switch.

Current Translation	New Translation
<p>We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.</p> <p>We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.</p> <p>We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.</p>	<p>I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.</p> <p>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.</p>

COMMENTARY

It is striking that nearly all of the articles of the Nicene Creed concern our faith in God and Who we know God to be through Revelation and the Apostolic Tradition. St. Thomas Aquinas teaches that faith is “the assent of the intellect to that which is believed” and to it belong those things that the sight of which we shall enjoy in eternal life (God) and those things by which we are brought to eternal life (*Summa Theologica*, II-II, 4 & 6). God’s grace is operative *through* the Church, the mystical body of Christ. Just as Christ is One and Holy, just as He is the universal (catholic) savior, and just as He was sent forth on a mission (apostolic) His bride and mystical body the Church bears the same marks. The Church on earth is both populated by fallen men and women and yet founded by Our Lord to teach the fullness of the Truth. Through her teaching, her sacramental life in which the Divine Bridegroom gives Himself to the bride, and her authority we have communion with Him who saves. It is through His mystical body, the Church that his graces flow, most especially in the Sacraments. Apart from Christ there is no salvation, and it is through the one Church founded by Him that we can have faith that what is taught is

true, including the path to eternal life.

COMMENTARY:

WE ACKNOWLEDGE VS. I CONFESS

Again the singular first person versus the plural first person appears. Just as our baptismal confession is made in the first person singular, so our profession of the faith here when we prepare to celebrate the sacred mysteries of our salvation. Confessing one baptism calls to mind the seven-fold unity found St. Paul’s Letter to the Ephesians 4:4-6: *one body and one Spirit, as you were also called to the one hope of your call; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.* It is fitting to use the word **confess** here not only because it too looks more like the Latin word it translates, *Confiteor* (which earlier in the Mass is translated “I confess”), but also because we confess One God in Three Divine Persons and are baptized into One God in Three Divine Persons. St. Paul uses Spirit, Lord, and God and Father. We use Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Baptism frees one from sin, makes one a member of this “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic” Church, and gives to the recipient charity, faith, and the theological virtue of hope, which in turn is expressed in the final article of the Creed.

COMMENTARY:

LOOK FOR VS. LOOK FORWARD TO

If the articles of faith are indeed about those things that pertain to eternal life, they are also objects of hope. No one hopes for that which he fully possesses. As such, there is a **looking forward** quality to the virtue of hope; this is certainly true of the belief in the resurrection of the dead and our life in the world to come. The words **look for** could imply that it is discoverable here and now if only we just searched hard enough. One does not get this connotation from **looking forward**. The latter word choice also reminds us that the resurrection of the dead and life of the world to come are that which we long for and await in expectation, that which we prepare for, and that which is a struggle to obtain but possible with the assistance (grace) of God.

