

Pastor's Message

In this series of discussions of the celebration of the Mass and in particular the liturgy of the Word, we have come to the consideration of the role and place of the Creed. The Creed comes after the homily and is meant as a response by the people to what we have heard in the readings and the reflection on those readings in the homily. The church gives us two options for the Creed, the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed.

As with all reforms, including the reform of the Mass, compromises and accommodations were made. The Creed is one of those accommodations. In the flow of the liturgy, the Creed seems out of place. It is a statement of theological beliefs rather than a celebration of the mystery of our faith which the Mass is meant to be. So why put an ancient statement of theological beliefs, e.g., "consubstantial with the Father" in the Mass? Because in the early church these beliefs divided the community. The Creed was included to try to guarantee unity of beliefs among the faithful.

The issue today is that few Catholics would argue anymore that Jesus, the Son of God, is not "consubstantial with the Father" as they did in the third and fourth centuries. Still, it is an ancient practice to repeat these Creeds in the Mass and so we continue to do so. Often you will go to Masses where the Creed is omitted and its loss does not significantly detract from the celebration of the Mass at all.

But since the Creed is a part of our current celebration, let's take time to listen to its statements of theological belief and ponder the way we have come to understand the great mystery of God among us as we profess: "I believe in one God...."

Fr. Chris