

Welcoming the New *Roman Missal*



What will we be saying differently at Mass? The Profession of Faith

Among the early Christians, a profession of faith was part of the rite of Baptism. The catechumen would renounce evil, enter the water, then profess belief by answering a series of questions associated with the Trinity. Later, as the catechumenal process developed, those awaiting baptism would be given a longer credal formula which they would memorize, then recite it for the bishop. These questions and recitation are still a vital part of our initiation rites.

The Nicene Creed, which we most commonly used at Mass, was developed at the Council of Nicea (325) and the Council of Constantinople (381). Historians first see its use at Mass in the sixth century. In various liturgical families, it was recited before the Eucharistic Prayer, before the Lord's Prayer or following the homily.

In modern times, the Creed is recited or sung on Sundays, solemnities or other festive occasions. "The purpose of the ... Profession of Faith or Creed is that the whole gathered people may respond to the word of God proclaimed in the readings ... and that they may call to mind and confess the great mysteries of the faith ..." (GIRM 67).

In the *Roman Missal*, third edition, which we will begin to use in Advent 2011, the English translation of the Nicene Creed is going to change slightly.

Currently, we begin with "We believe ...," but soon we will begin with "**I believe.**" This is the literal translation of the Latin "*credo.*" But even when we profess our faith communally, we can only speak for our individual faith. You'll also notice that "I believe" replaces "we believe" three more times in the new translation.

While we currently say "... the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father," soon we will say "... **the Only Begotten Son of God born of the Father before all ages.**" "Only Begotten Son" matches the words of the Gloria. In addition, "born of the Father before all ages" is a literal translation of "*natus est* ..." Bishop Boyea notes, "We believe that Jesus was not merely "born" in Bethlehem, but that he is eternally begotten by the Father. The Son is always being born of the Father and the Father is always begetting the Son" (Faith, October 2009).

"**Consubstantial with the Father**" will take some getting used to, but it is a good word for us to learn. It is a direct use of *consubstantialis* and is a stronger phrase than "one in being with the Father." Everything has being and we all have that being in God. But the Father and Son, together with the Spirit are of the same substance, that is, they are only one God (ibid).

While the current translation uses "he was born of the Virgin Mary," the new translation will use "**was incarnate of the Virgin Mary**" (*incarnatus est ... ex Maria Virgine*). To become incarnate means "to take flesh," that is Jesus, became a human being, not at

his birth in a stable, but in the womb of the Virgin.

You'll notice a few more slight changes in the new translation. Most were chosen to adhere more literally to the original Latin. "Suffered death" replaces "suffered and died" since there are not two verbs in the original. "Adored" replaces "worshipped" since it appears in the original and since it was consistently used throughout the new *Missal*. "I confess" means to express belief in, not merely to acknowledge our guilt.

As you recite the new translation, do so slowly. Reflect on each word and each line, because "This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rites of Baptism and Confirmation).

— Rita A. Thiron, Director of the Office of Worship for the Diocese of Lansing.

The Nicene Creed

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

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,
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 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.