



NATIONAL  
**Eucharistic  
Revival**

**Step-by-Step Walk Through the Mass  
Do This in Remembrance of Me, Part 28:  
The Creed as Profession of Faith  
by FR. LUKE SPANNAGEL**



What does the word *Creed* mean? According to Fr. Guy Oury, “A Latin word for the Creed is *symbolum*. Its first meaning is that of a sign, a mark of recognition by which an envoy is accredited or strangers know each other as belonging to the same group. The ‘symbol’ of faith identifies Christians. People who are not Christian cannot profess it without a lie on their part” (*The Mass*, p. 71). In addition to being a sign of our unity, the Creed also is a summary of core doctrines we believe in and an important part of the Mass. The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* states, “The purpose of the Creed or Profession of Faith is that the whole gathered people may respond to the Word of God proclaimed in the readings taken from Sacred Scripture and explained in the Homily and that they may also honor and confess the great mysteries of the faith by pronouncing the rule of faith in a formula approved for liturgical use and before the celebration of these mysteries in the Eucharist begins” (*GIRM*, no. 67). In summary, Charles Belmonte says, “The symbol or Creed expresses our response and assent to what we have just heard in the readings and in the homily” (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 99). Having heard the truths of the Faith in the Liturgy of the Word, now we profess them in the Creed.

### Stand and Profess

Why do we stand up to profess our Faith? As the Diocese of Peoria teaches, “Through the Creed, we as a community of believers stand and profess, in precise terms, the foundations of our faith. We stand for the Creed because of its importance in our Church and in our lives. Of important note is another gesture the Church asks of us as we profess the Creed. As we say ‘[and by] the Holy Spirit [was incarnate] of the Virgin Mary and became man,’ we are to bow in adoration of the Incarnation and birth of our Lord. Interestingly, on those respective solemnities (Annunciation and Christmas) we are to retain the ancient custom of genuflecting during those lines” (“A Study of the Mass,” p. 10). As we have reviewed previously, each of the gestures and postures within the liturgy has a meaning and can help us pray more deeply. Throughout the Mass, we stand together for the principal prayers. In a very practical way, standing is another way of giving our assent, as when a crowd stands in applause. Standing adds an additional fervor to the recognition. In a similar way, standing to pray together adds an element of strength to the words we proclaim. Bowing while we recall the Incarnation acknowledges in a humble way how much we honor that significant moment in world history. Genuflecting on the Solemnities of the Annunciation and Christmas adds even more solemn praise to the joy of that moment, reflecting our adoration of our Lord who took on a human nature, becoming man for our sake.

As we profess our faith together, we are joined in a unity that began at our Baptism. “As on the day of our Baptism, when our whole life was entrusted to the ‘standard teaching,’ let us embrace the Creed of our life-giving faith. To say the Credo with faith is to enter into communion with God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and also with the whole Church which transmits the faith to us and in whose midst we believe” (*CCC*, no. 197). The *Catechism* quotes St. Ambrose: “‘The Creed is the spiritual seal, our hearts’ meditation and ever-present guardian; it is, unquestionably, the treasure of our soul’” (*CCC*, no. 197).

Reflecting upon St. Ambrose’s words recalls for me the amazing gift we have been given through our Baptism, being invited into the very life of God. That is definitely worth standing up and professing together!