



Step-by-Step Walk Through the Mass
Do This in Remembrance of Me, Part 29:
The Creed as Statement of Faith in the Trinity
by **FR. LUKE SPANNAGEL**



Having considered the Creed in general, let's take a closer look at the contents of this statement of our Faith. As we look through the phrases, the Creed is very clearly laying out the main truths about the Holy Trinity, our belief in One God in Three Persons. As our current *Catechism* quotes from the *Roman Catechism* (or the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*), explaining "The Creed is divided into three parts: 'the first part speaks of the first divine Person and the wonderful work of creation; the next speaks of the second divine Person and the mystery of his redemption of men; the final part speaks of the third divine Person, the origin and source of our sanctification'" (CCC, no. 190).

The Three Parts of the Creed

Charles Belmonte expands this introduction to the three parts of the Creed:

— *A confession of faith in God, the Father*, our Creator, maker of heaven and earth, of all [things visible and invisible].

— *A confession of faith in Christ, our Lord*. He is God, who by the power of the Spirit became incarnate [of] the Virgin Mary and was made man. Then we focus on Christ's Passion and Death on the Cross; his Resurrection, Ascension, and participation in the judgment to reign forever, as it was announced by the angel to the Virgin Mary (Lk. 1:33).

— *A confession of faith in the means of salvation, supplied by God, the Holy Spirit*, the giver of supernatural life. We declare how he works through the Church (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 100-101).

Continuing through the last part of the Creed, Belmonte writes, "[I] believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. [The word] *catholic* means 'universal'—a reminder that the Church exists throughout the world and embraces the *entire* revelation of God... The Church is *apostolic* because she traces her origins back to Christ through the apostles and always teaches the message the apostles received from him" (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 101). The Church is one and holy because it is founded by Christ and led by the Holy Spirit toward the unity and holiness that Jesus calls all Christians to live.

We call this list the Four Marks of the Church. These characteristics are like landmarks or distinguishing features that help us to know the one true Church of Jesus.

Words to Speak... and Believe

As we go through each phrase, we are reviewing the truths we believe in, and we are also invited into a reflection on the ways that God has made himself known to us. We recall the steps of salvation history and the moment when God dwells among us. We remember the ultimate gift of God's love and the gift of the Holy Spirit who helps unite us and strengthen us for life in that love. As Belmonte concludes:

"The Creed is none other than the marvelous history of God's love for us... In these times of doctrinal confusion, we should be careful not to compromise the content of our faith, not even in small things... It is worthwhile, above all, to decide to take our Christian life seriously. When we recite the Creed, we state that we believe in God the Father Almighty, in his Son, Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, and in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and giver of life. We affirm that the Church—one, holy, catholic, and apostolic—is the body of Christ enlivened by the Holy Spirit. We rejoice in the forgiveness of sins and in the hope of the resurrection. But do those words penetrate to the depths of our own heart? Or do they remain only on our lips?" (*Understanding the Mass*, p. 102).

We say the Creed often, and many of us can likely follow along without even really thinking about the words. But wouldn't it be fruitful to truly ask ourselves what we are saying? What truths are we proclaiming together? What do we mean when we say those words?