

#3: *Giving every word credit in our Creed* [October 23, 2011]

*Credo* means “I believe.” The original creeds or symbols of faith come down to us from the celebration of Baptism. In the early Christian communities, like today, the basic tenets of our faith in the Blessed Trinity had to be accepted before one was baptized. The creed we profess on Sundays and Solemnities is derived from composite creeds professed in the Councils of Nicaea (325 AD) and Constantinople (381 AD). In 589 the Council of Toledo mandated the use of the creed on Sundays in its ecclesiastical province. Eventually this custom reached Rome and became part of the Roman Liturgy by the eleventh century.

Each word of the creed warrants great reflection. Great defenders of the Faith fought over the meaning of each word. Some of the words warrant a bow or genuflection, such as, “and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.” In the revised translation of the Roman Missal, we will begin using words that have great theological significance for all Christians. Although they are not used in conversational English, words like “consubstantial” and “incarnate” are utterly important because they speak to us of the very nature of God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The new translation of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed helps us to see that the very mystery of God Himself is not one we can easily put into words, while each word we use invites to a deeper reflection.

