

Welcoming the

English Translation of the

Roman Missal
THIRD EDITION

Part 10: Credo (Part 2)

Last week we looked at the new English translation of the Nicene Creed, specifically the translation change from “We believe” to “I Believe.” This week we will take a theological look at some of the other translation changes in the Creed. When analyzing any liturgical text, especially a Creed, it is always helpful to examine the text through the lens of the ancient formula: *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*, which literally trans-

lates to, “the law of prayer is the law of belief.” In other words, how we pray directly expresses who we profess to be. The Church has stated in numerous documents that the Roman Catholic Church is best defined by her liturgical books (those books containing the prayers, acclamations and dialogues of the liturgy, such as the Missal). Again, we are defined as the Church by how we pray. And so our prayer texts, especially our Creed, must clearly and accurately express our beliefs.

In the new translation of the Creed, “all things seen and unseen” is retranslated to “all things visible and invisible.” It may be difficult at first to see any difference in meaning between the two translations, but again, we must be very accurate with the wording of our liturgical texts as they define who we are and what we believe. When we say things “unseen,” we could be talking about Jupiter, for example. None of us have actually seen Jupiter, but we know it exists through science and photos, yet it is technically “unseen” to us. This is not what the Creed is referring to. When the Creed states things “invisible,” it is expressing that another reality, which is invisible to us (such as the angels or the souls of humans), exists and God is indeed the creator and Lord of them all.

In the new translation, we profess that Jesus is the “Begotten Son of God” (which was included in the old translation), but we now also profess that Jesus is “born of the Father before all ages.” This new translation better expresses the mystery of the Trinity. When we profess that Jesus is the “Begotten Son of God,” we are expressing that Jesus and the Father are one and have been co-eternal for ever (before all ages). At the same time, we profess that Jesus is “born of the Father” indicating that Jesus is the Son of the Father, but again is one with him. We further express this mystery of the Trinity when we profess that Jesus is “consubstantial with the Father.” “Consubstantial” is a philosophical term which indicates God the Son and God the Father are of the same substance (it is hard to comprehend, which is exactly why the Holy Trinity is a *mystery*).

In the new translation, we profess Jesus as being “incarnate of the Virgin Mary” rather than “born of the Virgin Mary.” When we simply state that Jesus was “born,” we are not clearly expressing who Jesus was (it sounds like he was just simply conceived and born like every other human). But Jesus is different than every other human: Jesus is God made human. We now profess in the new translation of the Creed this mystery of the incarnation: the mystery of the Word becoming flesh.

In the new translation, we profess that Jesus rose “in accordance with the Scriptures” instead of “in fulfillment of the Scriptures” as in the old translation which suggested that the Scriptures have been completely fulfilled. While Jesus did fulfill some of the Scriptures, Scripture has not yet completely been fulfilled: Jesus has died, rose from the dead, but he has not yet come again (when he does, then the Scriptures will be fulfilled).

The other translation changes you may find are a result of attempting to maintain the form and thus the beauty of the Latin text from which the English translation comes from. The retranslations mentioned above have theological significance and allow our prayer to better express what we believe: *Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi*. If you missed last week’s column or any in this series, they can be found at goodshepherdparish.net.

Nicene Creed (2011 Translation)

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.