

# **UNDERSTANDING THE PROFESSION OF FAITH**

Father James Chelich – Summer 2015

## **The Profession of Faith**

The Nicene Creed

**I believe in one God, the Father, the 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 (BOW) 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.**

## ...I believe...

To believe in something does not make it exist. You can choose to believe or not to believe in the existence of a large oak tree along your path. Either way, you will injure yourself if you try walking through it instead of around it. What is real doesn't wait upon our believing in it. Believing *acknowledges* that something exists. You walk around the oak tree. But there is more to believing – something richly personal. Believing establishes a personal connection between you and it. When you believe in something or someone, you accept the invitation to enter into communion with something or someone's existence. You find yourself conforming yourself to the good in them. The "someone" we are talking about in the Profession of Faith is God. **I believe** means I acknowledge the existence of God. But **I believe** also means I accept God's invitation to enter into communion with God's existence, and that I give my life to be conformed to Who God is. Believing is at the heart of being a person. Believing is a personal act that stretches your consciousness wide open – way beyond absorption with self – to receive the beauty and goodness in someone or something. Believing is the way a human being connects personally with existence. Believing is the only way to experience the fullness of the existence of anyone or anything.

Catholicism is a faith. Holding that faith, heeding that faith and striving to change our lives according to that faith is what makes a person a Catholic. When someone joins the Catholic Church they say publically before the gathered Church, **"I believe and profess all that the holy, Catholic Church believes, teaches and proclaims to be revealed by God."** Our believing is what joins us in a personal way to God, and through God in a personal way with others and all things. Our believing joins us to one another as a community of faith. It is our gift to each other. Saying "I believe" during common prayer and worship means: "I offer my believing to serve and strengthen your believing." This is what makes us the Catholic Church: sharing the same faith, striving for the same holiness of life.

## ...in One God...

Something always existed. This is an empirical fact. It requires only logical reasoning to recognize that it is true. Catholic faith believes that the essence of what always existed is personal. As far back as we can go, among the many races of humanity we find a sense and awareness of the Personal at the origin of existence. We profess that there is a Personal God at the Origin of all things, Who is the Creator of all things. It is tempting to immediately think that God is "like us," a solitary ego at the center of the universe. God warns us against this conclusion:

*My thoughts are not your thoughts,  
nor are your ways my ways, (says the LORD). Isaiah 55:8-9*

God is not made in the image of man and woman. Man and woman are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27). God is not a projection of the human ego out and onto the universe. It was through this lens that the ancient Greeks and most pagan peoples perceived God. Nor is God a solitary ego unto himself.

God is a Trinity: a unity of three Divine Persons. Between the three Divine Persons, Who are the One God, there is a dynamic, interactive Love of an utterly unique character. Their unity is achieved by the total surrender of each to each other. This ceaseless and total self-surrender to each other is Divine Love. At every moment, in every moment, all is given as a gift, and simultaneously all is received in return as a gift, but *multiplied infinitely*. This Love results in a unity complete and yet the integrity of each preserved. In this unity all is possessed by each *as a gift received*, and nothing is retained by any *as a possession held*. This **unity** is the **One God**. This Love is at the origin of the universe. An act of this Love precipitated the “Big Bang.” The Greek word used in the Bible for this constant, unreserved self-emptying of one into the others is *kenosis*.

In the Creed we profess our faith not only in the Trinity (the three divine Persons Who are the One God) but equally, and perhaps more so we profess our faith in the Love between these three divine Persons – the Love that makes them **One God**. In reciting the Profession of Faith we embrace what God has revealed about God’s Self. We remind ourselves that there is a personal and loving God at the Origin of all things. Here at Mass we are called to receive this self-surrendering Love from God, and to embody this Love for the life of others. To profess that there is One God in three Persons without embracing the Love at the heart of Who God is, is insufficient to make you a Christian.

### **...the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth...**

God is a unity three divine “Persons” in a unique communion with one another, the essence of which is the complete self-surrender of each to each other. This dynamic of their relationship generates infinite power: the power of the One God, the power out of which the universe came into existence. Jesus gives us names for each of the three divine Persons in the Unity of Love that is the One God:

*Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations.  
Baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,  
and of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 28:19*

God is the Father. God is the Father’s Word – the Son. God is the Father’s Spirit – the Holy Spirit.

All that exists in creation (**in heaven and earth**) has its origin in the mind of the Father. All that has come to be was born of the Father’s thought. What

the Father conceives is simultaneously expressed into existence by the Father's Word – the Son, and brought into relationship in a living whole by the Father's Spirit – the Holy Spirit. The three Divine Persons in the unity of the One God do not hold to themselves three separate minds. The mind of the Son freely receives the mind of the Father as his own, and the mind of the Holy Spirit freely receives the mind of the Father as his own. In this sense they have one and the same mind. When you pray the "Our Father," you are asking to join the Son and the Holy Spirit in sharing the one mind of the Father:

*"Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name.  
Thy kingdom come, Thy will (not mine) be done on earth  
as it is in heaven..."*

To pray this, and truly mean it, brings you into communion with the One God and with all things **in heaven and earth.**

### **...of all things visible and invisible.**

There are elements of creation that can be seen with the human eye and there are elements that cannot – air and wind being an example. We can sense them with our other physical senses but not with our sight. We see the effect of these invisible elements on the things around us (like the grass, the trees and the water) and conclude that they act on these other elements in predictable and sometimes unpredictable ways.

Sight, taste, hearing, feeling, and smelling are senses proper to our physicality (our body). Our religious faith teaches us that we have senses that belong to our rationality (our soul): to grasp the integrity of something, to see the whole as well as the parts, to apprehend the interconnectedness of things, to recognize when things are in wrong (life-defeating) relationship. Our religious faith also teaches us that we have senses that belong to our spirituality (our interior spirit): to sense the movement of the Spirit of God within us, to recognize what is authentically "of God" and what is not, to recognize the personal stamp of the Creator in all created things. These senses must be attended to, exercised and developed if we are to live the life of a whole human being. The senses that belong to our rationality and spirituality enable us to live in constructive relationship with other human beings, with the fundamental physical and rational forces that move the universe, and with the spiritual forces that link, at the deepest level, all things in a life-giving whole. They are all needed to live in full communion with all things that exist.

If God created all things, then the full truth of what they are and are made to become is known completely only to God. We can know the truth about someone or something but we cannot exhaust it, there is always more of the truth to be known. We are called, in Catholic faith, to take on the attitude that all things are larger than we think they are. There is always more to someone or something than we can apprehend at the moment. Living with this

conviction, this believing **in all things visible and invisible**, radically transforms the life we live. Instead of being full of conclusions about people and things (boxes in which to stuff them) we stand before all things with wonder and awe, and in an attitude of discovery. If we ask God to show us what we are failing to see, God will!

## **I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ...**

These words declare that you submit your life, ultimately and in all things, to **one** and only **one Lord: Jesus Christ**. You choose him and him alone as the pattern in which to shape who you are as a person. Jesus asks:

*Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' but not do what I command? Luke 6:46 This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. John 15:12*

But who is Jesus?

## **...the only Begotten Son of God...**

Jesus calls himself, "Son of Man." This refers to his incarnation, his taking on our human nature:

*Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life." John 3:14-15*

Jesus also calls himself, "Son of God." This refers to Who he is before his incarnation:

*For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. John 3:16-17*

The Bible helps us to understand the true identity of the **only begotten Son**. He is the Word who created all things in the beginning:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be... And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us... John 1:1-3, 14a*

From the beginning, Christian believers knew Jesus to be the **only begotten Son of God**, the Word, now made flesh, and they experienced him in a profoundly

personal way:

*And we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son,  
full of grace and truth... John 1:14b*

The words, "Son," and, "Father," evoke kinship – intimate personal relationship with one another. The Word that became flesh is more than just *what* God is. The Word that became flesh in Jesus is **the only Begotten Son of God**, a personal *You* at the core of *Who* God is. The truth proclaimed here is that the same personal God who brought the world into existence has broken into the world in a new way to seek out the broken, to heal, to regenerate, and to draw all things back together with one another in a life-giving whole.

**...born of the Father before all ages,  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made...**

God is a Trinity of Persons: the Father, the Father's Word – the Son, and the Father's Spirit – the Holy Spirit. God is One God because of the self-surrendering Love between these three Divine Persons.

**Born of the Father** means that the only begotten Son has his existence in the Father and comes forth **from** the Father. **Before all ages** means that the only begotten Son has no beginning. Like the Father (Who is God) the only begotten Son (Who is God) always and ever has been. **Begotten** as it is used here means "emerging" **from** the Father. It is not that the Father came first and the Son came later. The only begotten Son was **not made**. He was not created and is not a creature. The Father always was and the Son always came **from** him. There is no point at which the Son did not come from (was not **born of, begotten of**) the Father. Therefore, the only begotten Son who became flesh in Jesus is **God from God, Light from Light, True God from True God**. In other words: He is really God, the eternal God, incarnate!

**...consubstantial with the Father...**

**Consubstantial with the Father** means that what God the Father is, all of what God the Father is, God the Son is:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God...And the Word became flesh and  
made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory  
as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth. John 1:1-2, 14*

This is why Jesus, the Word made flesh, the incarnate Son of God, says:

*If you knew me, you would know my Father too. John 8:19*  
*The Father is in me and I in Him. John 10:38*  
*All that the Father has belongs to me. John 16:15*  
*The Father and I are one. John 10:30*

### **...through him all things were made.**

God is a Trinity of Persons in a unique relationship of self-surrendering Love. God creates as a Trinity of Divine Persons. All that exists has its origin in the mind of the Father. All that has come to be was born of the Father's thought. The Father conceives it and simultaneously it is expressed into existence by the Father's Word – the Son, and brought into relationship in a living whole by the Father's Spirit – the Holy Spirit. This is how **all things were made through him**, the Only Begotten Son, the Father's Word, who became flesh in Jesus.

### **For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven...**

God has business with humanity. We had turned inward on ourselves, we had grown envious of one another and sought constantly to dominate each other. We wrested the elements of the world out of right and life-giving order with each other in order to serve our desire to acquire, dominate and control. We did violence to each other and to the earth, and grew progressively more fearful of each other and alienated from existence. This grieved the heart of God. Sacrificing Self, a personal and loving God draws near to us **for our salvation**: to redeem, heal and regenerate the lives of men and women and their world. The name that God the Son, the Father's Word, would take when he came among us was Jesus, a name which means "God is Saving:"

*Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to [Joseph] in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:20-21*

### **...and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.**

God the Holy Spirit (the Father's Spirit) is the Power of God, unfolding all things as God the Father conceives them and God the Son (the Father's Word) expresses them. The Father conceived of coming

to save us, the Son (the Father's Word) expressed the Father's mind and became incarnate, and the Holy Spirit (the Father's Spirit) unfolds it with divine power. "And so it happened:" God the Son (the Father's Word) took on our human nature. He did not just appear as a man, he **became man**. He **was incarnate of** a specific woman, **Mary** of Nazareth. She was a **virgin**. He was conceived, carried in her, and born of her at a specific time and place. In his conception in the Virgin, Mary, the egg for the formation of the human embryo was that of Mary. It was fertilized, not by the seed of a human male, but by Divine intervention, in a miraculous act **by the Holy Spirit**.

By becoming incarnate, God the Son (the Father's Word) *revealed* God to us. He did not come to *tell us about* God. He *is* God. He came to *show us* God. By becoming incarnate God the Son drew close to us in a way that we could embrace physically and comprehend mentally. In this way He disclosed God to us in a new and accessible way. All of what God is, was present in Jesus when he was on earth. Saint John writes:

*No one has ever seen God. The only Son, God,  
who is at the Father's side, has revealed him. John 1:18*

In his humanity the only begotten Son of God also showed us what a human being was created and intended to be. In Jesus we see both True God and True Man.

**For our sake  
he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,  
he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day,...**

God became flesh in Jesus **for our sake**: to draw near to men and women, to speak to their hearts, to offer to redeem, heal and regenerate their lives and the life of their world. Those who opened their minds and hearts to Jesus experienced just that. He was crucified and suffered death **for our sake**. Though many grew hostile toward him, Jesus did not withdraw either his love or his presence. He was faithful to us in love through suffering and unto death. He expresses this love for us at every Mass, when he says: "This is my body broken for you. This is the cup of my blood poured out for you." While Jesus' human nature can be put to death, his divine nature cannot. God cannot die. By the power of his divinity, Jesus rose again in the flesh for our sake: to draw near to the side of every man and woman, offering to redeem, heal and regenerate their lives and the life of their world. The incarnation, the birth, the preaching and healing ministry, the suffering, death and resurrection was **all for our sake**. It is all one redeeming act on the part of a Loving God, Who cared that we and our world were dying.

### ...under Pontius Pilate...

The birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus was an historical event. It is not a legend, a fantasy, a fiction or a fairy tale. It happened, **under Pontius Pilate**, who was the Roman military overseer of Judea from 26 to 36 AD. An artifact found in 1961 proved his historical existence.

### ...in accordance with the Scriptures.

The coming of Jesus, his life, suffering, death and resurrection were a fulfillment of what had been foretold in the Scriptures:

*See my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high  
and greatly exalted... Isaiah 52:13*

He suffered death  
in fulfillment  
of the Scriptures

*He was...a man of suffering... Yet it was our  
infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that He  
endured, While we thought of him as stricken,  
as one smitten by God and afflicted.  
Like a lamb led to the slaughter or a sheep before  
the shearers...he was cut off from the land of the living,  
and smitten for the sin of his people.*

*Isaiah 53:3-4, 7-8*

He rose again  
in fulfillment  
of the Scriptures

*If he gives his life as an offering for sin,  
he shall see his descendants in a long life,  
and the will of the LORD shall be accomplished  
through him. Because of his affliction he shall  
see the light in fullness of days. Isaiah 53:10-11*

Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection were *redemptive*. They fulfilled the redemptive design that God set in motion long ago when man and woman first darkened their souls and embarked upon the blood-stained path that is human history. The Scriptures reveal God's redemptive design unfolding over time, leading to and culminating in the atoning Sacrifice of Jesus:

*He was pierced for our offenses, crushed for our sins. Upon him was  
the chastisement that makes us whole, by his stripes we were healed...  
Isaiah 53:5*

The Word that is God took on our human nature to draw close to us, to express God's unconditional love for us, to extend to us an offer to heal us. We heaped upon him everything broken, bruising, and death dealing in our fallen human nature. He took this from us and endured it. He bore it in his human nature with great suffering, and carried it to his death at our hands. The diseased human nature we heaped upon him, dies with him – its power broken in him and by him. Now all who bring him their mortally wounded

human nature can put it to death through him, with him and in him, and rise with him to new life. (see Ephesians 4:17-24). He is forever death to sin and resurrection to a new life for all who believe, for all who call upon him in faith. This is all **“in accordance with the Scripture.”**

*Through his suffering, my servant shall justify many, and their guilt he shall bear...And he shall take away the sins of many, and win pardon for their offenses.*  
*Isaiah 53:5, 11, 12*

## **He ascended into heaven...**

*As they were looking on, he was lifted up,  
and a cloud took him from their sight. Acts 1:9*

Jesus ascended **into heaven**. This means beyond our physical sight. He remains alive and present with us. Before he ascended he said:

*Behold, I am with you always. Matthew 28:20*

In the forty days after his resurrection, Jesus' presence in his resurrected body was substantial. He was not only seen, he ate and was physically touched. This was experienced by Mary Magdalene at the tomb, by the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, by Peter and John on the lakeshore, by the twelve in the upper room. But in each instance, he suddenly is no longer visible to them. He ascended beyond our physical sight, not to go away, but to take his place as Savior at our side, and at the side of every man and woman. He waits for us to call upon him, and when we do, he manifests his presence by inspiring and giving us strength. This is our salvation.

As believers we know his presence with us in the reading of the Word of God, the Scriptures:

*They said to each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” Luke 24:32*

We know his presence with us in the celebration of the Mass and other Sacraments:

*While Jesus was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight...  
the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. Luke 24:30-31, 35*

And we know his presence with us when we call upon him in any moment or situation seeking his inspiration and strength.

**...and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**The right hand of the Father** is not a physical location. It is a place of *being*. God is not confined to a location. God is present everywhere. The only begotten Son of God, was, is, and always will *be* with the Father. **Is seated at the right hand of the Father** means that Jesus, the incarnate only begotten Son of God is now and always will be with the Father.

**He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead...**

Jesus tells us:

*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him,  
he will sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations will be assembled  
before him.*

*Matthew 25:31-32*

And Saint Paul reminds us:

*We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ,  
so that each one may receive recompense, according to what  
he did in the body, whether good or evil. 2 Corinthians 5:10*

When a gift is offered to you, you become accountable to the one offering it and for the gift offered. When the gift of life and consciousness was given to us, we became accountable for it. When the gift of a garden world was given to us we became accountable for it. When the gift of redemption from the darkness and violence we unleashed within ourselves and in the world around us was offered to us in Jesus, we became accountable to him for it. He is the **judge**, but the judgment is written by us: whether we receive and embrace the gift offered and the one offering it, or whether we refuse it or abuse it. The Father has assigned Jesus, the incarnate only begotten Son of God, **to judge the living and the dead:**

*Nor does the Father judge anyone, but he has given all judgment  
to his Son...Amen,, amen, I say to you, whoever hears my word  
and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not  
come to condemnation, but has passed from death to life...  
For just as the Father has life in himself, so also he gave to his  
Son the possession of life in himself. And he gave him power  
to exercise judgment, because he is the Son of Man. Do not  
be amazed at this, because the hour is coming in which all who  
are in the tombs will hear his voice and will come out, those  
who have done good deeds to the resurrection of life, but those  
who have done wicked deeds to the resurrection of condemnation.*

*John 5:22, 24, 26-28*

When Love is offered to you, you become accountable for its acceptance or its rejection:

*This is the verdict, that the light came into the world, but people preferred darkness to light, because their works were evil. John 3:19*

### **...and his kingdom will have no end.**

The kingdom spoken of here is **the Kingdom of God**. It is a relational reality. The Kingdom of God is where all things are in right and life-giving relationship with one another as they were created to be. This world was lost to men and women. It is restored to us by Jesus, the incarnate only begotten Son of God. In this sense it is uniquely **his Kingdom**. In Jesus the presence and power of God entered the world to redeem, heal and regenerate its life. In Jesus the Love that is God is poured out to win back men and women from the kingdom of violence and death they created for themselves. In each moment, Jesus waits to be received by us, and when he is, all things are brought to right and life-giving relationship, both within us and between us and all that exists. We enter this Kingdom through him, with him and in him.

*I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture... I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly.*  
*John 10:9-10*

Faith in Jesus brings a man or woman into the Kingdom of God. This takes place in each moment. Faith in Jesus means opening your mind and heart to him and being aware of his presence with you. It means calling on his name and asking him to show you what is really going on. It means asking him to make known to you what needs to be said and done, and for the strength to say and do it. In doing this Jesus allows you, in the moment, to be the man or woman you were created to be. You discover your true self. Faith in Jesus also means releasing the moment back to Jesus when you are no longer in it. This sets you free. Moving with Jesus from moment to moment in this way, **his Kingdom has no end**. It continues on beyond death your death and into eternity:

*God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have eternal life. John 3:16*

The world men and women have made for themselves dies and passes away. The kingdom you enter with Jesus will last forever – it is the real world made whole.

## **I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life...**

God is a Trinity of Persons: the Father, the Father's Word – the Son, and the Father's Spirit – the Holy Spirit. God is One God because of the self-surrendering Love between these three Divine Persons.

God is the Father and Source of all Being. He conceives of all that comes to be. God is the Word of the Father (the Son). He is the expression of the mind of the Father. He expresses into existence all things that come to be. God is the Spirit of the Father (the Holy Spirit). He is the Power of the Father that unfolds all things in a life-giving whole –as the Father conceives them and the Father's Word (the Son) expresses them. That is why the Holy Spirit is called,  
**the Lord and Giver of Life.**

The Bible can help us appreciate the unity of God and the Trinity in God. In the Book of Genesis creation is described in this pattern:

*God said, "Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures,  
and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky."  
And so it happened.* *Genesis 1:20*

### **God...**

When God (the Father) thinks of something...      ► The multitude of living creatures on Earth.

### **...said,...**

...in that same moment God's Word (the Son) expresses it...      ► *"Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky."*

### **...And so it happened.**

...and in that same moment God's Spirit (the Holy Spirit) unfolds it.

Every act of God is unified. It unfolds in three simultaneous movements: thought, expression, action. These three simultaneous movements are never without each other, nor are they ever, in any way divided against each other. The three Divine Persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) are never without each other, nor are they ever, in any way divided against each other.

### **...who proceeds from the Father and the Son...**

**Proceeds from the Father and the Son** means that the Holy Spirit has his existence in the Father, He is the Father's Spirit. He comes forth **from** the Father and the Son. The Holy Spirit, has no beginning. Like the Father (Who is God), and the only begotten Son (Who is God), the Holy Spirit (Who is God) "always and ever has been." **Proceeds from** means "emerging" **from** the Father and the Son. It is not that the Father and the Son came first, and the Holy Spirit came later. The Holy Spirit was **not made**. He was not created and is not a creature. The Father always was, the Son always came **from** him, and the Holy Spirit always came **from** them. There is no point at which the Holy Spirit did not come from the Father and the Son.

### **...who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified...**

All that the Father is, is in the Father's Word (the Son). All that the Son is, however, is given in the service of the Father's mind and will. The same is true of the Holy Spirit. All that the Father is, and all that the Father's Word (the Son) expresses is in the Father's Spirit (the Holy Spirit). All that the Holy Spirit is, however, is given in the service of the Father and the Father's Word (the Son). Because of this God is an undivided unity: three Divine Persons equally adored and glorified as One God.

### **...who has spoken through the Prophets.**

The power of God (the Holy Spirit) moves out across the landscape of human history just as it moves out over the landscape of universal time and space, unfolding the will of the Father and fulfilling the Word of the Father.

It was the power of the Father's Spirit – the Holy Spirit, who laid hold of the minds of the prophets, inspired them and moved them to speak. It was the Father's Word that was spoken by the prophets when the Holy Spirit moved them to speak. It was the saving plan of the Father that the Father's Word, the only begotten Son revealed through the words of the prophets when the Holy Spirit moved them to speak. Always keep in mind, God is a unity of three Divine Persons and acts as a unity of three Divine Persons. There is no one Person in the Blessed Trinity who acts independently of or contrary to the others. When we think of how prophecy begins, with a person being moved by God to speak, we naturally (humanly) think of the Holy Spirit as the first agent, although all three Divine Persons are involved simultaneously.

## **I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.**

By God's design, the **Church** is connected with the continuing presence of Jesus in the world. For Catholics, the Church is not a freely elected fellowship of individuals. Catholic Faith understands the members of the Church to be organically connected to Jesus:

*I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.*  
John 15:5

And through Jesus they are organically connected to one another:

*For as in one body we have many parts...so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another.*  
Romans 12:4-5

Men and women come to faith in Jesus, but it is Jesus who joins them to himself, as members of his body: flesh of his flesh and blood of his blood. He does this most clearly in the Holy Eucharist:

*Jesus took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and giving it to his disciples said, "Take and eat; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins." Matthew 26:26-28*

He commanded his disciples:

*Do this in memory of me. Luke 22:19b*

In Holy Communion he gives the whole of himself to live in them:

*I have given them the glory you gave me, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may be brought to perfection as one. John 17:22-23*

The Church is the body of believers so joined by Jesus to himself:

*Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him.*  
John 6:56

In the Church there are various roles of service:

*Now you are Christ's body, and individually parts of it. Some people God has designated in the church to be, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then, mighty deeds; then, gifts of healing, assistance, administration, and varieties of tongues.*  
1 Corinthians 12:27-28

The Church is **one**: There is one risen Lord, Jesus, and he has only one body

to which he joins those who come to believe in him.

The Church is **holy**: It is where the presence and power of God in Jesus builds up in holiness those who believe in him.

The Church is **catholic**: The role of the Church is to witness to the presence and power of Jesus to all people everywhere. This has brought it all around the world.

The Church is **apostolic**: Jesus declared that the Holy Spirit would be in the Church, to preserve the Church in truth:

*I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth. John 14:16-17...*

*The Advocate, the Holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind you of all that [I] told you. John 14:26... I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now. But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. John 16:12-13*

The truth the Church proclaims is consistently the same from the time that Jesus taught it to the apostles:

*You should know how to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth. 1 Timothy 3:15*

## **I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins...**

**Confess** means get your faith out of the enclosure of your mind and give it expression in your words, your actions and in your very being. We are to **confess** our Baptism: our death to our old self with Jesus, and our resurrection to a new self in Christ. This striving to be a new self in Christ should be evident in all the things we say and do. Saint Paul writes:

*Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life... As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God. Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as [being] dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus. Romans 3-4, 10-11*

Is it clear in the way you live that you are *dead to sin and living for God*?

**Confessing your baptism** is living your life in a way that becomes an invitation for others to try it on themselves.

**...and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead,  
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

**I look forward to** is an expression that has a certain energy to it. There is nothing indifferent or reluctant about it. “Looking forward to” demonstrates a conviction that what you say and do today is connected to **the life of the world to come**. This attitude finds us using the things of this world in a way that builds up things that endure forever: justice, works of mercy and self-sacrificing love. Jesus says:

*“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be. Matthew 6:19-21*

Do our priorities and choices indicate that we are looking forward to resurrection and the life of a better world to come?

**Resurrection from death** is something Jesus promised:

*Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and I will not reject anyone who comes to me, because I came down from heaven not to do my own will but the will of the one who sent me...For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in him may have eternal life, and I shall raise him [on] the last day.*

*John 6:37-40*

**Life in the world to come** is also something Jesus promised:

*Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.’ Matthew 25:34*

Resurrection and the life of the world to come are not a reward for being good. They are the intended fulfillment of human existence. They are the true end of a man or woman made whole in Christ.