

Session 4: Overview

Monday, November 24, 6:30-8 PM

1. Welcome Song: *"Shepherd Me Oh God"*
2. Wendy Ferkany – OCIA Information
3. Prayer – *The Nicene Creed: Video and Creed Handout*
4. Tradition and "Where do we go from here"?
5. Fill out – *Inviting Catholics Home Evaluation form – "The Summons Hymn"*
6. Tour of the Church – *Sacramentals (Handouts)*
7. Deacon Jim – Closing Blessing in Church

Relevant Quote: *"Whether you are 16 or 60, the rest of your life is ahead of you. You cannot change one moment of your past, but you can change your whole future. Now is your time."* Matthew Kelly

Relevant CCC Quote:

81 *"Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit."*

"and [Holy] Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the successors of the apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may faithfully preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching."

82 *"As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, "does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence."*

Session 4: Words Explained

Familiar Words

Bible	A word meaning a collection of books
Scripture	Inspired written word of God
Creed	Contains the basic truths of our faith
Revelation	God self-communication through Scripture and Tradition
Old Testament	Begins with the story of creation/Ends with the Prophet Malachi
Paschal Mystery	The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus
Tradition	The way in which something is done over and over
Faith	Personal adherence of the whole person to God, involving your free submission
Catholic	Word means "universal"
New Testament	Stories of Jesus' life...and life of the Church after his death
7 Books not in Protestant Bible	Tobit, Judith, Wisdom, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees
The Incarnation	The Christmas Story... Jesus becomes man
Immaculate Conception	Mary is conceived without Original Sin
Divine Providence	God will always love us and care for our needs
Pentecost	Birthday of the Church

Item in Church

and what it is...

Ciborium	Gold or ceramic cup with lid for the hosts
Chalice	Gold or ceramic cup for the wine
Paten	Gold or ceramic plate used for the hosts
Purificator	Cloth with cross used to clean the chalices
Host	Eucharistic bread consecrated at Mass into the body and blood of Christ
Wine Cruet	The glass container for the wine
Water Cruet	The glass container for the water
Lavabo Dish	The dish used when Father washes his fingers at mass
Credence Table	The table in back of the altar for all vessels
Altar	The altar of Christ. The focal point at Mass
Ambo	The lectionary stand at the side of the altar
Bench	The bench at the side of the sanctuary
Tabernacle	Gold repository at rear of the sanctuary where the consecrated hosts are kept
Candles	Easter candle, altar candles, candles at the Tabernacle
Stations	Fourteen (14) Stations of the Cross. Located on each side of the congregation area
Corpus	A statue of the Body of Christ
Crucifix	A cross bearing a corpus
Incense	The substance that is burnt in the thurible
Thurible	The canister on a chain used to burn incense

Session 4: Sacred Scripture & Tradition

SACRED SCRIPTURE (the Bible, the living WORD of God) and **TRADITION** (putting the WORD into Action) You can't have Faith without works, which is how we live out what we believe.

Catholics The Bible/Living Word of God + Tradition = Divine Revelation ("Deposit of Faith")

Protestants Sola Scriptura ("Scripture alone") a 16th century belief popularized by Martin Luther

Tradition (capital "T") Tradition (with a capital "T") refers to the essential, unchanging body of Christ's teachings and the deposit of faith, through both sacred Scripture AND oral tradition ("Truths of the Faith"). This Tradition comes from the apostles and hands on what they received from Jesus' teaching and example and what they learned from the Holy Spirit. The first generation Christians did not yet have a written New Testament, and the New Testament itself demonstrates the process of living Tradition (ccc). Capital "T" tradition are:

- Beliefs that never change unless new revelation changes it
- The Bible, the Creed (i.e. One God, Jesus lived, died and was resurrected)
- Truths of our faith cast in stone for all time
- Refers to the Apostolic Tradition or teachings of the Apostles, passed through the Magisterium (the teaching office of a pope or a bishop in union with the pope)
- Doctrines, teachings accepted as true
- Dogma, cannot be denied or disputed – Doctrine declaring essential contents of Christianity
- ie: Male only priesthood

tradition (lower case "t") are changeable practices, like various theological, disciplinary, liturgical or devotional traditions, born in the local churches over time. These practices are important for Catholic life and piety, but can be retained, modified, or abandoned by Church authority without damage to foundational beliefs.

- Rituals and actions that have particular meaning for particular groups of people
- Practices that give richness to our observations but aren't doctrinal
- Can be retained, modified or abandoned under the guidance of the Church's Magisterium.

Some examples of lower case "t" traditions include:

- The solemnities/feast days, holy days of obligation, days of fasting/abstinence from meat
- Devotions such as various types of prayer, praying the rosary
- Ornate vestments vs. plain, simple ones, using incense, Mass in Latin or English
- Ringing bells during Mass
- Compulsory celibacy in the priesthood
- Receiving Holy Communion in the hand or on the tongue

Session 4: Creed/Nicene Creed

What is a Creed?

- The Creed was a public statement of faith
- The Creed anchored Christian faith to a tradition, to make it difficult for people or churches to be led astray by strange doctrines
- The Creed was a preaching and teaching tool
- The Creed was memorized through frequent repetition, which helped the many believers who could not read
- The Creed provided a doctrinal basis for different churches to accept one another, and to reject those who did not accept the basic truths

The Nicene Creed presents the basic Catholic teachings about the nature of God.

Catholics, Orthodox, and many Protestants accept the ancient Nicene Creed.

The current form of the creed was written at the Councils of Nicaea (AD 325) and Constantinople (AD 381). Over 300 Bishops from all over the world gathered to write the Creed, in response to Arianism, a form of Christianity that denied Jesus was fully God. The Nicene Creed ultimately explains the Church's teachings about the Trinity, but it also affirms historical realities of Jesus' life. Even though the creed does not directly quote Scripture, it is based on biblical concepts. See below for explanation of each section:

I Believe In One God – Genesis 1:31, 2:1-4

Christians, like Jews and Muslims, believe that only one God exists. The former English translation of the creed began with "WE" believe, while the Greek, Latin and Current English translation begin with "I" believe. The latter is more accurate, because reciting the creed is ultimately an individual confession of belief, although the creed also expresses the collective beliefs of the Church.

The Father Almighty

Jesus frequently calls God "Father" in the Scriptures. God the Father is the first person within the Godhead. The Father is the "origin" or "source" of the Trinity.

Maker of Heaven and Earth of All Things Visible and Invisible

Catholics believe that God created the visible world (created matter) and the invisible one (spiritual work of angels, etc.) Thus, God created everything. Some early sects, the Gnostics and Marcionites, believed that God the Father created the spirit world, but that an "evil" god (called demiurge) created the similarly evil material world. The Creed dispels such a notion.

Session 4: Nicene Creed

(continued...)

I Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ - John 1:1-5, 9-14

Jesus Christ is the Lord of all. The title Lord means that Jesus is master of all.

The Only Begotten Son of God

Jesus is in a unique relationship with God the Father. While Hebrew kings were sons of God symbolically, Jesus is the only Son of God by nature.

Born of the Father Before All Ages

Begotten has the meaning of born, fathered, generated, or produced. God the Son is born out of the essence of God the Father, just as a child shares the same humanness as his or her parents, the Son shares his essential nature of God with the Father.

God from God, Light from Light

God the Son exists in relation to God the Father. The Son is not the Father, but they both are God.

True God from True God

God the Son is not a half-god or inferior to God the Father. God the Son is full and utterly God, distinct from the Father, yet not divided from the Father.

Begotten, Not Made

Some Christians today (Jehovah's Witnesses) and in the past (Arians) have suggested that Jesus was a creation of God. The creed tells us that just as when a woman gives birth she does not create a child out of nothing, being begotten of God, the Son is not created out of nothing. Since the Son's birth from the Father occurred before time was created, begotten refers to a permanent relationship as opposed to an event within time.

Consubstantial with the Father

God the Father and God the Son are equally divine, united in substance and will. Father and Son share the same substance or essence of divinity. That is, the Father and Son both share the qualities and essential nature that make one in reality God. However, sharing the same substance does not mean they share identity of person.

Through Him All Things Were Made

The Bible tells us that through the Son, as Word of God, all things have been created.

Session 4: Nicene Creed

(continued...)

For Us Men and for Our Salvation, He Came Down From Heaven

Jesus came from Heaven. While the creed says "down" it is important to remember that our language is limited by time and spatiality. Heaven is not "up", just as God is not biologically male father. However, due to our limits of language, we are forced to describe heaven symbolically and spatially.

And by the Holy Spirit, Was Incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and Became Man – Luke 2:1-8

God the Son became incarnate in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. He was born of a virgin through the Holy Spirit. God truly became human in Jesus Christ. Catholics believe that Jesus of Nazareth was and is a real human being, not simply a spirit or ghost.

For Our Sake He Was Crucified Under Pontius Pilate; He Suffered Death, and Was Buried – Isaiah 53:4-9 Acts 10:37-43

Jesus died on a cross, suffered as humans do, truly died and was laid in a tomb.

And Rose Again on the Third Day in Accordance with the Scriptures

Jesus was resurrected bodily as the Scriptures say, just as Jesus truly died, he truly rose from the dead three days later. The bodily resurrection is the keystone of Christian doctrine and experience. However, Jesus was not just physically resuscitated (as was Lazarus), but rather his body was transformed at the resurrection. The word "again" is used because Jesus first "rising" was his birth. To "rise again" is to be alive again.

He Ascended into Heaven and Is Seated at the Right Hand of the Father

In ancient science, heaven was thought to be "up" and literally situated above the sky. So in the Scriptures, Jesus is said to "ascend" to heaven. Whatever happened that day, Luke had to render the event into his own scientific paradigm, so he said Jesus "went up" to heaven. Again, we are limited by our language and experience of spatiality. Jesus is at the right hand of the Father, i.e., sharing authority with the Father, and not literally sitting next to the Father.

He Will Come Again in Glory to Judge the Living and the Dead and His Kingdom Will Have No End – Matthew 25:31-46

Jesus is coming again to righteously judge the living and dead. His kingdom cannot be destroyed, despite all of humanity's efforts. The creed says Jesus is coming; it does not say when or how.

Session 4: Nicene Creed

(continued...)

I Believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life - 2 Peter 1:3-11

The Holy Spirit is also called "Lord". The Holy Spirit sustains our lives as Christians, illuminating us after the new birth. The original Creed of Nicaea simply ended with "we Believe in the Holy Spirit".

Who Proceeds from the Father and the Son

The Son is said to be begotten, while the Spirit is said to proceed. Both words convey that the Son and Spirit are in special relationships to the Father, yet also fully divine. The Catholic Church acknowledges that the Father is the sole source within the Trinity, and admits that "proceeds from the Father and Son" means "proceeds from the Father through the Son."

Who with the Father and Son Is Adored and Glorified

Who with the Father and Son Is Adored and Glorified

Who Has Spoken Through the Prophets

The Spirit inspired the prophets of old, and inspires the Church today,

I Believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church

The creeds requires belief in the Catholic (Universal) Church, whose origins are ancient and historical, going back to the Apostles themselves. Thus, the Church was built upon the faith and witness of the apostles.

I Confess One Baptism for the Forgiveness of Sins

Catholics believe that sacramentally, through the waters of baptism, God forgives us of our sins, and we are born again. This belief of baptism's saving power is ancient and universally acknowledged in the early Christian writings.

And I Look Forward to the Resurrection of the Dead, and the Life of the World to Come, Amen – Romans 6:5-11

Christians always hope for the end of this fractured system, when the universe is fully reconciled with God in Christ Jesus. The Nicene Creed seems to affirm both the existence of a soul-filled heaven and the later resurrection of the dead when souls meet glorified body.

Session 4: Apostles' Creed

The Apostles' Creed is a fundamental statement of Christian belief used in the Catholic Church and other denominations to summarize core tenets about God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. It is a profession of faith often used in baptism and worship. The Apostles' Creed is a shorter, more primitive statement of faith that originated in the early Roman Church, while the Nicene Creed is longer, more detailed, and was developed by the First Council of Nicaea to specifically address theological disputes like Arianism. The Nicene Creed's more extensive explanations clarify the divinity of Christ and the Holy Trinity, whereas the Apostles' Creed is a more general summary of core beliefs, making it suitable for baptismal services and popular devotions

In 2011, English speaking Churches instituted a new translation of the Roman Missal, designed to be more accurate to the Latin words of the Roman Rite. The Creed was not changed – “we believe” was more accurately translated as “I believe” – as that was and still is the actual text of the Creed, just translated more accurately.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended into hell;
on the third day he rose again from the dead;
he ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty;
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.

Amen.

Session 4: Where to go from here?

Four Good habits

1. Attend Weekly Mass and make a plan first to attend Mass on Saturday or Sunday, then plan your weekend
2. Pray Everyday
3. Daily Examination of Conscience
4. Avoid Negative Influences or letting someone talk you out of your faith or your journey

On-Going Formation

1. Keep Learning – join bible studies, read, Google anything Catholic, learn about the Saints, never stop seeking
2. Prepare for Sunday Mass - Listen to Catholic Radio/Apps as part of your day, find a favorite program, author or speaker – Dr. Brant Petrie, Catholicproductions.com, Anything EWTN, Sacred Heart Radio, St. Gabriel Radio, Word on Fire
3. Find a Confessor or Spiritual Director

Think “Community”

1. Small Faith Community – Stay in contact with Inviting Catholics Home Ministry, email your small Inviting Catholics Home group, sign up for events or volunteering
2. Treasure Community – Share your Time and Talents, get involved
3. Celebrate Community – Participate or attend Masses and Church events
4. Your Other Family – Be the person God created you to be and show the people you love, by your words and actions, who you really are by the way you live out your life
5. The Rest of your Life – Take advantage of what you already know and love and continue to make it better. Take nothing for granted and enjoy the gifts you have been given.

Resources

1. The Veil Removed short film: <https://youtu.be/OOLZDaTglaM?si=eG5-JwwXufplWbNK>
2. Resources available on Inviting Catholics Home web page: <https://stbrendans.net/ich/>
3. Research St Monica and her son St Augustine, and his journey back to the Church
4. Read about the lives of the Saints and early Church fathers
5. Pray daily! Check out our Adoration Chapel at St Brendan and make it a regular practice.

Session 4: Reasons to be Catholic

10 Great Reasons to be Catholic, by Matthew Kelly

1. This is the Church that Jesus Christ started and sent the Holy Spirit to guide. It is unique and original.
2. The Catholic Church has relieved more suffering than any other group of people in the history of the world. We Care for the sick, the hungry, the lonely, the homeless, the uneducated, and the imprisoned.
3. We have history and mystery. To really understand Christianity you need a historical perspective, and the History of Christianity is Catholic. For more than 1,500 years there were no Baptist, Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans, Pentecostal Christians, Lutherans, Mormons, Evangelical Christians, and Non-Denominational Christians. Today, there are more than 25,000 different Christian denominations but they all lack the rich and beautiful history we have a Catholics. We have history, and we have mystery. We know it's all right not to have the answer to everything. Some things are a mystery and that's OK.
4. We have the Saints. These are the great heroes and heroines of Christianity. They are the most diverse group of people in history. Some were rich and some were poor; some were very well educated and some had no formal education; some were young and others were old. They have lived in every century, on every continent, in every country – and they all tried to be the best-version-of-themselves. Now they are in Heave, cheering you on.
5. We believe in the power of prayer. At every moment of every day Mass is being prayed in 1000's of places Around the world. That's our family praying for the whole world. We don't just pray for Catholics; we pray for everyone. Imagine how different the history of the world would have been if the Catholic Church had never offered a single prayer.
6. It's the same all around the world. Even though you may not speak the language, you still know what is going on. Catholicism is the same everywhere, and that's a beautiful thing.
7. The Catholic Church is the premier defender of human rights.
8. You need to be part of something bigger than yourself. Life is not about you. It's about laying down your life in service of others out of love for God. You could lay down your life for a sport, a career, money, things...and people do. But what a waste! The Catholic Church has the most important mission in the world – and you are invited to get involved and be a part of that great mission!
9. The Eucharist. Jesus Christ is truly present in the Eucharist.
10. You don't have to say "no" to God when he invites you. There are some invitations we don't turn down.