

“FOUR-FOR-FOUR”
CATECHESIS ON THE *ROMAN MISSAL*

Liturgy of the Word: Creed, part 1 (February 12–13, 2011)

To review, there are four major parts of Mass:

1. Introductory Rites
2. Liturgy of the Word
3. Liturgy of the Eucharist
4. Concluding Rites

Having covered the Introductory Rites in the first four catecheses, we now turn our attention to the Liturgy of the Word.

There are eight rites within the Liturgy of the Word:

1. First reading (usually taken from the Old Testament)
2. Responsorial Psalm (Old Testament)
3. Second reading (New Testament)
4. Alleluia verse (New Testament)
5. Gospel (New Testament)
6. Homily
7. Creed (Profession of Faith or Symbol)
8. General Intercessions (Prayer of the Faithful)

The Liturgy of the Word has two purposes:

1. To proclaim the Scriptures (readings and homily)

Through the proclamation of the Scriptures, Christ becomes present in the Church (see *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, 55).

The disciples realize on the road to Emmaus:

“Were not our hearts burning (within us) while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?” (Lk 24:32).

2. The second purpose of the Liturgy of the Word is to and to respond to the saving message of Scripture in faith (Creed and General Intercessions).

The pattern of the Liturgy of the Word is proclamation–response (within the various rites, and between the rites).

E.g., “The word of the Lord: **Thanks be to God.**”

E.g., “The Gospel of the Lord: **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**”

Within this structure, the Creed functions as a profession of faith in what has been announced.

The Creed developed between 300 and 400 A.D., as way of clarifying the Church’s faith against erroneous teaching (heresy) about the Trinity (one God in three Persons) and Jesus Christ (human and divine).

The Creed is a summary of faith written in the language of the Bible.

In some cases, the phrases are taken word-for-word from Scripture.

The Creed has three paragraphs, which correspond to the three Persons of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Creed is also a prayer, and so it is worth pondering what we are saying.

Numerous saints were exiled or even killed for defending this faith.

In the new translation of the *Roman Missal*, there are few changes to the Liturgy of the Word, except for the Creed.

The first change to note is the opening line: “*I believe*” (no longer “*We believe*”).

In Latin,
the text begins *Credo* (“I believe”) from which the “Creed” derives its name.

The value of saying “*I believe*” is that we can grasp the importance of our contribution.

According to the *Catechism*,
“Whoever says ‘I believe’ says ‘I pledge myself to what *we believe*’” (185).

The second change is that the phrase, “of all that is seen and unseen” will now become “of all things visible and invisible.”

This is a more literal translation of the Latin text:
visibilium omnium et invisibilium.

The new English translation will also be more theologically precise.

There are some things that are visible but unseen:
I do not see my brother, because he lives in Charlottesville,
but he is still visible.