

PART I: CREDO

Do I really believe?

The first step to understanding the Lord more deeply and loving the Lord more fully in the Eucharist is to strengthen our belief. I first have to 'believe' in Jesus, the Son of God. If I don't believe, and if I am not aware of myself as one who lives, one who makes decisions, and one who acts from that core belief, then my love, worship, and service is empty.

In the Gospel of John (11: 19-27) we read:

"Many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother Lazarus, who had died... Jesus told her, 'I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies will live and anyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' She said to him, 'Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.'"

The dialogue from this passage is incredibly compelling. There is a simplicity to it. There is a strength and clarity about it. In the midst of experiencing the deep sorrow at the death of a beloved brother, a family member, Martha manifests her belief that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. At a dark moment, she manifests her belief that her brother, Lazarus, will rise in the resurrection on the last day. It is her *credo* that shapes who she is, how she sees the world, how she engages those around her, how she gives witness. We know that later in the same passage Jesus in fact raises Lazarus from the dead. And in so doing he reveals his own Sonship and the mystery of the Triune God. It is a revelation that calls for the deepest act of faith, calls for us to say and to live, *credo*.

It's one word. It's a simple word. It's repeated often, every Sunday, every Solemnity, and every rosary we pray. *I believe. Credo* is at the heart of who I am, who we are. We are who we are because we believe. We do what we do because we believe. Why should I seek to live a life of virtue if I don't believe? Why preach, give witness, and commit myself to the truth of the Gospel if I don't believe? Why seek to receive the sacraments if I don't believe? Why be ready to endure hardships or challenges from the secular world if I don't believe?

In the midst of the many challenges we face today, one of the persistent ones is relativism. It's certainly not a new reality, but we are so immersed in it. It manifests itself in the current trends of society as a rejection or disregard of truth that is often accompanied by a disillusionment and

hopelessness. We see that being played out in a number of areas of our society, and you've probably heard it in statements like: "You can't trust any leadership" or "That's your truth." The significant impact of such a trend is that it also moves to erode our confidence in the truth, the authority and validity of the Revealed Word of God, particularly about the truth of the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. And when the revealed Word of God (the Bible) is dismissed as myth, when we hear "Oh, the Bible is just literature made up by humans" we are confronted with the need to renew again our deepest commitment to what we believe.

Credo, then, is critical because it connects us to what God reveals. When I say "I believe" it's rooted in what God reveals about Himself, not what I choose or what secular society chooses to create on its own, driven by whatever the current ideology may be. Far too often the lack of belief in our society moves us to a disposition where we seek to create God in our image, to force God into categories that we want, rather than rejoicing what God reveals to us and being formed in God's image and likeness, which is love. "I believe" in the Christian context seeks to explore first the eternal truths that God desires us to know, and to recognize the enduring beauty, goodness, and dignity of the human person.

Reflection Questions

1. What am I basing my life decisions on: God, myself or what the world proclaims as truth?
2. How do my choices reflect that I believe in God, the Real Presence of the Eucharist or the Church?
3. How have I explored the truths of God to try and understand the mind of God?

Resource

For additional reading, please see *Fides et Ratio* (Faith and Reason), an encyclical letter written by Pope St. John Paul II in 1998, which helps us understand more clearly the relationship between faith and reason and the confidence we can have in objective truth. In paragraph 12 he writes:

"History therefore becomes the arena where we see what God does for humanity. God comes to us in the things we know best and can verify most easily, the things of our everyday life, apart from which we cannot understand ourselves.

In the Incarnation of the Son of God we see forged the enduring and definitive synthesis which the human mind of itself could not even have imagined: the Eternal enters time, the Whole lies hidden in the part, God takes on a human face. The truth communicated in Christ's Revelation is therefore no longer confined to a particular place or culture, but is offered to every man and woman who would welcome it as the word which is the absolutely valid source of meaning for human life. Now, in Christ, all have access to the Father, since by his Death and Resurrection Christ has bestowed the divine life which the first Adam had refused (cf. Rom 5:12-15). Through this Revelation, men and women are offered the ultimate truth about their own life and about the goal of history."