

THE CREED

I believe in God. That is so easy to say. We say it every week when we celebrate Mass on Sunday. It is the beginning of the Creed. Like so many prayers, we say them so often, we are inclined to say them without thinking what the words we are saying really mean. In recent years, I have tried to make a special effort to concentrate on what is happening when we celebrate mass and to say each prayer devoutly and with meaning; to listen intently to the readings and the homily. Before coming to mass, I prepare by looking at the first readings, the psalm and the gospel, trying to understand their meaning. This helps me to avoid distraction during Mass.

I believe in God, so easy to say but so hard to contemplate and impossible to understand or at least it is for me. I am not a learned man nor even very clever. I have been abroad a few times but I have seen only tiny parts of this world apart from what I have seen on television or in books. I find it amazing when I think of this Solar system but exploring further into the universe and infinity is difficult to imagine. Infinity is beyond my comprehension, but God is an almighty, eternal and infinitive being, without a beginning and without end who created all that is. To deny the existence of God is to deny the whole universe and all that is in it for there is nothing in the universe that can come into being unless it has been created were, before, there was nothing. I cannot prove that God exists but my heart tells me that He is there for me and every day I recognise signs that he is watching over me. I believe that from when the first man was created, God has been revealing himself to us through the prophets. His son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, humbled himself to share in our humanity so that we could share in his divinity. Jesus became one with us when he was born to the virgin Mary. During his life here on earth, he revealed his father to us and showed us the way to his kingdom. By his death and resurrection, he promised us admittance to that kingdom if we follow his way. After his ascension, Jesus sent his Holy Spirit to guide us on that way. I believe that He is still revealing himself to us, speaking to us but his voice is often so gentle we have to listen hard. The readings in the last couple of weeks of ordinary time, from the book of Danial have been quite disturbing. It made me think how very troubled our world is at this point in time and even in the gospels, Jesus was warning us to be ready for we did not know the day nor the hour that the second coming would be. We are now into Advent and the readings are more uplifting and so full of promise, encouraging us to wait patiently and prepare for the joyful coming of Jesus, our saviour.

When I was younger and still working, I thought that if my wife was taken from me and I was left bereaved, I would give away all my earthly possessions and join a monastery for I firmly believed that my earthly vocation was to be a loving and faithful husband and father and to try to pass on to them my faith in God and in Jesus Christ, the son of God. After 64 years of marriage and Fatherhood, I am not sure how successfully I have carried out that mission or how poorly I may have failed but I am still trying. I am not an eloquent person nor am I charismatic. I cannot draw people to me and preach the word of God to them. I can only try to follow the words of St. John Henry Newman in his beautiful prayer which I recite every day asking Jesus to teach me "to preach without preaching - not by words but by my example and by the sympathetic influence of what I do - by my visible resemblance to his saints and the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to him".

O almighty and merciful God, Loving Father in Heaven, thank you for all your gifts, for all the graces and blessings you have bestowed upon us. I am sorry for the times I have offended your infinite goodness and I am resolve, with the help of your grace, nevermore to offend you again.