

# Catching Fire - Meeting 3

The Coming of the King

The Creed

The Church

## Part 1 - The Coming of the King

- 1) Take some time to catch up with your sponsor/candidate. Share high points and low points of the time since you last saw each other. Share with each other how you have seen God working in your lives since you last met.
- 2) In your Bibles, read Matthew 3: 1-11, the story of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was sent to prepare the way of the Lord. As John preaches the coming of the King, he reminds his following that he is just an ordinary man, and the one who is coming (Jesus) is much greater.
- 3) Share with your sponsor/candidate how you are preparing (or prepared) for the King to come at Christmas. Did you remember to focus on the arrival of the Messiah, or did you find yourself caught up in the hustle and bustle? What can you do next year to make your preparation for the King even better than this year?

## Part 2 - The Creed

Think of a club you have formed or a sports team that you are a part of. When starting a club, you probably came up with an idea that you all had in common, and with your sports team there are rules that you all have to follow in order to play the game properly. For many groups, clubs, and sports we sign something to show that we are committed and will follow the mission and roles of that organization.

The Creed is the summary of our whole Faith. Having a fixed formula for the Faith allows Catholics worldwide, to profess the same Faith as passed on by Jesus. The Creed gives us a set of beliefs that build the foundation of the Faith Christ passed on to the apostles. Before Jesus ascended into heaven, leaving the apostles to continue His mission on earth through the Church, He gave the apostles a mission.

READ MATTHEW 28: 19-21

The Creed comes from the command to baptize we heard about in the Gospel of Matthew. The profession of faith is necessary for baptism. When you were baptized, you or your parents made this profession of faith in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

The Creed is divided into three parts. The first part refers to God the Father and His wonderful work of creation. The second part refers to God the Son, His divinity and His work of redemption. The third part of the Creed speaks of God the Holy Spirit, His origin and His relationship with the Father and Son.

There are two Creeds that you are probably familiar with: the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed. The Apostles' Creed was written as the summary of the apostles' faith in the early Church. The Nicene Creed was written later in response to some confusion about what the Church teaches. It is longer and includes more details.

Just like we sign our names saying we are committed to a club or organization, each time we profess the Creed, we sign our names to it with our "Amen." "Amen" comes from the Hebrew root meaning "believe." It is an expression of faith, steadfastness, reliability, and fidelity. When we say "Amen" at the end of the Creed, we are saying that we trust in the God who we profess and will be faithful to Him. When it comes time to profess the Creed at Mass, some of us may space out or mumble the words out of habit. It is easy to take the Creed for granted. However, the Creed is not just a sequence of lines that we rattle off at Mass, but they are the truths we live for and many have died for. In the early Church, being a Christian was illegal. Professing the faith and being baptized into God's family most certainly meant martyrdom and death. (Martyrs are people who die for the Faith, like St. Stephen). The Creed is the summary of our Faith as presented by Christ to His Church. Catholics around the world profess their faith in the Triune God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. As His disciples, we are called to proudly profess this faith in word and deed with a steadfast and firm "Amen."

## The Nicene Creed

I believe in God,  
The Father 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 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.

Read through the Nicene Creed (above). What part of the Creed do you least understand? Why?

As baptized Christians, how can we live out the Creed with our "Amen?" Is it a priority in our daily life to live out the Creed? What can we do to make it more of a priority?

## Part 3 - The Church

The Church is not just a building - it's a people made up of individuals like you and me. We are pilgrims on a journey to Heaven together. When we are at our best, we form dynamic communities. People need community. We need people to do life with, others who can encourage and challenge us. St. Paul tells us in Romans 12:5 that we are all one body. The right hand cannot leave the body. It needs the body and the body needs it. Without the body, it is useless. In the same way, we need each other. We need the Church - and the Church needs us. We are the Church. So when you don't show up, something is missing. When you don't show up, the Church can't fulfill its mission.

Life for the early Christians was not easy, yet they felt called to fulfill their mission in Christ. Why? The ancient world was brutal, cold and impersonal. Why would someone want to be a Christian knowing they could be killed? In a world of brutality, Christianity was warm, caring and deeply personal. The early Christians modeled a more compassionate, humane, and noble way of life --- this was attractive! What fueled this way of life? Ágape love!!! The

Church was organized around Ágape love which is the choice we make to love another person regardless of whether or not he/she chooses to love us in return. Ágape love is not driven by any emotion, but rather it is an unconditional love that is an act of the will. It sets aside self-interest, and is the love Jesus modeled for us and calls us to.

When you think of Church, what comes to mind?

Why is it difficult to practice Ágape love?

If you could ask a group of early Christians one question, what would you ask?