

The Creed Part I

“I believe” or “We believe?” In Latin, the non-English sacramentaries published since Vatican II use the singular pronoun “I.” In the early 1970’s it was deemed a worthy change by the International Committee on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) and approved by the Holy See to use the first person plural “we,” in English, because it emphasized the theology of being a united people in the body of Christ. Saying “we” identified us as part of the church assembled and the church throughout time. It was thought that this reinforcement was needed because of the perceived individualistic piety of our forebears that “my religion” was between “me and God,” and that others didn’t matter. This value of being a corporate body of Christ was enshrined in the architecture of new churches that were being built. The ceilings of churches were lowered and seating was re-arranged to draw the eye to those gathered as the worshipping body of Christ. In hindsight, the church saw this as an unnecessary detour supported by progressives who wanted to change the church’s self-understanding.

It has long been the church’s tradition that we say the same thing throughout the world, whether in Greek or Latin, particularly when we are articulating the True Faith. The Creed as the pre-eminent “Symbol of the Faith” (*Simbolum fidei*) was always articulated literally, not in paraphrased language, a style of translation called “dynamic equivalence”. In the history of the Church, one notorious attempt at dynamic equivalence caused the Great Schism of the East from the West when the language defining the Holy Spirit was translated from Greek (From the Father through the Son) to Latin (From the Father and the Son). Today, from this perspective it was argued that the English speaking Church was no longer professing the same faith when we began to use “We believe” instead of “I believe.” The Latin phrase *Credo in Unum Deum*, literally translates to “I believe in One God.” To conform to what the English speaking Church was saying, the Latin phrase would have to be changed to *Credimus in Unum Deum*.

In the new Roman Missal, or Sacramentary, the Creed has restored “I believe.” With that said, it is important that we do not lose the belief that we are the people of God gathered around the one table of Christ’s ultimate sacrifice. When we say “I believe in One God” with the force of the gathered voices, we proclaim the one Faith in the Holy Trinity through the Creed; we are one Body, one Spirit in Christ.