

## Authentic Apostolic Teaching on Faith and Truth:

### Part III

# First, The Truth!

In this final part of Father Phillipson's catechetical speech on the Apostles Creed at *Our Lady's Army of Advocates* conference in Boston, Massachusetts, he teaches us that, at all cost, the truth must come first. [Part I](#) is in *The Fatima Crusader* Issue 115 and [Part II](#) in Issue 116. A DVD of the entire speech can be ordered from The Fatima Center – see [page 63](#) for order information.

by *Father David Phillipson*

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**A** lot of people are trying to attempt their moral behavioral Catholic life without being rooted in the truth. That is an error in and of itself!

First, the truth. First, the mind needs to be converted to the truth and then you will begin to act in the truth. Many people are trying to act somewhat in a Catholic way without first changing their minds. That is the first place that change needs to occur.

The catechism is the first recourse to conversion and to acting properly in a moral and Catholic way. The devil is doing everything he can to separate the faithful from the Shepherd, from the truth, in a diabolical way.

However, the Creed is the solution because it brings

together the faithful and Christ the Shepherd, because they both have the right half of the coin that go together.

Not only does the symbol of the Creed attach us to God, it also brings us in communion with one another. We all hold the same half coin because we all hold the same Faith. Our Faith should be One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic. That's a catechism question, by the way.

What are the four Marks of the Church? That is what should characterize our faith. It needs to be Apostolic; it needs to come from the apostles. Therefore, when we read a catechism and meditate and reflect on a good catechism, we are reflecting on the Apostolic teaching.

This Apostolic teaching is one, the same, whether it was

taught two thousand years ago or whether it's authentically taught today – *it's the same*.

So, as Catholics, we are all holding the same coin. We recognize each other because we are all holding the same symbol. That's important – we should be united in Faith.

### **Catholics All Believe the Same Thing**

The idea that Catholics can believe different things is a novelty! It's not Catholic. It's not Apostolic. There is an insistence that we all believe the same thing; we all hold the same coin by adhering to the Creed and understanding it the way the Church teaches – not the way we “*think*” it should be understood; not the way you “*feel*” it should be understood: “Well, I feel this way about that Article of the Faith.”

That doesn't cut the mustard. It's how the Church teaches, how the Church understands this Article of Faith – that we should receive as coming from God, as the Church teaches.

Therefore, our Faith should be one – it should be the same. This is primarily what unites us to one another, and to God.

I'd like to dovetail a little bit regarding the definition of Faith.

This is a very similar definition that is from the *Summa Theologica* of Saint Thomas Aquinas.

I want to read this to bring out one or two particular points about what is entailed in the Faith. This comes from the old 1913 Catholic Encyclopedia. It is a definition quoted from the *Summa Theologica* of Saint Thomas Aquinas – a definition of Faith:

“The act of the intellect assenting to a Divine Truth owing to the movement of the will, which is itself moved by the Grace of God.”

That's quite a lot and I'm only going to touch upon a couple of things here. First of all, it is an act of the intellect – assenting to Divine Truth. Owing to the movement of the will – which is, itself, moved by the grace of God. Clearly, when we are making an act of Faith – a supernatural act of Faith – grace is required.

### **There Is ONE God**

We might be able to reason – I would imagine most adults would be able to figure this out – there is *one* God. The proofs of St. Thomas Aquinas bear this out. Reason alone can attain to the fact there is one God. That is not an act of Faith. Believing

it on rational grounds is not an act of Faith. When I believe there is one God because God revealed there is only one God – as the Church teaches – then I am making an act of Faith in the God Who has revealed it.

It requires grace to elevate my intellect and my will to assent or consent to that truth for the reason that God revealed it – not because I can figure it out.

For example, if I think it makes sense that Christ founded a Church and we would all come together occasionally for social purposes and have a good time – on Sundays and so forth – that is a rational approach to the understanding of the Church.

### **The Catholic Church Is a Divine Institution**

But understanding the Catholic Church as a Divine Institution – because God has revealed it to be such – requires the assistance of grace. A supernatural act will always require grace. It is not an act based merely on reason alone.

The Catholic Encyclopedia – in discussing what an act of Faith is – speaks about Faith in the objective and subjective mode. I've been speaking about the Faith mostly in an objective mode – that is, a body of truths

that anybody can take up a book and read. These are the objective body of truths, a deposit of Faith. That's the object.

There is a subjective dimension to Faith, which used to be the only problem, because what used to happen is that pretty much all the priests, bishops, and popes were already on board with the deposit of Faith.

The only problem they may have had was how clear they were in explaining this or that point of the Faith. Usually, the only problem back then was the fact that some people might have had a difficult time assenting because they couldn't understand it, or they had a hard time getting motivated to make an act of Faith.

The difficulty then would have been on the subjective side – on our side:

“I have a hard time believing that, I need help. I need assistance. I need grace, I need prayer – in order to come to make an act of Faith in these truths as the Church teaches.”

Unfortunately, what has happened today is that there has been so much emphasis on the subjective dimension – or the difficulties of coming to an



**Distribution of our leaflet on Luther to the thousands arriving for the papal Mass. See excerpts of the leaflet ([page 30](#)) which warns about the diabolical disorientation of Luther's Protestant revolt.**

act of Faith – that the objective bodies of truth have completely been obliterated.

Today you might find people in the hierarchy saying: “Well you know it doesn’t really matter *what* you believe, so long as you believe it sincerely; so long as you believe with all your heart; that’s what’s really important. It doesn’t really matter what you believe; it’s just whether what you do believe, is believed from your heart, if you really feel it.”

There are legitimately two poles and they both have to come together. We want to make sure that when we read the catechism, and accept the Faith it’s not just merely a head-game. It’s not just: “Oh yeah, God exists somewhere out there. Yes, I can figure out that there is a God.”

### **We Believe Through God and With Him**

No! That is not an act of Faith. That is not the will *assenting* to the truth because God has revealed it. Rather, when I believe *in God* – and this is bringing us right back to the first article of the Creed – I don’t just believe that God *exists* – I believe through Him, and with Him because I’m being assisted by grace. In order to be assisted by grace, I need to be in Him.

Remember, St. Paul said that we can’t say that Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit. We can’t really say that and mean it with our minds and our hearts. Obviously, we can say that verbally off the top of our heads, but we can’t say that and mean it without the assistance of the grace of the Holy Ghost.

So there are the two sides – the subjective and the objective sides. We need both.

First and foremost, when we are talking about the Faith, we need to make sure that we’re talking about a body of truths that the Church has always and everywhere taught.

Secondly, that we are making our own personal act of assenting to those truths which the Church teaches. That is part of what an act of Faith is. I believe these, and all the truths, which the Catholic Church teaches because Thou hast taught them – Thou, Who can neither deceive nor be deceived.

These truths are the truths found in the catechism. These truths – God has revealed. These truths are to be believed because God, Who reveals them, cannot lie and cannot be deceived. 

**See page 63 to order Father  
Phillipson’s entire speech.**