

Bates College

SCARAB

Honors Theses

Capstone Projects

5-2020

"One" and "I": Dimensions of Ritual Unity and Individuality in the Liturgical Practice of the Catholic Nicene Creed

Jack M. McLarnon

Bates College, jmclarno@bates.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scarab.bates.edu/honorsthesis>

Recommended Citation

McLarnon, Jack M., "'One' and 'I': Dimensions of Ritual Unity and Individuality in the Liturgical Practice of the Catholic Nicene Creed" (2020). *Honors Theses*. 313.

<https://scarab.bates.edu/honorsthesis/313>

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Capstone Projects at SCARAB. It has been accepted for inclusion in Honors Theses by an authorized administrator of SCARAB. For more information, please contact batesscarab@bates.edu.

“One” and “I”

Dynamics of Ritual Unity and Individuality
in the Liturgical Practice of the Catholic Nicene Creed

An Honors Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Departments of Anthropology and Religious Studies

Bates College

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of Bachelor of Arts

By

Jack M. McLarnon

Lewiston, Maine

May 1, 2020

Acknowledgements

This thesis is only possible due to the support, advice, and contributions of several exceptional people in my life. First, I extend my warm gratitude to every member of the Prince of Peace Parish, especially those who were generous and thoughtful enough to share their points of view during our interviews. Second, I thank my family and friends who have been so understanding with their help and consideration throughout my writing process. Third, I thank Bates Library Services, because without their hard work every year, neither I nor my peers could ever hope to complete our theses. Fourth, I am extremely appreciative of every professor in the Anthropology and Religious Studies departments at Bates, since every class I took helped to shape my abilities at analysis and critical thinking in these subjects. Lastly, Cynthia Baker and Loring Danforth deserve special recognition and dear thanks for being such dependable, insightful thesis advisors. Thank you all.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	ii
Table of Contents	iii
A Note on the Text	v
Introduction	7
History of the Nicene Creed in Catholic Institutions, Liturgy, and Theology	14
<i>1.1 Empire, Theology, and the Council of Nicaea</i>	15
<i>1.2 The Council of Constantinople and Further Revisions</i>	20
<i>1.3 The Creed in Catholic Liturgy</i>	24
<i>1.4 Catholicism Brings the Creed to the United States</i>	29
<i>1.5 Conclusion</i>	32
Catholicism in Lewiston	34
<i>2.1 The Prince of Peace Parish</i>	34
<i>2.2 Ethnography of the Catholic Mass</i>	40
<i>2.3 Participating in the Nicene Creed</i>	43
<i>2.4 Interviews</i>	47
<i>2.5 Conclusion</i>	52
Ritual Performance Theory	54
<i>3.1 A Genealogy of Key Figures in Ritual Studies</i>	55
<i>3.2 Relevant Concepts for Ritual Performance</i>	68
<i>3.3 Conclusions, Assessments, and Applications</i>	78
The Nicene Creed as Ritual Performance	82
<i>4.1 The Ritual Character of the Nicene Creed</i>	83
<i>4.2 Ritual Distinctions</i>	89
<i>4.3 Conclusion</i>	96
Collective Unity in an Orthodox Creed	98
<i>5.1 Unity and Exclusion</i>	100
<i>5.2 Becoming One with the Catholic Church: Initiation</i>	105
<i>5.3 Group Unity: In the Moment</i>	107
<i>5.4 Catholic Unity: A Historical Institution</i>	112
<i>5.5 Spiritual Unity: The Dead and the Divine</i>	118

5.6 Conclusion	123
Individual Experiences and Interpretations of Creedal Practice	124
6.1 Demographic Diversity	126
6.2 Variations in Group Performance	131
6.3 Experiencing a Moment of Faith	137
6.4 Personal Values and Understandings	139
6.5 Different Applications	147
6.6 Conclusion	151
Conclusion	153
Final Thoughts	154
On History	154
On Ethnography	155
On Ritual Theory	155
On the Spectrum of Collectivity	156
Further Ideas	157
References	161
Appendix: Christian Creeds	166

A Note on the Text

This thesis uses multiple scholarly terms from the Catholic tradition to describe relevant texts and practices in the study. For most of these terms, I have provided background or definitions to render them understandable to the reader. However, for the Nicene Creed, there are some forms of phrasing to address here. In several instances, I refer to this orthodox Catholic statement simply as “the Creed,” because it is significantly more central to the thesis than other creeds such as the Apostles’ Creed and Athanasian Creed. Also, when addressing the Nicene Creed as a ritual practice, it is often referred to as “the liturgical Nicene Creed” or “the liturgical Creed,” for brevity; this should be separated from the text of the Creed, as it depicts instead the act of reciting the Nicene Creed during Catholic Mass.

Many terms related to theories of ritual are also presented. These are explained and clarified in the text as well. In this thesis, I do not use “ritual theory” in the singular because as a category of theory, “ritual” is far too diverse and multifaceted to properly refer to just one angle of theory. Instead, I refer to the theoretical source of my analysis as a “corpus” or “set” of plural theories, all of which include ideas about rituals in various capacities.

On the following page is a transcription of the current English translation of the Nicene Creed used by the Roman Catholic Church. This can be used for reference to details in the thesis body, and it is contained once more in the Appendix.

The Nicene Creed

I believe in one 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.

Introduction

A Spectrum of Collectivity

***creed** - *a formal definition of summary of the Christian faith, held in common by all Christians*¹

The following thesis discusses the Catholic Nicene Creed as a ritual practice, historic text, and instrument for Catholic faith. However, the first scene I wish to present is one that I encountered this year on January 26, 2020 during the 5pm Sunday Mass at Holy Cross Church in Lewiston, Maine. Father Greenleaf, the presiding priest, explained to those of us in the congregation that Catholics—and people everywhere—are in a constant struggle between light and darkness. To win out over the darkness in the world, he implored us to turn to Jesus as the light we need in our lives. This moment of priestly insight and advice, known as a homily, has great bearing on this thesis's approach to the Nicene Creed.

First, Fr. Greenleaf established a clear dichotomy between light and darkness, with one being the obvious good and the latter being a path to avoid. Parallels can be drawn to the straightforward orthodoxy of the Nicene Creed. The Creed is a foundational Catholic text, which has been used for centuries to express core beliefs of the religion. In this sense the Nicene Creed is a source of light; it is easily recognized as helping Catholics maintain a holy outlook on the world, and its directness sets it apart from other beliefs that could lead the faithful towards views that the Church would see as darkness. Second, the priest's homily upholds Jesus as a constant

¹ This terminology is derived from Alister McGrath's volume *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought* (McGrath 1998, 347).

source of light, who has been shining always and is forever ready to help Catholics get out of worldly darkness. Similarly, the Creed is so entrenched in Catholic tradition that believers can rely on its light without fail. The beliefs posited by the Nicene Creed never change, even if the precise words may be altered occasionally (MacMichael 2019), so Catholics are always able to access its continuous orthodoxy. Yet a third point reveals the underlying complexity of this metaphor, and the crux of this thesis: light can shine at different levels of brightness, and so too can individual Catholics approach the orthodox Nicene Creed with personal perspectives on its significance. The Nicene Creed may be a source of light for all who speak it during Catholic services, but it is viewed not the same light by everyone. In other words, the unifying expression of faith and Catholicism exuding from the Creed is simultaneously affected by a coexisting dimension of individuality.

The Nicene Creed is an ancient doctrine originating in 325 CE, designed to unify the entire Christian world through shared beliefs promoted by a central institutional church. It can be broken down into four parts. Part One is about God the Father, the one and only deity in the Catholic faith and the divine creator, “maker of heaven and earth.” Part Two is the longest of the four, providing details about Jesus’ holy conception into the human world, His sacrifice for the salvation of humanity, and His relationship with God the Father. Part Three covers the Holy Spirit, which has influenced the Christian religion through the centuries. These first three parts together present a Trinitarian God, one which is made up of three distinct persons (Father, Son, and Spirit), but is nevertheless a single entity for this monotheistic faith. Part Four turns from divine cosmology to the Church and its people, stating that there is one church as an institution and that via baptism into this church, sins will be forgiven and its members will be ready for “the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.” In addition to introducing and

explaining the Trinitarian God and the Church that is devoted to this deity, the Nicene Creed also expresses belief in these religious cornerstones. By reciting the Nicene Creed, Catholics align themselves with these traditional beliefs about their God and their Church.

Although the text of the Nicene Creed can be the subject of substantial analysis and inspiration, my thesis focuses instead on the element of practice.² Since it is most common for Catholics to engage with the Creed during holy Mass, reciting these orthodox beliefs under the roof of their parish church and speaking together as an assembled group of believers, this act becomes a ritualized performance ideal for study. Using the lens of ritual allows for the application of anthropological theory, as well as repeated ethnographic studies of this weekly practice. Significantly, the practice of the Nicene Creed demonstrates that there is not just *one* orthodox Catholicism. By practicing the Creed myself and observing my fellow participants, I was able to appreciate how personal quirks influence the people involved in this group practice. Individual interpretation still exists about this text that has been given absolute authority by the Church. In addition, unique experiences exist within the institutional orthodoxy, although some general ideas may still be universally held. This issue matters because it is directly related to Catholic identity: the Nicene Creed is a form of self-definition within the religion.

The interrelated dimensions of group belonging and self-determination constitute the main idea of this entire thesis. I argue that by viewing the Nicene Creed as a ritual performance of orthodox Catholicism, the ideal of unity expressed in this statement nevertheless allows for a variety of personal interpretations, experiences, and overlapping communities associated with the

² For this thesis, the worded Nicene Creed is referred to as the “textual Creed,” even though some interpretive anthropologists like Clifford Geertz approach practices as texts as well; to this end, the practice of reciting the Nicene Creed in Mass is referred to as the “liturgical Creed.”

liturgical Creed. Not only does this approach allow for a complex look at the Nicene Creed's role in Catholic worship and identity, it also provides a model for considering other orthodox religious texts, events, and practices. Religious orthodoxy is often associated with institutional unity and absolute authority, but recognizing the possibility of variation, interpretation, and agency from within the religion can build appreciation for the individual nuances in the actual practice of these religious fundamentals.

My thesis enters into dialogue with various other strands of academic conversation, past and present. These lines of relevant scholarship influenced my work as important sources of inspiration, criticism, disagreement, and citation. Many scholars from the field of religious studies have analyzed how the Nicene Creed's history, rhetoric, and usage influence Catholicism and its members. These studies inform my understanding of the Creed and are applied to my analysis. In terms of theory, several anthropologists have debated over how to best study and interpret religious rituals. This thesis provides yet another view on addressing ritual, utilizing a perspective that best applies to the Nicene Creed. Specifically, my thesis tackles a similar problem as anthropologist Stanley Tambiah, whose studies are concerned with ritual duality the tension it causes. Yet instead of focusing on the dichotomy between invariance and contextual variation as Tambiah does (1985, 125), I address the theoretical issue with an eye for unity and individuality acting in conjunction and serving as endpoints for a *spectrum of collectivity*. This spectrum represents how there are many fluctuating degrees of belonging or independence in ritual practices, being more complex than simply unified or individualistic.

Before going any further, I feel it imperative to explain the stance from which I approach this scholarship, since I occupy a complex position as both a native anthropologist and believer-scholar. I am Catholic, and I have always been a member of this religion since I was baptized at

the age of one. Throughout my life I have remained active in my faith, attending church services and events at my home parish of St. Luke's in Westborough, Massachusetts. At age seventeen, I personally chose to adhere to Catholicism via the holy sacrament of confirmation. Now, when I attend Mass and say the Nicene Creed, my participation is genuine and personal. I take my faith seriously, but even before embarking on this thesis I actively thought about Catholicism with a critical eye to larger social factors and independent reflections. Therefore, bringing a scholarly approach from my secular college seems fitting and even helpful for developing a deeper outlook on my Catholic faith. The disciplines of anthropology and religious studies provided tools with which to articulately examine the religion; concepts such as etic-emic description (Geertz 1973, 14) and reflexivity have helped me understand the need to represent phenomena like the Nicene Creed in a way that is accessible for anyone, regardless of their identity. Ideally, my thesis will be useful for Catholics and non-Catholics alike, but I still want all readers to be aware of the subjective insider stance that I hold.

I certainly felt a tension while writing, under stress from both Catholicism and academia to respect their interests fairly. Through this process, I had to consider how to balance faith and analysis, integrating them both into the final product that is this thesis. However, my complicated stance brought forward important questions that I otherwise may have never addressed, such as how faith and analysis inform each other, or why traditional religions and critical academics may seem at odds in the first place. Also, in this believer-scholar position, my subjectivity is more apparent than if I were an outsider with less at stake in the tradition. Bias in writing is often viewed with trepidation, yet I view my clear subjectivity as an asset for better representing my role in the ethnography and analysis. Complete objectivity is impossible when discussing humanity, so recognizing one's subjective stance is crucial for writers of anthropology, religious

studies, and other similar disciplines. Being a member of the faith whose Creed I studied makes my stance visible to readers, so that they can better understand where my ideas are coming from and assess them accordingly. As a Catholic I hold the Creed and religion of my study to be true, but as a scholar I can envision alternative worldviews as well.

For the part of my identity that is a collegiate scholar, I made sure to utilize ethical methods and comply with the standards of the International Review Board. My ethnographic fieldwork consisted of attending services in the Prince of Peace Parish and participating with the assembled Catholics, especially for the Creed. Meanwhile, I was also observing my surroundings and events that occurred. My notes may have people's names in them, but only those from whom I received consent have their names given in the following paper; all others are indicated by only general description. I also conducted interviews with adults who have experiences with Catholic services, making sure to receive permission to interview, respect their confidentiality, and give them choice of location. This thesis was approved by the IRB.

Chapter One presents a history of the Nicene Creed from its origins to its current use in US Catholic parishes today. The Creed's creation and development are vital to comprehending its complex orthodox character, which informs my analysis. Chapter Two provides context on the Prince of Peace Parish and Lewiston area, before displaying my relevant ethnographic fieldwork about the liturgy, performance of the Creed, and key interviewees. Chapter Three is about theory, first presenting a critical genealogy of anthropological ritual theory and then a focused look at the specific theoretical areas important for my analysis: 1) linguistics, 2) power, authority, and agency, 3) ritual manipulation of symbols, 4) experience and affect, and 5) the characteristics of ritual-like behavior. The challenges and benefits of using ritual theory are seriously addressed, as well.

Chapter Four is the first analysis chapter, applying ritual theory to the Catholic Nicene Creed's liturgical practice. This general analysis shows how the lens of ritual touches upon multiple qualities in the Creed, making ritual ideal for a complex analysis with the spectrum of collectivity. Chapter Five continues the analysis and explains how the Creed unites liturgical speakers with each other, the Catholic Church, earlier generations of believers, and even the divine. However, with unity comes inevitable exclusion, so the consequences of unification also receive attention. Chapter Six is the culmination of the analysis, as it shows how even with the unifying orthodoxy of the Nicene Creed, participants in its liturgical performance also have individual impressions based on their identities, actions, experiences, interpretations, and creedal applications. The Conclusion offers final thoughts on these chapters and suggests ways in which this thesis can lead to further scholarship, perspectives, and faith formation.

My intentions for writing this thesis are not to argue in preference of either unity or individuality, make judgment statements about the Catholic Church, or criticize the views of anybody who was kind enough to support me in this study. Rather, I have four goals that I hope the following chapters will accomplish. First, I strive to help discuss the Catholic Nicene Creed in a clear, insightful manner that promotes critical thinking. Second, I try to represent my fellow Catholics at Prince of Peace Parish as accurately as possible. Third, my analysis is designed to address ritual theories and show that they are useful for approaching complexity in traditional religious practices, specifically the liturgical Creed. Fourth, I intend to maintain my Catholic religiosity in spite of my role as scholar, and instead form a more nuanced view of my faith through this study. I pray that any Catholic readers of my thesis will also my scholarly analysis on the Nicene Creed a positive experience in their religious lives.

Chapter 1

History of the Nicene Creed in Catholic Institutions, Liturgy, and Theology

One of the most enduring texts of the Catholic faith is the Nicene Creed. First brought to existence in 325 CE, this creed had the intended purpose of unifying a recently institutionalized Christian Church in the Roman Empire (Edwards 2006, 560). Over the subsequent century the Creed was redacted and developed, but always with the intent of expounding fundamental truths about the Holy Trinity of God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. However, since that early age, the Creed has remained strictly the same for Catholics, although it is by no means a static text: the way that it shaped church politics, fit into liturgical services, and moved across the world with the religion's globalization makes the Nicene Creed an essential influence in the history of Catholicism. In fact, the long past of the Creed is still relevant to its present use in Catholic communities. Therefore, examination of the Nicene Creed's historical development within this religious tradition will inform the contemporary analysis of this thesis.

The history of the Nicene Creed is intertwined with that of Catholicism as a whole. Since this dogmatic statement expresses the fundamental beliefs of Catholic cosmology, the Creed has always been an underlying force throughout the lengthy and ongoing life of the Church. This close connection makes the Nicene Creed a powerful lens through which to consider Catholic influence and development over the course of centuries, addressing cultural, social, political, and spiritual elements. In fact, since it is also used by other faiths, such as Eastern Orthodoxy, the Creed's history extends even beyond Catholicism. To keep this historical background focused and relevant, I will only include past events and trends that relate to the specific subject of my thesis: US Catholic use of the Nicene Creed within active church communities (or "parishes").

This condensed review covers the conception of the Creed at the first official ecumenical council in 325 CE, its various revisions, theological debates concerning its truths, its place in the Catholic liturgy and practice, and its journey into the Americas.

1.1 Empire, Theology, and the Council of Nicaea

Before the Nicene Creed was brought into existence, the situation of Christianity in the Roman world was undergoing a complicated set of changes. This tumultuous context determined how the Creed would take form, with lasting influence on Christian doctrine to follow. In the early Fourth Century CE, the Roman Empire was divided between western and eastern states, and each state had its own issues in Christianity. Notably, the Eastern Roman city of Alexandria was the site of serious theological debates as to the nature of the Holy Trinity, especially concerning the relationship between Jesus and God (Brasher 2017, 4). These contestations over divine cosmology had two main sides: one position, led by Arius of Alexandria, argued that Christ was an ideal and preeminent human but not divine, while the opposition, which included figures like Athanasius and Basil of Caesarea, claimed that the divine quality (*logos*) of Jesus was necessary for him to have truly offered salvation for humanity (McGrath 1998, 33). This debate included a whole array of stances between these two sides, pondering how human and how divine Christ really was. Meanwhile, other variations of belief also existed across community churches, with each one using its own confession of faith (Ehrman and Jacobs 2004, 252). While the Church as a singular institution had the Pope to lead the religion, this authority figure did not have enough actual influence to deal with all the different stances of the bishops beneath him (Ross 1941, 103). In its plurality of cosmology and tradition, Christianity at this time lacked internal unity, which several clergy leaders saw as a problem.

The internal instability of Christian religion was exacerbated by external factors. Explicit persecution of Christians by imperial forces began in the military, which then expanded to the general population in 303 CE with the official advent of the Diocletian Persecution (Woods 2001, 587). While this attack on the Christian faith ended after about ten years, the surviving Church was weakened due to complications over who had remained faithful during the crisis and who had not—some early Christians had renounced their religion to avoid persecution and only returned to the Church once it was safe again (Ehrman and Jacobs 2004, 252). In addition to imperial abuse, the branch of Christians who would come to form the orthodox institutional church also faced theological conflict with Gnostic Christians. Gnosticism features a diverse array of alternative views on Christian belief and scripture, connected by a general sense that knowledge is more essential than faith in matters of God and Jesus. In the debate about Jesus's nature, many Gnostics argued that he was more of an ethereal spirit than physical being. From this perspective, the godly spirit possessed the human body of Jesus when he was baptized as an adult, thereby significantly removing the divine Christ from humanity and sin (Coetzee 2008, 211-213). Many proto-orthodox Christian leaders clashed with these Gnostic ideas, further weakening efforts of centralization. The reality of Christianity at the start of the Fourth Century was tumultuous and varied across the Roman Empires.

However, the institutionalization of a dominant Christian discourse became possible in the year 324 CE, when Emperor Constantine of Western Rome achieved a significant victory against Emperor Licinius of the Eastern Roman Empire. With this development, the once-divided Roman Empire became a unified entity under one leader (Ehrman and Jacobs 2004, 251). Furthermore, Constantine was the first Christian emperor, so a new political focus on the wellbeing of the Christian Church arose in Rome (Brasher 2017, 5). This state of affairs directly

contrasted the Diocletian Persecution, so Christians could feel more secure against external conflicts now that wartime was over and they had the support of the emperor. With newfound security and a centralized source of power in Constantine and his empire, Church leaders could focus much more on theological issues. As the Roman Empire sought to reconcile its western and eastern parts, Constantine gave selected patriarchs an official opportunity to produce an orthodox Christianity. In 325 CE, the emperor called a clerical council in Nicaea, a city in the eastern part of his lands in modern-day Turkey, hoping to solidify Christian faith, peace, and unity across his newly reconnected empire (Coetzee 2008, 218). Those attendant had a chance to form their own resolutions on the controversial debates in Alexandria, which would have serious consequences: this assembly of bishops were the first ecumenical council (Edwards 2006, 558), meaning that any decisions impacted all the parishes under Constantine's imperial authority.

While the Council of Nicaea discussed multiple issues, one of the most significant outcomes was the birth of the Nicene Creed in its original version. The intention was to unify all Christianity, creating a statement that would exist above all local variations of divine teaching. Several debates carried on through the duration of the council. Bishops were free to argue for their own ideas of creedal truths, since Constantine was more concerned with dissipating major tensions among church communities than he was about asserting his own personal beliefs (Edwards 2008, 557). The emperor saw all Christians as united by their shared belief *in* Jesus more than they were divided by specific views *about* Jesus, so he hoped that the council would come to agreements about tolerance and approval (Boyarin 2004, 44). However, at the end of these debates, the resulting creed was not formed from compromise; rather, different views on Christianity were separated into categories of orthodoxy and heresy. Proponents of Jesus' divine nature managed to dominate the council, pushing their ideas of truth above those at the council

who saw Jesus as human, like Gnostics and Arians. By getting most bishops to sign on to their wording of the Creed and anathematizing (i.e. condemning as heretics) those who did not, representatives of the “divine Son” camp were able to make their version of the Creed official (Coetzee 2008, 218). Since the final product did not actually result in total agreement between those who signed the Creed, different theories exist as to how all parties were convinced to comply: some historians suggest that the victors utilized strategic phrasing, others claim they spoke with sincere yet simple truths, and still others believe that the bishops were touched by divine influence (Boyarin 2004, 168). Yet regardless of how it exactly happened, the Council of Nicaea had created an orthodox creed that would affect ideas of community and identification in Christianity from then on.

At the time of the assembly, another creed already existed for Christian use: the Apostles’ Creed was a statement that professed belief in the Holy Trinity, the Church, a tradition of saintly faith, and life after death. This creed also focuses on the almighty power of God and the love of Jesus offering a chance of salvation to humanity, highlighting the drive of Christians everywhere to be saved and immortalized by their God (Ross 1941, 116-121). Yet, despite covering fundamental Christian ideas, the Apostle’s Creed was not practiced by most Christian groups and thus failed to bring them all together in shared beliefs. More importantly, it did not mention anything about the nature of the Holy Trinity, which is why the bishops at Nicaea strove to address this controversial theological issue in their new creed.

The Creed made at Nicaea is not the same text that is recited in the Catholic world today. It was only concerned with the Holy Trinity, whereas later iterations include belief in such matters as holy baptism, future resurrection, and the Church itself (See Appendix). The foremost details in this early creed are those specifying how Jesus the Son is of the same being as the

Father, but that he was also born human; this wording seems to be as ambiguously inclusive as possible, only excluding the most extreme opponents of the Creed-represented theologians (Edwards 2006, 559). Notably, this original version contained no specifics about the nature of the Holy Spirit, other than the fact that Christians believed in its existence. Later, the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Holy Trinity of God would be the creedal point of contention separating Catholicism from Eastern Orthodoxy, so the original text from Nicaea must be recognized as a foundational document that could be developed later. While the notion of an institutionalized orthodoxy was being formed in this moment, the Creed had not yet reached the status of absolute, unchangeable doctrine that it would eventually become.

The Nicene Creed was not created to formalize universal Christian beliefs; rather, it was written as a way to *produce* an orthodox doctrine and assert it as the official universal belief for all Christians. This ecumenical creed marked a major development in Judeo-Christian tradition: whereas before multiple viewpoints had been allowed to exist and contradict each other under the same name of Christianity, certain sides of theological debates could now be officially deemed heretical by those who had achieved orthodox status ecumenically (Boyarin 2004, 2). Although the Nicene Creed had begun as a collaborative response to real problems in divided Christianity, the results did not fairly include all voices but instead made the division even greater. The exclusion of previously legitimate (though contested) groups like the Arians from the now-proper form of Christian belief limited the realities that Christianity could encompass. Furthermore, the political power backing this new Creed enmeshed Christian faith with the domination tactics of empire (Brasher 2017, 30). Since imperial power touches all aspects of its subjects' lives, Christian dogma would now have more persistent influence on laity. This context of the Nicene Creed's origins is significant for considering its role in the modern Catholic

Church: it still supports a secure, unified religion for practitioners, through the means of promoting absolute belief in established cosmic truths.

While the Council at Nicaea brought an official worldview with imperial support to the Christian world, controversy and disagreement still abounded regarding the Creed. Although the Nicene Creed had authority, in actual practice it was not accepted by many parishes and failed to replace their local confessions (Edwards 2006, 565). Arian supporters and sympathizers actively fought against the faith raised up at Nicaea, pushing back with their interpretation of the Holy Trinity for decades after the ecumenical council had finalized its creed. Leaders like Eusebius and Eunomius kept saying that Jesus was of dissimilar substance to God, directly opposing the Nicene Creed (Ehrman and Jacobs 2004, 256). To combat against this rebellion against orthodoxy, Emperor Theodosius convened the Council of Constantinople in 381 CE; the goal was to reaffirm an authoritative, “monovocal truth” in the empire by adding further support for the faith outlined earlier at Nicaea (Boyarin 2004, 193). The Christian Church was becoming a more centralized establishment and constructing clearer connections between local churches.

1.2 The Council of Constantinople and Further Revisions

It was at the Council of Constantinople that the Nicene Creed really started to resemble what it does in institutions today (see Appendix). The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed added more detail to describe the Holy Spirit, laying a more exact connection between the Father, Son, and Spirit of the Trinity (Badcock 1915, 207). This description of the Holy Spirit matched the version now used by Eastern Orthodox Churches: the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, and *not* from the Son. This creed also incorporated significant elements from the Apostles’ Creed, namely mentioning Jesus’s mother Mary to provide more detail on his conception, and including

a final statement about the speakers' belief in the church, baptism, and eventual life after death, which all came from the Apostles' Creed. Although Catholics would make future revisions to the Creed across time and place, a recognizable foundation was firmly established with the Niceno-Constantinopolitan form of this religious statement.

Significantly, this second council championed the decisions made by those at Nicaea, with one of its major rulings—Canon 1—elevating the Holy Fathers at that past assembly to a level of “absolute authority” (Ehrman and Jacobs 2004, 257). By vesting such determined theological power in the earlier Creed, the bishops at Constantinople constructed a dialectical relationship of authority, in which the old rulings of Nicaea gained increased standing from Constantinople, only to, in turn, provide further support the like-minded leaders who were at Constantinople. The second ecumenical council has long-term significance for successfully starting the Catholic trend of institutionalizing traditions like the Creed, to use them as a source of power in and of itself. Short-term, this enforced the Creed's orthodoxy and ensured its usage until at least the next ecumenical council. Key figures like Athanasius and Gregory of Nyssa further propagated the authority of the Nicene Creed, using their own religious forums of speeches, debates, and services to support what the Constantinopolitan Council had decided. Again, not all attending patriarchs were of the same opinion about the council's outcomes; on the contrary, there were constant arguments over leadership, laws, and even the meaning of the Creed (Burrus 2000, 60, 137). However, because the Creed now had both imperial power *and* religiously historical authority to support it, credal orthodoxy grew increasingly attached to Christianity as a whole, dominating the religion.

It is important to note here that the Creed has been contested ever since it was signed in Nicaea, with contradicting interpretations continuing to oppose each other through the entire

span of orthodox Roman Catholicism. Even this history about the ecumenical councils is contested, with no definitive answer as to how the Creed was written and rewritten (Badcock 1915, 209), who its main authors were, or how many bishops attended the councils (Edwards 2006, 558). Accordingly, what precisely happened during these historical events is less important than the lasting influence they have had, which is the focus of this thesis.

The Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed received official validation from the next two ecumenical councils: one at Ephesus in 431 CE and one at Chalcedon in 451 CE. These councils were again called by the empire, and their theological discussion focused primarily on the godly and human aspects of Jesus (Constantelos 1982, 88). The Council of Ephesus did not add anything to the Creed, but it did contain a ruling in Canon 7 that explicitly forbade any alterations or alternatives to the Nicene Creed (Ehrman and Jacobs 2004, 260). Anyone who promoted anything different from the credal faith would be declared a heretic, excommunicated, and effectively removed from the church. The subsequent Council of Chalcedon offered yet another affirmation of the Nicene Creed, and added an auxiliary definition of its truths (Badcock 1915, 219), specifying precise details of Christ's nature. Together, these two councils carried the Nicene Creed into a new century and established a tradition of maintaining this same statement of dogma for centuries to come. They strongly set the rule that this Creed could not be altered, which strengthened the Creed's place in the church but also led to severe institutional controversy much later, in the Eleventh Century.

The unchangeable orthodox quality of the Creed played a significant role in the Great Schism of 1053 CE, when the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches became separate Christian entities. The Eastern and Western sides of the Church had become increasingly less accepting of each other over the years, due to major differences in worship and institutional

leadership, particularly in regards to papal power (Constantelos 1982, 92). The break between the two Christian groups occurred for multiple pragmatic reasons, but one theological argument given to support the schism was disagreement over the Filioque Clause in the Catholic Creed. The Clause, added by western institutional leaders, strengthened the role of Jesus in God's person(s). This addition was not present in the early ecumenical versions, and it directly affected theological doctrine regarding the nature of the Holy Trinity: it claimed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from Jesus as well as from God the Father. Eastern Orthodox leaders refused to add it to the Creed, referring back to those ecumenical councils that had made the Nicene Creed unalterable (Ehrman and Jacobs 2004, 219). Using past issues of heresy, both sides excluded each other and split; the Great Schism demonstrates that the Nicene Creed could have real effects on lived realities and identities, even at major institutional levels. After this divide, the Western Church identified as Roman Catholic, using its own Filioque version of the Nicene Creed to define itself. Since the Schism, there have been no more major changes to the Creed, so the Catholic practice of creedal recitation has been promoting the same fundamental ideas for nearly one thousand years.

However, while the ultimate message of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed remains unaltered, there *have* been translations, which are also important for enabling wider participation in its recitation and the understanding of its beliefs. For instance, the original doctrines were written in Greek (Constantelos 1982, 81), but these were soon translated by Church clerics into Latin and implemented in western parts of the Roman Empire (Burrus 2000, 20). Latin was the official imperial language, and its use in institutional Church documents and liturgies eventually overtook any vernacular. Due to Rome assuming a more centralized place in the Church, with the Pope and powerful bishops (Ross 1941: 97), by the end of the fourth century Latin had

become *the* language of Christianity (Burrus 2000, 22). Although not necessarily helpful for laity, the formal use of the language had implications for Catholic identity, vesting it with a sense of authority and power. The Catholic Church maintained Latin for centuries, using the traditional language to lead all its events and services. It was in the 1960s when Latin was finally replaced by local vernaculars, allowing Catholics to worship in their own everyday languages and leading to more translations of the Creed. With each translation, words are reinterpreted to fit the new language, and meaning may change slightly. For example, the official English version for Catholics was reinterpreted from Latin as recently as 2011, so the exact textual meaning of the Creed is not as static as the practice of its recitation (MacMichael 2019). In fact, recitation can be seen as a ritual performance, enacted at every church service, to reinforce the speakers' Christian beliefs and identity.

1.3 The Creed in Catholic Liturgy

Liturgy refers to “the public worship of the Church,” at which time members of the Catholic faith engage in official, communal service to honor God’s supreme excellence and maintain ideal relations toward Him (Miller 1967, 929). The form of liturgy associated with the Creed is the Mass; so although liturgy actually extends beyond church services, the term will be used in this paper to address the Mass unless stated otherwise. The Nicene Creed first entered Catholic services shortly after its documentation, although precisely when it was incorporated into liturgy is unclear. There is little evidence to suggest that the Creed became a major liturgical element as soon as it was formulated (Brasher 2017, 91), and it certainly was not a standard practice for every church, since substantial disagreements about the text itself lasted for over a century (Ehrman and Jacobs 2004, 262). The priests that included it in their services did so to

align with orthodoxy in an explicit, continuous fashion. Then, after the Council of Chalcedon, its role in orthodox practice was reaffirmed with vigorous authority, so even more churches started using it to prove their loyalty to the decreed truth of the Christian Church and its supporting empire (Brasher 2017, 93). Since it was said in Latin, the Nicene Creed provided a strong symbolic link between institutionalized faith and an increasingly standardized liturgy. Both clergy and laity were being integrated into a common set of regularly occurring group practices, connecting them and their beliefs to Roman Catholicism.

Since Catholic Mass is the context for the performance of the Nicene Creed, background on the Mass's history and nature is in order. The Mass brings the people together as an assembly for God, called by God's Word to partake in the sacraments that will join its members together in communion with each other and God (Boselli 2014, 111-112). Since this liturgical experience involves such strong connections through the celebration of shared Catholic faith, Mass demands that participants enter into an especially spiritual state of mind: "The chief element in worship must be interior in order to ensure the integrity and sincerity of its external forms" (Miller 1967: 930). The Mass has always been a way to reinforce the beliefs and integrity of Christian attendants, calling for a serious mindset that embraces the significance behind the liturgy. However, while the internal sacredness of Mass has remained consistent since the first disciples led their services, the "external forms" have undergone dynamic shifts based on the historical moment. Catholic liturgy today does not have the same shape today as it did in the first centuries of the Common Era. The Christian Mass as a set event of worship really originated with the practice of Eucharist, which ceremonially recalls the sacrifice that Jesus made when he offered his life to God for the salvation of his people (Deedy 1986, 106). The presiding priest presents the acts of Jesus during his Last Supper, in which bread and wine are transformed via holy

ministry into the body and blood of Christ. This practice comprised the earliest liturgical services, following the model of Jesus and keeping his loving leadership present in the Christian community after his death (Miller 1967, 934). Soon, more was added to the service, keeping in line with the tradition of Judaism from which Christian faith arose. Apostolic leaders started to include the Judaic practice of public worship readings, joining the old tradition to this new holy sacrament. These two elements of scripture and Eucharist have remained the core foundations to Christian worship, so as early as the first century, the basic structure of the Mass had been established. The liturgical breakdown was known as the Mass of the Catechumens, comprised of prayer and readings, and the Mass of the Faithful, which had the preparations and consecration for the host of bread and wine, body and blood (Deedy 1986, 107). As of the 1960s reforms of Vatican II, this two-part structure transformed slightly to help ease group participation, so that the readings are in the Liturgy of the Word and the rites are in Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Authority to determine how liturgy would be held has always rested in the hierarchical leadership of the church. At the time of the church's origins, individual bishops were the ones who ultimately decided the structure and elements of Mass, so during these first centuries different parishes had distinct forms of liturgical practice. Bishops tried to stick to traditional liturgical elements, but since they each incorporated separate rites based on local customs and personal preference, the Christian Mass had no set template. However, as centuries progressed, and the Church's power became centralized in Western papacy, the popes started exercising increased authority over bishops, resulting in a much more uniform liturgy throughout the Christian world (Miller 1967, 932). Throughout the rest of the Catholic Church's history, the pope has had the ultimate power to determine the practice of Mass worldwide, but depending on the individual and the circumstances, more local levels of clergy can also make slight variations

to minor details. Today, there is a standard set of ordered practices to the Catholic Mass, and the Nicene Creed takes place according to these guidelines.

In addition to being the authority behind liturgy, clergy also holds crucial leadership roles in the Mass. According to Catholic belief, leading liturgy entails a deep connection with the divine: priesthood started with Jesus and is passed down as an eternal position of mediation between God and humanity (Miller 1967, 931). Therefore, priests' leadership during Mass is their way of carrying out the sacred role they inherited from Christ, since participating in liturgy brings Catholics closer to God. Sometimes this connection is physically manifested through liturgical practice, such as in the Eucharist, when the host becomes the body and blood of Christ, which is then consumed by the attendants to bring them into tangible closeness with their divine savior (Boselli 2014, 68). On the other hand, liturgy can connect people with God through communal prayer and devotion, such as in the weekly gospel reading, when the holy scriptures inspired by Christ are shared among the attendants and revered as a group (52). In both types of liturgical practice, the priest leads the congregation of worshippers through the actions. Priests guide the Mass by adding clarification to liturgical practices, initiating new prayers and actions in the service, and performing holy rites with liturgical paraphernalia (Deedy 1986, 108, 149). Sometimes priests have to perform these duties on their own, but often liturgical assistants like deacons, lectors, and altar servers will aid in leading the Mass, helping out during various parts of the service. Still, without a clergy member to lead the service, Mass would not be possible, so their role cannot be overlooked in its importance to the Nicene Creed.

During the early history of Western Christianity and Catholicism, external participation in Mass was extremely limited. Priests led the Mass in a way that prompted observation from the assembled congregation, rather than interaction with prayers and readings. While attending Mass

was still crucial for being a proper member of the faith, since the Masses were held in non-vernacular Latin and lacked engaging practices, many lay churchgoers could neither understand the messages nor actively participate in the celebration of their religion. High illiteracy rates and priests' keeping their backs to the worshippers they were leading further exacerbated these main issues, respectively. Even priests' homilies, meant to address the people directly, did not involve scripture or creed (Bianchi 1985, 127). However, with institutional changes from Vatican II in the 1960s, the congregation became more involved in Mass practices. Comprehensible local language, interactive prayer, and clearer identification for each element of the Mass have been stressed for the past half-century to encourage lay worshippers to take part in the services (Deedy 1986, 106). Now priests are leading worship with the engagement of the lay community in mind. This relatively recent development has impacted the Nicene Creed by making it a Catholic practice to be actively thought about and confidently participated in as a group.

The Creed's specific place in the service adds complexity to its meaning, since it must be seen in relation to its full context as part of the holy Mass. Once it became more established in practice after the Council of Chalcedon, the Nicene Creed was used in liturgy for Mass and baptisms. Baptism is the initiation of new members into the Catholic religion, and the Creed was recited during this process to affirm their belief in this foundational Church doctrine (Reeves 2015, 11). As for Mass, due to the inconsistent structure of services across Christian parishes, the Creed did not occupy a standard spot in Mass for all Christians. It may have been practiced by the bulk of Christian churches, but it was not implemented uniformly. Now, however, the Creed *does* have a clear place in Catholic Mass. Happening only on Sunday services, the Creed occurs near the end of the Liturgy of the Word, after the priest's homily and before the Prayers of the Faithful. The Nicene Creed is professed by the assembly at Mass, preceded by a period of liturgy

based on the priest's personal reflections and followed by the congregation praying about contemporary issues. But regardless of how the adjacent liturgical practices affect the Creed, being part of the Mass makes the Creed special in a more holistic way. According to Catholic doctrine, "all liturgical actions are sacramental," meaning that they show how Jesus confers the divinity of God on His Church. The liturgy is a formal expression the loving relationship between God and His people, a love perceived to have divine salvific power (Miller 1967, 930). Therefore, as a liturgical practice, the Creed is sacramental, with profound significance for Catholic worship and spirituality. Inclusion in the Mass and association with baptisms cemented the Nicene Creed's sacredness to the Catholic religion—not only because the regular practice at weekly Mass familiarized churchgoers with its words, but also since its place in liturgy meant that it helped strengthen the vital love between practitioners and their God.

1.4 Catholicism Brings the Creed to the United States

Tracing the journey of the Creed to the site of this thesis's ethnographic context, the United States and particularly Lewiston, Maine, requires a quick overview of its history in Catholic Europe after the Schism and the addition of the Filioque Clause. In the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, the Nicene Creed was not the most popular text in Western Christianity. Among statements of faith, the Apostles' Creed saw wider use when teaching doctrine and was considered with higher regard in clerical practices. For example, the Catholic ordination of priests required recitation of both creeds, and the Nicene Creed was deemed a "lesser" creed to the Apostles' Creed (Reeves 2015, 42, 165). Generally, creedal doctrine was used less as a ritual and more to explain the foundational Catholic beliefs. The priest would even do this using vernacular speech instead of the Latin, even further removing the ceremonious aspect of formal

recitation. However, since the Nicene Creed saw continued use in liturgy, especially on major feast days when it was sung ceremoniously (Reeves 2015, 167), it still had a definite presence in Christians' experiences with their church.

Issues of orthodoxy and heresy also continued through medieval times. The Pope and his declarations played a major role in these matters, as over time papal power overtook what the ecumenical councils of the Roman Empire had done to impose orthodoxy (Ross 1941, 99). Official inquisitions for heresy were authorized by the Pope, enabling those who identified with Catholicism to expel people they deemed heretics. These started as early as the Twelfth Century, but one of the most intensive was the Spanish Inquisition, which lasted from 1478 to 1834. This inquisition was a collaboration of monarchy and clergy, and it led to abusive purging of those deemed heretical non-Catholics in Spain, particularly targeting suspected Jews ("Spanish Inquisition" 2015). Christianity was still clearly aligned with political influence, even after the Roman Empire had fallen; with this power, the tradition of pure, unified orthodoxy represented by the Nicene Creed was used for hegemonic ends with seriously harmful effects, for Christians *and* non-Christians. This dynamic of creedal exclusion is still relevant today, even if it does not explicitly take the form of heresy and inquisition.

In the Sixteenth Century, the Creed came to serve a purpose during the crucial moment of the Catholic Reformation. Epitomized by the Council of Trent, which first met in 1545 and had its last assembly in 1563, this Reformation was a means for the Catholic Church to defend its institution against Protestant criticisms (McGrath 1998, 163). One key tactic utilized by Catholicism was stressing that it had orthodox traditions and unchanging nature, which lent a perception of authenticity to its ways when compared to newer Protestant ideas or practices (173). Here, the Nicene Creed was among the most well-established traditions the Church had,

so it could support Catholic scriptures and practices at this time. While Catholicism *did* undergo several real changes during this Reformation, and its Creed did not have as static a history as the Church proclaimed it did, the Nicene Creed nonetheless acted to demonstrate the constancy of Catholic religion amid early Protestant challenges.

At the same time that the Church was defending its Roman Catholic tradition, Spanish voyages to the Americas were bringing the Catholic religion to this continent. By 1521, priests had already started trying to establish missions among indigenous peoples in modern-day Florida (Albanese 1981, 61). Initially, these efforts at conversion were unsuccessful, but by the start of the 1600s there were over 25,000 indigenous Catholics. In the mid-1600s, French missionaries undertook the same endeavor (62). These missions to convert native peoples also led to settled European Catholics in the continent.

When the United States became its own country, Catholics found themselves in a severe minority position. This demographic position lasted well into the Nineteenth Century, as Anglo-American Christianity stayed primarily protestant (Tentler 2012, 322). However, despite comprising less than 1% of the population, Catholics had representation in a wide variety of racial and ethnic groups: Germans and Irish in mid-Atlantic regions; Spanish, French, and African diaspora down south; French-Canadian up north; and English dispersed through the US as well (Albanese 1981, 73). Such a range of ethnicities influenced views that Catholicism was open to people of any cultural identity, and over time flows of immigration from Catholic countries increased the size and diversity of the US Catholic Church significantly (Tentler 2012, 322). These strains of Catholicism all had some ties to the global orthodoxy centralized by the Pope in Vatican City, but the presence of the Creed was more significant in some churches than others. US Catholicism peaked in size and activity in the 1920s, which started a period of

stronger Catholic communities and institutions for these people's everyday lives (324). The scope of this faith has generally decreased, but it is now more wide-reaching, which means that it can be viewed and practiced in several distinct ways by followers from different backgrounds. By the 1970s, Roman Catholicism had become a common religious identity, with over a quarter of the US population affiliating with the Catholic Church; however, fewer of them stayed regularly involved in devotional practices than the parishioners in earlier decades did (Albanese 1981, 81). Participation and representation may have fluctuated, but the United States now has an established history with Catholicism, with multiple groups having various amounts of experience in and interaction with this faith.

In this modern era, Catholicism has many different forms in the USA, with some parishes being more traditional, others more progressive, others more diverse, and others finding their own communal position in US society. Some Catholics value doctrine, some find attending Mass to be the most meaningful, and some feel heightened spirituality in living Catholic morality with pragmatic social service. Of course, these different views can overlap as well, forming a complex web of Catholic identity throughout the United States. All these modern iterations have a centuries-old connection with one another through the Nicene Creed. In the United States (and across the world), the Catholic tradition has been applied to different peoples' lives to form not one but many traditions, with a plurality that resembles the time of the ecumenical councils and complicates the idea of orthodoxy espoused by this institutional creed.

1.5 Conclusion

At its core, the Nicene Creed is a statement of belief in a particular view of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three-in-one deity is multifaceted

yet homogenous; Jesus is “consubstantial” with the Father and the Holy Spirit “proceeds” from the Father (and the Son, according to Catholics), so all of them have the same divine source. The exact details of this cosmology cannot be fully known by the text alone, since its history is so full of disagreement and ambiguity over this issue. This variety of perspectives about creedal truth still exists in contemporary interpretations. Despite these real complexities, the Nicene Creed also contains messages of a unified Church, although to create an institutionalized orthodoxy, many coexisting viewpoints had to be excluded from the Creed’s religious community. The dominant version of Christianity that eventually developed into Catholicism exists due to multiple sources of power, from past ecumenical councils to political influence to a discourse of indisputable traditionalism. Not all of this context may be known or reflected on by Catholics when they say the Creed, so the analysis of specific ethnographic examples helps form an idea of how relevant this theological and institutional history really is. Still, over the course of history, the Nicene Creed has nonetheless entered into the collective consciousness and liturgical routine of many churchgoers in the United States and around the globe. Today, its influence continues to define Catholic worldviews and identities.

Chapter 2

Catholicism in Lewiston

Although the last chapter already covered the specific Catholic Nicene Creed used in the modern United States, this thesis focuses on the form of Catholicism practiced in Lewiston, Maine. US Catholicism certainly has similar liturgies for parishes across the nation, especially during moments of prescribed orthodox performance like the Nicene Creed, but to best understand how parish members interact with the Creed it is necessary to be as precise and detailed as possible.

The particular setting of Lewiston, Maine affects the representations of Catholicism in this chapter. While the Catholic Church and its liturgy promote universal practices and values, the religious experiences for those of the Prince of Peace Parish have unique local elements as well. Therefore, the historical, social, cultural, and practical details of the parish provide context for this thesis's analysis of ritual unity and individuality in the liturgical Nicene Creed. First, the background of the Lewiston parish and its churches set the scene for the fieldwork that follows. Then, a description of a standard Sunday Mass at the parish establishes the environment, tone, and setting of the Creed. Accounts of real creedal performances follow, describing participation in the collective assembly speaking the Creed. Lastly, introductions to five key interviewees prepare readers for their insights in the later analysis chapters.

2.1 The Prince of Peace Parish

The institutional beginnings of Catholic presence in the area arose during the period from the late 1700s to the early 1800s, when new parishes were being formed for both indigenous and

immigrant communities. The diocese of Portland eventually became the institutional head for the parish set up in Lewiston, after being established by Pope Pius IX in 1853. Four years later, the roots of the Lewiston parish were founded, officially beginning in 1857 and developing from that point forward. Eventually the current form of this parish, known as “Prince of Peace,” was established in 2009, but this modern organization traces its lineage directly back to the local institution of the nineteenth century (*Prince of Peace Parish* 2020).

The history of local Catholicism in Lewiston was marked by multiple conflicts. In the mid-1800s, anti-Catholic prejudice had a serious effect on the people. The hostility of protestant Americans produced fear for clergy *and* laity; anti-Catholic mobs damaged churches, assaulted priests, and any Catholic felt vulnerable in this climate. Yet the resolve shown by the Catholics who persisted in their faith reflects the conviction that being part of such a strong, proud community can produce. Such a hostile setting was eventually ameliorated thanks to efforts from bishops and the institutions of parishes and schools they promoted, but as external issues died down, internal conflicts started to rise. Throughout the early twentieth century, French, English, and Irish tensions caused divisive unrest within the Maine parishes, each ethnicity struggling for better representation (*Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland* 2015). This second wave of conflict indicates how a seemingly unified religious group can be more divided than its shared orthodoxy would suggest. For Prince of Peace Parish, the presence of multiple distinct ethnic identities and differing viewpoints would continue into modernity.

Yet while social problems afflicted the Catholics of central Maine, the Church in the area was also growing and developing in its scope, involvement, and influence in society. By the middle of the twentieth century, the diocese saw increasing growth in clerical vocations, parish buildings like churches and schools, funds, and congregation population (*Prince of Peace Parish*

2020). The ability of Catholicism to impact the local community outside of Mass makes it a key influence in people's lives and a reliable source of identification between those who are similarly close to the parish. Although the scale of this outreach is waning slightly in the past half century (Albanese 1981, 81), the Catholic presence has been firmly established in Lewiston.

This local institution of the Catholic Prince of Peace Parish is responsible for the practice of Nicene Creed during liturgy, and the sites of this worship are found in various church buildings around the city. First, it is important to mention St. Joseph's Church. Although I did not do any fieldwork here, this is the oldest Catholic church in Lewiston, founded in 1867. As of 2009 it has no longer been used by the active church community, and the building is a preserved landmark on the National Register of Historic Places. Its new status demonstrates the importance of Catholicism in Lewiston history, and the mark of pride this past can be for some parishioners. Similarly, St. Mary's and St. Patrick's are also former churches with new meaning in the current generation of Lewiston Catholics. St. Mary's Church closed in 2000 and the old building is now the Franco-American Heritage Center. St. Patrick's held its last Mass in 2009, but a decade later the church is still as a symbol for the Irish Catholic community of Lewiston. These former churches show that Lewiston's Catholic history is rich and dynamic, since a new shape of the parish has emerged in more recent years.

For the Prince of Peace Parish, the active Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul is a notable icon of Catholicism in Lewiston. Rising up above the city skyline and located in the heart of urban Lewiston, the basilica is directly and explicitly connected to the French-Canadian Catholic immigrants who came to the city in large numbers during the 1800s. This church was established in 1870, became a basilica when it was blessed by the Pope, and has a heritage of centrality for French-Canadian Catholic life in Lewiston. The Prince of Peace website credits these historic

immigrants' faith as the key to constructing such an impressive structure, so the actual architecture and grandeur in the building itself has spiritual significance. Furthermore, even though the basilica has a noteworthy history, it is not purely a historic site and is still used today. The French culture is present in language, images, style, and history, yet non-French Catholics also use the place of worship. In line with its communal character, it offers weekly brunches and has Masses spoken in English, French,³ Spanish, and Latin. I attended several services at the basilica, and found myself particularly affected by its massive size, pristine stone interior, loud organ music, and ornate religious adornments; the sense of formality given off by this building makes its way into the Mass itself.

I also conducted fieldwork at Holy Cross Church, which is also the home of the parish center. Located in a commercial area on Lisbon Street, this parish was established in 1924, as primarily French. Although the Irish population in Lewiston used the church for a few years, they left after the administration and community leaned more towards French identity, and they attended St. Patrick's Church instead (*Prince of Peace Parish 2020*). This history shows how the dominance of French-Canadian Catholicism, and this ethnicity is still most prominent today in spite of more diversity in the congregation and clergy. As for the church building itself, Holy Cross is less grand than the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, but its interior is still quite spacious and large enough to fit well over one hundred parishioners. Its imagery depicts white Saints and there is a white Christ on the crucifix up front; its western, Franco-Canadian presence is made known through these physical features.

³ Actually, the French Mass is bilingual, with only the music and scripture readings in French. The rest presented in English. This suggests that the French population is more integrated with the mainstream American English than Spanish speakers, yet it is not elevated to the status of Latin as a holy church language.

Although I attended the fewest services at Holy Family Church, this church is the place of worship for a large number of Lewiston Catholics. It is located on Sabattus Street, not in the center of town but still closer to the urban center than Holy Cross. Holy Family is one of the three main churches in Prince of Peace Parish, along with the basilica and Holy Cross.

French culture has strong presence in Prince of Peace Parish, but the active congregation is more diverse than the original French-Canadian population. Some other major Catholic populations in Lewiston are the historically Italian and Irish communities, as well as recent Catholic immigrants from Angola. There are four main priests that I saw on different occasions leading the Masses I attended, and two of them are white while the other two are South Asian. Most of the liturgical assistants—e.g. deacons, greeters—are white, with the exception of some young altar servers. Prince of Peace Parish shows its history of European immigrant populations, but the modern diversity of the city is also visible in minority groups in the congregation.

The demographic makeup of the parish is not precisely representative of the Lewiston community as a whole. Lewiston today is home for people coming from various places in life, geographically and socially. Some neighborhoods are made up of families who have been living in the city for several generations, descended from the immigrants who first came to work at the mills. These include the French-Canadian and Irish diasporas that have become firmly rooted in this Maine city. Anglo-Saxon residents are common as well, and may attend Catholic Masses.

There is also a substantial Greek Orthodox community, with members worshipping at Holy Trinity Church. I attended services here in the spring of 2019 for fieldwork and personal interest, and formed relationships with the priest and certain members of the congregation. Even though Holy Trinity is a hub for Greek culture (hosting a Greek festival once a year), not all who attend are Greek but they *are* all Eastern Orthodox Christians.

Another major group living in Lewiston is the more recent immigrants from across Africa, seeking asylum from political dangers in countries as spread out as DRC, Angola, Cameroon, and Djibouti. Even though they come from different cultures, these asylum-seekers share the common experience of fleeing their homes and entering a foreign country with the difficult task of being black in the United States. One more key Lewiston group is comprised of Somali-Bantu refugees from East Africa. Whereas the asylum-seekers came to the US via comparatively independent means, these refugee families arrived through international programs which made all their relocation decisions for them, and only through local diasporic networks did they manage to find Lewiston as a home.⁴ While many of these immigrants from Africa are Muslim, others are part of the Catholic community.

Lastly, there are multiple other cultural groups like the aforementioned Italian and South Asian communities who are part of Lewiston but whose presence is less conspicuous. Also, the college students in the city come from an even broader set of cultures and places, and while some may never get very involved in the city outside their campus, others have enough presence outside the college to influence the Catholic parish. This diverse array of humanity is the setting in which all Prince of Peace liturgical services take place, and the Catholic parish draws influences and members from several groups.

In short, the traditional identity of the parish is French-Canadian, and this is the ethnicity with the strongest symbolic presence in Lewiston's Catholic churches. However, it is not representative of the entire church community, with plenty of others attending Mass and participating in the faith at various levels.

⁴ I have this knowledge of immigration to Lewiston due to involvement with the Bates Harward Center and purposeful work courses, from 2017-2020.

2.2 Ethnography of the Catholic Mass

I only attended Sunday services because only these say the Creed. The Catholic Church also holds Masses on weekdays, but these fall outside the range of my fieldwork and are irrelevant to my thesis. Although the Apostle's Creed is another option that can replace the Nicene Creed on Sundays, all the Masses I attended used the Nicene Creed, which is more common. Every Sunday there are options to go to Mass at different times, and they are held at various churches. These services all followed the same format and only differed due to their atmosphere, music, attendance, and tone.

The physical environment and characteristics of the churches reveal much about the cultural, social, and religious identities of these institutions, reflecting as well upon the people who attend their services. All of the churches are large spaces designed to fit large congregations, leading to a sense of community in shared space. Wide pews in the middle, side pews in the Basilica as well. All pews face the front of the church, where there is an altar. From here the Mass is led: lectors read the scripture, the priest gives the homily, and clergy and attendants prepare the sacrament of Eucharist. The place is quiet, except for children, both before and during the service. Afterwards, some people talk together and become more personally social. The Basilica is the most classically grand architecturally, yet all three churches give off an aura of sacred solemnity and importance for those inside. The buildings have large, visually striking designs and religious decorum that can be appreciated by even secular visitors.

The churches also contain significant symbols and images. In each church there are elements of French, Latin, and English writing. The stained glass windows are in Latin but the plaque of contribution is in French, since the donors were mostly French parishioners. All the

labels for the Stations of the Cross at the basilica are in French as well. The liturgical missal is mostly in English but some prayers are in Latin. There are symbols of God and Jesus around the church, with images, figures, and the crucifix. The Virgin Mary and various saints are also present, both in the interior and on the exterior the churches. The depictions of holy figures display an abundance whiteness, due to the European roots of the parish.

My participant observation was practiced in a way to impact the service and worship around me as little as possible, while also staying as engrossed and aware in the Mass as possible. Whenever doing ethnography for this project, I was also participating as a worshipper. I partook in all the prayers, listened to scripture and homily, sang hymns, reflected, and received the Eucharist. Meanwhile, I also took notice of anything relating to the Creed, beliefs in the Creed coming up later in liturgy, community, identity, and signs of unity or individuality during Mass. To respect other worshippers and the sacredness of the service, I did not take notes during the Mass. Instead, I mentally kept track of key moments and relevant observations, writing them down immediately afterwards. I also took pictures of some church symbols and missal, after the service. Otherwise, I behaved as a respectfully active parishioner, paying attention to the Mass and performing no other tasks during the liturgy. This is ideal for the church, as indicated by the way that every Mass has an opening announcement about silencing cell phones and following along in the hymnal or missal. Balancing observation and faithful participation has been challenging, and I could not fully do only one or the other. Usually, I favored ethnographic points of interest over focused worship, yet keeping up faithful practice is also important and may have impacted how I observed some phenomena.

⁵ The Stations of the Cross are a set of fourteen images displayed around Catholic Churches that depict the sacrifice Jesus made by being condemned and crucified for humanity's sake.

The Mass always follows the same general order, although there can be slight variation. It starts with an introductory hymn, which is sung by the entire congregation about a topic relating to God, Jesus, faith, a biblical story, or the church; hymns occur at other points in the service as well. This first hymn is followed by a prayer of contrition (all ask for forgiveness together), the scriptures are read, the priest presents his homily. After the homily, everybody says the Nicene Creed, and then the Prayers of the Faithful are prayed in group supplication, ending the liturgy of the word. The offering is taken, the priest leads the Eucharistic Prayers, everybody says the Lord's Prayer and offers each other the sign of peace, the sacrament of communion takes place. Finally, the priest concludes the service with announcements for the Catholic community, and one last hymn is sung while the clergy and liturgical attendants proceed down the aisle to the periphery of the church.

The Catholic liturgy is comprised of some invariable practices and others that depend on the specific messages of the day. Scripture readings, homily, prayers of the faithful, the rite of peace, and the priest's concluding remarks are all different every week, while the other prayers and actions are prescribed. Still, while the precise content of these liturgical sections may alter depending on the particular service, the structure of the Mass generally follows the same order, with few exceptions. For instance, during a Mass with a baptism, the homily, Creed, and Prayers of the Faithful were all incorporated into the baptism itself, in a slightly different format. Father Greenleaf was sure to note that these rites had in fact taken place after the baptism was over, so that the people knew that no parts of the Mass had been skipped. Also, liturgy is experienced as a whole, rather than the sum of its parts, and no part need be more crucial than the other (Boselli 2014: 15). Even when an aspect of the Mass changes, the overall impact of liturgy on some members of the congregation may stay the same across multiple services.

The Eucharist especially never changes in the eyes of Catholic believers, since the Holy Spirit comes down and God enters the host, which is received by the congregation. This is a sacrament of utmost importance to the church, and by welcoming God into one's body and life there is divine salvation. The Mass culminates in this moment, with earlier parts preparing for the sacrament. In terms of holism, despite the Eucharist being a highlight, it would not happen without the rest of the Mass. Yet the reverse relationship is also true, since without the Eucharist one of the most essential functions of the Mass would be incomplete, leaving the Catholics who attended the service unfulfilled. Relating to the Nicene Creed, the more important elements of the liturgy are the ones with the most consistent, proper practice.

2.3 Participating in the Nicene Creed

The recitation of the Nicene Creed happens directly after the homily and before the Prayers of the Faithful. This weekly practice is the first time that the congregation actively participates in the Mass after receiving the scripture and homily from the lector and priest, and brings them back into vocal group performance after being led by these single speakers. According to parish priest Fr. Greenleaf, the Creed is a statement of belief in the word of God that has just been “revealed” in scripture. Yet it also prepares everybody to soon pray to God in supplication with the Prayers of the Faithful—Catholics cannot pray to God unless they actually know Him, but He is revealed and accepted through the Creed. Therefore, the timing of the Nicene Creed in Mass has strategic theological reasoning.

When people perform the Nicene Creed, they generally face the front of the church. Body posture is usually straight and upright, but there is no absolutely uniform stance or position that every person follows. For example, some have their hands at their sides, others on the seat in

front of them, others have them folded in prayer, and still others hold pew missals with them to read the words. While stating the Nicene Creed, only one body gesture is required, and this is the bow at the mention of the virgin birth of Jesus into the world. Most people bow, but not everybody starts and stops at the same time. Another example of behavioral variation is eye movement. For those not reading the Creed, most have their eyes staring ahead at the front of the church, towards the altar where the priest is leading. However, some others look down, glance around, or may even look up—possibly to gaze in the direction of God and the heavens. Their eyes do not always rest on one main target, and often move around. Individuals make other minor movements as well, like fidgeting, scratching, shifting balance; even if there is an ideal to be still and focused during the Creed, this body language suggests that people are not as rigidly formal as the ideal. After all, they are human.

Speech is another major factor of their participation. Of those speaking, a little less than half read from the hymnal while the rest recited from memory, although this ratio varied based on the day. The volume at which the Creed is said differs from person to person. Most people are fairly quiet, but there can still be force in their voice. Louder reciters simply assert their voice more—no shouting, formal. Some people whisper or mumble, whether reading from the book or speaking from memory. I have noticed two different people who just mouthed the words

Not everybody actively participates in the liturgical Creed. Some people just stand and face ahead without moving their lips. This behavior abstains from recitation but still displays an acknowledgement of the creedal practice. Others in the church may sometimes have incomplete performances, especially by missing the beginning of the Creed. These late starts can arise from distraction or confusion, and they show how the group recitation can go on without every person in unison. Yet these outliers still participate, even when not actively speaking. By standing and

respectfully attending, they stay engaged and also contribute to the assembled audience. They do not bring the Creed into the world, but they do share in the group experience.

Some services have people chant or sing the Creed as opposed to saying it. These were at the Basilica in the upper cathedral. Although there is a choir at Holy Family, they only sang the hymns and stated the Creed along with the rest of the congregation. At the Basilica there is organ and choir putting the creedal words to music. The impact on the parishioners seems to be that *fewer* people actually vocalize the Creed when it is sung, similar to people avoiding singing the hymns. Also, with the loud cantors and organ, it seems like the rest of the congregation has less responsibility to make the Creed heard, as opposed to a stated Creed in which the collective makes the noise. Still, they are an audience to the Creed, and many other congregants *do* actively participate when the Creed is sung. I have no conclusive evidence that less people sing than state the Creed, but on all occasions I observed fewer parishioners joining the cantors when this practice was put to music.

In comparison to the rest of the liturgy, people do not appear more enthusiastic or stoic about the Creed. It simply feels like the rest of the prayers in Mass. A formal, respectful tone and collective voice is the norm for these prayers, so the experience of saying the Creed has strong similarities to saying any of the following prayers: the Penitential Rites, the Gloria, the Lord's Prayer (Communion Rite), Lamb of God, etc. These prayers are all present in the hymnal or missal, along with the Creed, so that even their source is the same for churchgoers.

Children at Mass are an interesting exception to many norms about behavior and worship. Young children not only tend to act out and lose focus on what is being said or done, but their outbursts, fidgeting, and wandering can disrupt others. Their parents and family members have to

put their own worship on hold to console or reprimand the children. Other parishioners can have difficulty concentrating on the service depending on how distracting young kids are being

Yet the youngest of children can be the proper center of attention in some Masses, such as on November 3rd when there was a baptism. This liturgy is particularly notable because the Mass structure changed to include baptizing the baby, and the Nicene Creed was not used. However, the sacrament still included the elements of creedal beliefs through its initiation vows. These vows applied to the infant initiate, but they were also performed by the rest of the congregation as well. Everybody renewed their baptism in the church by expressing their belief in God as Trinity (the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit), the afterlife, a community of saints, and salvation. Each of these beliefs arises from Catholic creed, but this form is more based on the Apostle's Creed than the Nicene Creed. While the baptized was the center of attention, everybody came together around this shared moment. A new member entering the faith community renews not only the vows to the church but also the sense of togetherness.

Priests' interactions with the Creed also vary, depending on how they feel they can best convey its significance to the laity. Fr. Greenleaf has a special speech to introduce the Creed in Mass. He has been saying this for years, ever since the 2011 revisions to the English Catholic version. It goes as follows: "We stand before God to profess the Creed on page 9. We join other people around the world who say these words in so many different languages. And our voices are one with theirs as without shame we tell the world who we are...again I invite you to turn to page 9, as we say..." After this, everybody enters into the Creed together, led by his words on the Nicene Creed's global significance. In contrast, the other priests and deacons usually go into the Creed without any explanation. Sometimes the priest says "Now, let us profess our faith" before the first "I believe..." statement. But at other times the priest may start saying the Creed

immediately from the homily, after only a brief pause, forcing people to join in immediately with him. The different approaches influence how prepared the congregation is to start participating.

Everybody at a Catholic Mass does not perform the Creed the same way, but they all contribute to and share in the group experience of this liturgical practice. People differ in the way they speak the Creed, while some may not speak at all. Priests hold a distinct role of leadership in the Creed, even though they profess the same faith as the congregation with “one voice.” Each person influences the entire group performance to varying degrees.

2.4 Interviews

As the final piece of my ethnographic studies, I formulated a series of interview questions and posed them to various members of the Prince of Peace Parish. For these interviews, I use critical analysis to find deeper meaning and significant connections between the comments of different interviewees. Although I interviewed eleven Catholics in total, there are five main interviewees that contributed the most significant insights relevant to my study. Below I have provided background on these interviewees to help ground their comments in the upcoming analysis chapters.

First, Father Daniel Greenleaf, an active priest leading in Prince of Peace Parish, offered an expert viewpoint on the topic, as well as thoughts on his own experiences as a devout Catholic community leader. Fr. Greenleaf was born into a Catholic home in Biddeford, Maine, and was baptized into the church as a baby. During his childhood, he was involved in Catholicism through his family (especially on his mother’s side, which has been Catholic for generations), his participation as an altar boy during the local French Mass, and his attendance of Catholic school up until high school. Although his high school and college were public schools, his Catholic faith

remained strong and he went to a Catholic University. He worked as an accountant for some time, before deciding to leave his secular career and proceed to seminary. With his Catholic upbringing and education, Greenleaf went through the process of Holy Orders and was soon ordained a priest in 1995, in his hometown of Biddeford where his faith formation had begun.

As a priest, Fr. Greenleaf is always highly attuned to the congregation for which he leads each Mass. Since he knows that the energy and engagement of the people directly affects his own feelings towards the Mass, he often goes into clearer detail about what is going on for certain parts of the service and makes his homilies as relevant and accessible to his audience as possible. His helpful, engaging demeanor during Mass remains consistent outside of church services as well, as I was able to see first-hand when visiting the parish office to interview him. He answered all of my questions with thoughtful detail, while also prompting me to consider them from the doctrinal point of view as well. While Fr. Greenleaf is accommodating as a teacher and leader, he also values Catholic traditions deeply and asserts official church beliefs on matters of the faith. For example, when my tongue slipped and I described the Holy Trinity as “forms” instead of “persons,” he lightly corrected me and let me know that I had technically said a heretical statement. His knowledge and perspectives stem directly from institutional authority, and due to his position as a priest Fr. Greenleaf’s insights also influence those in the parish who develop their faith with his leadership.

Deacon Frank Daggett has been another extremely helpful collaborator in my thesis process. I first reached out to him since he is the campus minister for Bates College, but he also shared some enlightening insights from his ongoing service as a Mass attendant. Like Fr. Greenleaf, Deacon Daggett was also born into a Catholic family and received infant baptism. From a young age he felt close connections to his religion, since Catholicism was simply a part

of his everyday life: for instance, his home was full of religious images like the Virgin Mary, and he spent much time with his uncle, who was a priest. One of Daggett's biggest inspirations for becoming a deacon was his uncle, and several of his views on believing, practicing, and leading in the faith came from his close connections with the priest in his family. Deacon Daggett is now a senior member of the Prince of Peace Parish, and he also has connections with Catholic communities in other parishes and on the Bates campus. As deacon, his responsibilities range from presenting various readings and prayers throughout the liturgy, assisting with the Eucharist, facilitating prison ministry programs, and working with funeral services. Being involved in so many ways has let Deacon Daggett appreciate Catholicism in various aspects of life. His faith is also continually developing, as he thoughtfully considers the deeper meanings behind the many religious practices he undertakes.

Lisa Daigle is the director of faith formation for Prince of Peace Parish. Her upbringing was also very Catholic, rooted in religious practices such as doing a daily rosary with her family. This relationship to Catholicism has left strong values of holistic appreciation for her faith, seeing the entire Catholic experience as essential and taking nothing for granted. She firmly believes that God does not waste, and that every part of His religion is true, meaningful, and worthy of celebration. For example, she recognizes how consecration is a vital element of the liturgy, since this is when God becomes divinely present in the host of Eucharist. Daigle, however, stressed to me that she does not see this liturgical element as any more significant than any other part of the service, since it is all for the purpose of bringing us closer to God in our Catholic faith. Embracing her religious identity, Daigle fully puts herself into "the place of a child of God." Her devotion to God and the Church is absolute.

Daigle's leadership role in faith formation lets her share her beliefs and passion with those entering and developing their Catholic lives. Daigle deeply values her opportunity to strengthen the presence of Catholicism in others' lives. While we were talking about religious life, she expressed her heartfelt conviction that we are "blessed to be Catholic in this day and age." The ever-increasing dominance of non-Catholic thought, media, and activities in modern life has been a source of concern for Daigle, and she believes that these current conditions make it essential for people to actively form a connection to Jesus. Since love of God, Jesus, the Catholic Church, and a devout lifestyle have always held a central spot in her life, Daigle is keen to help inspire similar reverence and appreciation in others.

Director of Music Scott Vaillancourt provided a fresh perspective on Catholicism and the Nicene Creed, from his vantage point as the organ player at the Basilica services. Vaillancourt is from a French-Canadian family who lived in a 90% French-Canadian neighborhood, so like Fr. Greenleaf, Deacon Frank, and Lisa Daigle, he grew up with close bonds to Catholic community that have remained with him all the way through adulthood to the present. Another leader in the Lewiston parish, Vaillancourt ensures that hymns and music accompaniment to the liturgy run smoothly, adding to the emotional feeling of the service. While he is deeply involved in the church, he also recognizes and respects beliefs outside the Catholic vision, as he told me when talking about family members who hold agnostic views and feel uncomfortable with formal liturgy. Still, Vaillancourt himself is thoughtful in his worship, seeing how his faith is relevant in various parts of everyday life.

Karen McArthur first contacted me because as a Bates staff member, she was able to reach out to my college-based invitations to share insights on Catholicism and the Nicene Creed. McArthur is a devout Catholic and choir member at Holy Family Church, but earlier in her life

she experienced various other forms of Christian worship. Although she was baptized into the Catholic Church at nine days old and confirmed as a teenager, she later rebelled against her religion by going to a Protestant (Baptist) church and Houghton College (affiliated with the Wesleyan Church). After a variety of other Christian experiences, she chose to come back to the Catholic Church as a mother to teach her children about the faith. Her appreciation of the Church and commitment to Catholicism stems in part from the long tradition it boasts, which she views as legitimizing the practices and messages the institution offers. McArthur feels close to God, His Word, and the church community, and her background experience with non-Catholic forms of Christian worship gives her insight into why Catholicism is special for her. Yet despite having found truth and meaning in Catholic faith, she does not judge others and leaves room for their own thoughts while still staying firm to her own beliefs.

When considering all my interviews in general, it seems necessary to acknowledge that all of my interviewees are white, English-speaking adults. Even the other members of the parish that I spoke with about the Creed—whose names are left confidential according to their request—fit this identity set. I regret being unable to interview anyone outside of this limited demographic, especially considering how the parish is more diverse in character than I present through my interviews alone. My thesis is not claiming to represent the entire parish, but hearing from a more diverse array of voices would have been helpful. However, at least I learned that the most easily accessible voices speaking for the parish fall into this demographic of white, mostly French-Canadian, English-speaking Catholics. Also, speaking with members who share similar identity perspectives facilitates a more nuanced look at similarities and differences, which still supports my approach of the spectrum of collectivity.

2.5 Conclusion

Although the current Prince of Peace Parish of Lewiston has only recently been the iteration of the city's Catholic structure, it has been influenced by the a much longer history that has left Catholicism a true legacy in the Lewiston area. In this parish, there is a prominent French-Canadian identity for the remaining churches and many of the parish members, but there are also many other ethnic groups involved at Prince of Peace. Regardless of identity, all Lewiston Catholics attend the liturgy to engage with highly formalized, institutionally tradition-based practices with set rules and order. The Nicene Creed's recitation during Mass is no exception to the formal comportment and pre-set performances that guide the rest of the Mass. However, there are also cases where certain individuals break from the expected norms of formal performance; sometimes, the entire Creed is even replaced to make room for another church practice such as baptism. I witnessed and was told more than what is recorded here, but these details are the most relevant towards my thesis on unity and individuality.

Although there are various perspectives here, I am *not* arguing that anybody's perspective is better or more correct than those of others. People have personal ideas about faith that relate in different ways to the sense of orthodoxy upheld by the Catholic Church, its official documents, and statements from its clerical leaders. Even though the church has its own official stance on the matter, I will not discount what somebody says about their personal feelings, experiences, or meanings found in liturgy.

Lastly, I want to acknowledge a question of scholarly ethics and religious morality that pertains to my fieldwork for this thesis. Fr. Greenleaf told me to be careful of heresy when I was writing this, since during our interview my tongue slipped and I said "form" instead of "person" to refer to the Trinitarian relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This comment

led me to ask: can this thesis exist without crossing that same line of heresy? How will I know if something is heresy or not? And how do these concerns impact my position as a believer-scholar in this project? I still have no clear answers to such questions, and I encourage readers to ponder them as well and use these issues to reflect critically upon my analysis.

Chapter 3

Ritual Performance Theory

To study the Nicene Creed's performance in Catholic liturgy, I have utilized the literature of anthropological theories on ritual. Any theory set is complex and developed by multiple sources across time, and this is especially true for ritual theories. Countless intersections and influences link ideas about ritual performance with various other ideas both inside and outside of the discipline. These include linguistics, social structures, symbolism, assemblage, ontology, art, affect, hegemony, and more. In order to make such a complicated set of theory useful, I apply specific ideas to particular cases—however, these individual theories should not be taken completely out of context, so the theory set as a whole always remains somewhat present in any anthropological study of ritual. Therefore, the purpose of this chapter is twofold: to appreciate the full complexity of ritual theories, and then establish the key concepts that are relevant for analyzing the Nicene Creed.

In this chapter's first section, a genealogical overview covers anthropological ritual theory from the nineteenth century to modernity. Major figures and movements are considered for their insights and impact. While ideally the timeline would include every scholar in the field, such a scope is too ambitious for the purposes of this thesis. Only a select number of theorists are discussed, and the attention given to them is not divided equally; since certain moments in anthropological study have had more impact on theorizing ritual, these are covered in greater depth. The overview of ritual theory mostly concerns theories that involve performance, and this focus is sharpened in part two. For this second section, I present the specific concepts from ritual theories that guide my analysis of creedal performance. To conclude the chapter, I evaluate the

value of using specialized theories about ritual, and then I introduce how a critical application of anthropology's ritual studies inform my own thesis project.

3.1 A Genealogy of Key Figures in Ritual Studies

The ideas in ritual theory are constantly developing in reaction to new studies or shifted perspectives. The contextual moment and multitude of approaches existed for ritual theory as early on as its origins, as anthropologists approached ritual from different positions. It is important to note that the earliest sources for ritual theory are not necessarily a paradigmatic beginning as much as they are entryways into a complex chronology.

Also, as the author for this historical overview, I want to acknowledge the issue of my subjectivity. Since I made choices about which perspectives to include, the genealogy I present here cannot be entirely objective when explaining how the theory of ritual progressed. These scholars and their sources will not comprise the entire set of work on ritual theory. Granted, they represent various fields and paths that this area of anthropology has taken, but even then, seeing a few scholars from a certain perspective does not reflect the *full* array of ideas within their particular subfield (for example, the works of Geertz and Munn do not contain all ideas that symbolic anthropology has ever brought to ritual study). Finally, all the scholars have careers that spanned longer than the historical period that I connect them with, so my perspective is again subjective for deciding which parts of their academic achievements to highlight in this chapter. In addressing these issues, I hope to encourage readers to approach this theoretical genealogy with critical eyes and further explore scholars that interest them.

When approaching a timeline of ritual theory, the exact "birth" of the subject is not a definitive moment that can be easily found or determined. Starting with ritual study in general,

people have been learning about rituals ever since they were formed, in the earliest civilizations (Kaeppler 2010, 270). Recognizing the agency within any individual or group, coupled with the way that most rituals are passed down as traditions through subsequent generations, local rituals entailed an element of study outside western academia. For rituals to exist, people had to learn the meaning behind them, understand the intricacies of their performance, note their influences on non-ritual social life, and deem them a special situation, even if they did not label them “ritual”. While this engagement with ritual may not be actual theory, it correlates with how theories are developed and applied, so people’s critical thinking on their native rituals is nonetheless an important part of ritual study in anthropology. Still, such a starting point is too scattershot and far-reaching, and the origin should be traced to its beginning in the anthropological discipline itself.

To begin, several major concepts about ritual arose in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from western scholars outside the anthropological discipline. Works from biblical scholars, classicists, and religious studies set the stage for giving ritual special attention with its own group of theory. Since anthropologists draw from interdisciplinary sources, these early scholars hold some responsibility for deeming ritual an essential part of cultural traditions. Yet they also showed early on that acknowledging it to be important does not mean that everyone will find the same *kind* of significance in ritual; their distinct ideas about rituals would inspire different branches of anthropological ritual theory. For instance, biblical scholar W. R. Smith was one of the first to give primacy to ritual in studies of religion and society (Bell 1997, 4), focusing on how worship practices represented communal structures. Another key figure was religious studies Sir James Frazer, who took a more semiotic approach to ritual and theorized how these practices were primal symbolic expressions of life and death; then, in line with the

dominant academic mentality of the 1890s scene he was writing in, he used his theory for cultural categorization and evolutionary rankings. While his outdated and harmfully incorrect purposes have not passed down to the ritual theory of modern times, his ideas on ritual as a systematic reflection of life and death principles remains relevant in performances today, including my own thesis on the Nicene Creed. Moving onto the twentieth century, biblical scholar Samuel Hooke considered the role of authority and power in ritual, seeing how such phenomena supported unequal relationships like sacred kingship. As a final example, classicist Jane Harrison presented ritual historically in her 1912 book *Themis*, arguing that myth and ritual develop co-dependently but can also separate over time and exist on their own (Bell 1997, 5-6). Looking at ritual through lenses of practice, structure, symbolism, authority, and historical context all became influential avenues for analysis. With these scholars, ritual had become an established theoretical subject. Now, anthropology would develop and expand these theories, applying various approaches.

One of the ritual components that anthropological theory took initiative in analyzing was performance, coming from an angle of linguistics. Performance theory provided two major benefits for the study of ritual. First, it shifted the theory to being based on actual events that happened, to analyzing real rituals being performed in their usual context. In fact, anthropology as a discipline contributed to this more accurate shift in study, improving upon earlier scholars like Smith and Hooke who reconstructed the ritual for study purposes (Bell 1997, 4) rather than using ethnography to experience the acts as done for the real intentions of the people. With the study of performance, anthropological theorists could participate as a member of the audience or congregation, making the ethnography more feasible and realistic. Second, performance theory noted how ritual provides an ideal setting for speech acts. J. L. Austin argued that whenever

words are spoken, they do more than just describe reality—they *create* reality. Instead of merely expressing beliefs that are held to be true, words affect the world into which they enter by forming, reforming, or reinforcing how their subject is understood or experienced. In 1962, his book *How to Do Things with Words* popularized the term “performative utterances,” which take this idea of active speech and shows how language as performance calls even more attention to the action embedded in the spoken words. These utterances are explicit about the reality they are shaping, and the performed context influences the scope of its social impact (Duranti 1997, 15, 221). With ritual as a specific type of performance, one that is deemed special, the utterances are even more explicit and aimed towards influencing the reality of the participants.

Frits Staal added onto Austin by applying his ideas on speech acts more directly to ritual, and in the process he strongly supported the growing distinction between ritual and regular activity. Inspired by Austin, Staal worked in the 1970s to argue that the only part of ritual speech that matters is what it *does*, not what it says. To explain why language in ritual performance has special effects on the participants, he shifted his focus away from the meaning of rituals towards the tangible effects of ritual and what they make people do. This line of thought led to him declaring ritual to be an exceptional moment of syntax: whereas regular speech acts are about messages, ritual is about form and the rule system that governs the acts (Bell 1997, 71). Ritual is set apart from everyday communication due to the strictness of its form, which does not allow for improvisation. Staal even goes so far as to deny that ritual is part of language: it transforms into something entirely when speech is prescribed by tradition, so that execution matters more than meaning (Bell 1997, 69). Here, Austin’s linguistic theories have been taken to the extreme, and words matter for their inclusion in the entire act of the ritual. In a way, the ritual itself becomes one big performative utterance under Staal’s theory, creating a reality in which

following form and traditional rules comprises the purpose of the moment. The predetermined repetitiveness of ritual proved a major topic of interest for practice theories.

When looking at ritual in terms of practice, the main question that anthropologists addressed was how participating in the performance acted as a socializing event. The consistent rule-governance noted by Staal also aligned with scholars trying to study “observable and comparable social structures,” an effort spearheaded by A. Radcliffe-Brown (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, 122). This structural-functionalist camp analyzed the way that ritual performance not only had linguistic and formal rules, but also rules about social order. Similar to the earlier work of Smith and Hooke, these theorists examined representations of structural systems of societal organization and the way that authority depicted itself in ritual. As Radcliffe-Brown explained in 1952 with *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*,⁶ social structures are maintained with constant reinforcement of cultural norms (15). Just living life according to social rules keeps the rules in place. Extending this principle to ritual, order is maintained by ritual being part of a tradition, involving multiple people to form a structure, and often having a function that either promotes some important figure or establishes people as part of an official group.

The social side of ritual found in structural-functionalism is also present in the work of Arthur Hocart. Writing contemporaneously with Radcliffe-Brown in 1952, Hocart’s book *The Life-Giving Myth* also views ritual as a social practice, or rather a “social quest” (52). As Hocart explains, the “quest” is to propagate life and prosperity: the purpose of all ritual is to give people the power to confer life, in forms of health, wealth and fertility. Such absolute, all-encompassing statements reveal the mindset of anthropological theory in the 1950s, trying to produce universal

⁶ This title represents an evolutionary model of progress from early academics, which should be avoided but not ignored.

findings or at least broad cultural truths (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, 122). This perspective seeped into ritual theory as well, so that all rituals would be viewed the same way, even across different contexts, due to their academically-bestowed categorization. The drawbacks to such scholarly power were already facing resistance at the time, and surprisingly Hocart was on both sides of the matter. While he made vast claims about the purpose of ritual, he also recognized that the personal experience in ritual adds complexity to theories about structure. He argued that emotion disrupted the formality that makes ritual so structurally significant, and that rituals are never identical due to the distinct feelings of the people involved (Hocart 1952, 59). This shows that Hocart was able to look past the theoretical rules to see how the reality does not always follow them, which complicates the structural-functionalist perspective. Even more notable is Hocart's suggestion that rather than trying to define or categorize ritual, particular ritual performances should be compared to find variation or transformations (65). This calls into question using the monolithic term of ritual in the first place. As a complex figure in the life of ritual theory, Hocart represents a crucial historical point at which anthropologists still adhered to some old disciplinary norms (i.e. his objectively universal ritual function of "life") but were also willing to challenge the very foundations upon which ritual theory sat.

Victor Turner was another social ritual scholar at the time who blended universal theories about ritual with specific cases from real life. Rather than the dualistic, almost hypocritical path of Hocart, Turner made an abstract theory for a particular *type* of ritual, to be used as a model with selective application. This ritual was the rite of passage, or initiation, in which participants transitioned from one state of being to another. Turner's main contribution was theorizing about what happens in the liminal period, which occurs between the original state and the new state attained after the ritual. Whereas the states at either end of the ritual are part of regular social

order, the liminal period brings participants into a position where they are neither within the society nor entirely outside of it, and their identity is in flux (Turner 1957, 302). Turner provides general rules on liminality, but he only argues that these theories apply to initiation and not all rituals. In fact, Turner's own scholarship contains ritual analysis beside liminality, such as his 1957 description of the Musolu rain-making ritual, in which he observed practices that did not involve liminality (16). Turner demonstrates higher specificity in ritual studies.

Turner also considered how these ritual practices contained or comprised symbols, with images, actions, and entities representing some deeper concept important to the practitioners (1957, 302). Symbolic anthropology in ritual theory can touch several other approaches as well, such as linguistic practice and social structure. Turner drew from the work of earlier scholars like Frazer to analyze the symbols in rituals, and then Clifford Geertz continued this line of theory and further cemented the semiotic approach to ritual in anthropology. In his 1973 "Deep Play" article, Geertz presented a systematic understanding for how the Balinese Cockfight represented their ideas of masculinity, views on the sacred and profane, and sense of kinship at various levels (419). Geertz produced these explanations using textual analysis on the symbols of cocks and betting, showing how symbols can be both objects and performances (436). Recalling the social range of Radcliffe-Brown's structural-functionalism, rituals are not the only "texts" that should be interpreted symbolically; still, Geertz found ritual a fruitful place for finding symbols. Rituals act as venues for taking different symbols that ordinarily do not go together and reconfiguring them in a single event, to produce new meanings. For Geertz, this provides a way to fuse lived and imagined worlds, and permits a view into the deep values and beliefs of the people involved (1973, 447). The specialness of ritual lets it function in a symbolic capacity beyond the normal conventions of natural, everyday interactions.

By using symbols, ritual theorists have been able to find meanings inscribed into the ritual, which can suggest underlying themes and core values in the cultural groups who participate. However, there is the danger that this can lead to an analysis of the ritual like a text, seeing what it says and represents semiotically, and neglect for the way that it is a real part of people's lives. Geertz's symbolism took the humans out of the cockfight ritual and turned them into symbols, leading to massive problems of representation. If the ritual is a text that says all for the anthropologist, then this kind of scholarship prevents people from saying what *their* ritual means to them. This problem arose from mid-nineteenth century values of explaining entire civilizations, similar to the universalist objectification in which Hocart participated. Geertz's goal was to see how the Other (e.g. "the Balinese") viewed their world and how their society worked. His work was less about people than it was about cultures, and the ability to find symbols in ritual aided this reification process.

Pierre Bourdieu was part of the backlash against both structures and symbols, advocating for scholarship to look at the actors themselves and what *they* do. Bourdieu has a clear yet immensely crucial point that rituals are done by actual people (Ortner 1984, 145). For him, practice depicts people as doing more than blindly following representations of structure or symbolic meaning; practices are strategies enacted to navigate current, immediate issues. Ritual practices, then, are established means for reconciling incongruent values or agents, and they are practiced strategically to respond to real situations (Bell 1997, 78). Theoretical abstractions and absolutes have some value for approaching why rituals are meaningful for people generally, but Bourdieu shows their major weakness—a lack of human agency. Bourdieu himself could be faulted for not giving people enough credit for the agency they can possess in understanding ritual dynamics, as he argues that people are unconscious of the strategies they are engaging with

in ritual, even though some people are indeed thoughtfully self-aware. Yet overall, Bourdieu provides ritual theory with a touch of humanity by putting practiced performance in its lived context, which in turn provides another distinction for why ritual is special: it serves to create strategies that would not be available in normal situations.

Nearly a decade later, Sherry Ortner reinforced Bourdieu's ideas about practice while also providing some critique. Her 1984 essay "Theory in Anthropology Since the Sixties" covers more theories than just those on ritual performance, but her conclusions have serious relevance to this field. First, Ortner states that studying the special, "extraordinary practice" that is ritual is not necessary for understanding group consciousness (155). This further supports Bourdieu, showing that the studies of ritual performance that focused exclusively on the ritual apart from the actors were lacking in their approach to understanding society and culture. Additionally, she puts ritual as just another human practice to be studied, deemphasizing the specialness that has been granted to the subject by the earlier generations of academics. Ritual should still be studied, since it is a practice that people do, but it does not need to be seen apart from everyday actions. This critical perspective questions the need for ritual theory in the first place.

Also, Ortner combines practice and systems (or structures), showing that they have a dialectical relationship with each other. Bourdieu disregarded structure as too removed from the reality of practice, but Ortner criticizes his stance as having "gone too far," since actions do not come only from human agency but also from reproduced norms and routinized behavior that is produced systematically (1984, 152). She uses ritual to exemplify her point: ritual is a practice, and the role of the participants cannot be denied, but it is also a part of institutionalized structures such as religions or nations. Ritual is influenced by "the system," since the way that people act in these performances is determined by established traditions, norms, and values; meanwhile, the

practice of ritual influences “the system” in return, reproducing its important position in consciousness of the performers. Ortner’s work demonstrates how the lofty systematic interests of Turner and Geertz can coexist with Bourdieu’s person-based ideas on practice. Although relating these two areas does not completely explain ritual’s significance, it marks a step toward viewing the full complexity of ritual performance.

The timing of Ortner’s theoretical work surely contributed to her tactical combination of system and practice, since the roles of power and agency in ritual were becoming a larger issue for discussion within the theory. One of the big questions in the 1980s was how much agency ritual allowed for participants, and to what degree it gave control to authority. Maurice Bloch stood mostly in the same vein as the earlier structural-functionalists, albeit with more attention to individual and hegemonic action in ritual. His main argument was for recognizing the level of manipulation employed by authority during a traditional ritual: by performing institutionalized practices, participants are wrapped up in “static, transcendental order using formal, repetitive, non-arguable means that ‘legitimate’ traditional authority” (Bloch 1986, 184). Similar to Staal, Bloch views the strict form of ritual as the most important aspect, but he applies it to issues of systematized inequality (Ortner 1984, 141). On the other hand, J. L. Comaroff locates potential for the structured form of ritual to be a source of assertiveness, even resistance, against dominant hegemony. While she is in agreement with Bloch that rituals strongly reinforce tradition, when rituals are performed by marginalized groups of society, within their own heritage, it lets them reclaim their traditional identity in spite of the dominant culture surrounding them (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, 135). Comaroff agrees that agency is lacking within the performance itself, but there can be an element of active choice in the deployment of the ritual. This aligns closely with Bourdieu, with the practice strategically meeting the current needs of the situation. Positioned

somewhere between Bloch and Comaroff, Stanley Tambiah addresses rituals as cultural entities that can be either conservative forces of hegemonic order or progressive tools in identity politics (1986: 166). Ritual is neither entirely for supporting nor defying authority: the context in which people perform determines the character of power in each individual ritual.

This appreciation for ritual context harbingers the prime issue for the theory set in the 1990s, as anthropologists considered how seemingly timeless rituals are in fact inextricably linked with specific conditions and situations. At the start of the decade, John Kelly and Martha Kaplan's article on "History, Structure, and Ritual" recognizes how rituals are affected by the historical time they exist in. Like Ortner, they recognize that rituals are linked to both structures and practice—but the structures in power are conditional and which entities have authority depends on the moment in history, while practice also proceeds from the customs and values of the people acting in that precise ritual (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, 141). At the same time, Richard Bauman and Charles Briggs also advocated for placing rituals in spatial-temporal context. These linguistic anthropologists focused on connections between ritual performance and everyday speech, arguing that these are interrelated. Drawing from Austin, Bauman and Briggs reminded ritual theorists that speech in ritual has real impact on regularly experienced life, but they also note that regular life is brought into the ritual, affecting participant experience (1990, 60-63). In short, ritual performance does not stand alone as its own isolated event. Although they do not equate the "specialness" of ritual with everyday actions like Ortner does, their work minimized the perceived gap between these two forms of speech, asserting that they interact.

In 1997, Catherine Bell pushed the comparison a bit further, returning to Hocart's suggestion to avoid categorization. Rather than labelling a practice a "ritual" due to some vague notion of specialness, Bell decided to describe events as "ritual-like" based on their specific

characteristics (138). Bell did not provide these qualities to conclusively identify something as a ritual, but instead to help people recognize when to apply ideas from ritual theory when they encounter phenomena that resemble ritual. Bell's approach avoids binaries of the special and the mundane, so that ritual-like behavior can be found in more contexts than just those labelled ritual. New scholarship takes advantage of Bell's model to draw connections between ritual theory and different contexts. For instance, Adrienne Kaeppler found ritual qualities such as traditionalism and performance in Oceanic indigenous dance (2010: 264). Analyzing ritual in accordance with historical context, connections to regular activity, and specific non-categorical conditions helped expand the applicability of ritual theory.

At the turn of the new millennium, anthropologists began reimagining how ritual should be viewed. In 1998, Felicia Hughes-Freeland and Mary Crain published *Recasting Ritual*, a book of modern anthropological scholarship that envisioned new ways that ritual can influence identity. The authors illuminate how identity is interactive and negotiable, using specific ritual performances as examples of identity being strengthened, criticized, and reinterpreted. Ritual is cast as a dynamic process, "ritualization," in which identity is liable to change during ritual participation, rather than being a solid, stable force as some structural theorists like Hocart, Bloch, and Comaroff envisioned (Hughes-Freeland and Crain 1998, 5-9). However, a processual description is needed because ritual does not generate new identities out of nothing. Instead, change in identity comes when traditional values, definitions, and enactments of self are manipulated or criticized through ritual practice (39). Their view is most similar to Turner's since new identities are molded out of tradition, but the ultimate effect of ritual differs: no longer is ritual seen as only *following* tradition, but it has become a space for negotiating how to warp

specific traditions to novel sense of self and community. With this idea, Bourdieu's sense of conditional strategy gained revitalized potential.

One more reimagining of ritual appeared with Adam Seligman, Robert Weller, Michael Puett, and Bennett Simon in their 2008 work *Ritual and Its Consequences*. In the tradition of Staal, Hocart, Bourdieu, and Ortner, this anthropological team viewed ritual as "one possible orientation to action, rather than a set of meanings" (6). Extending the perspective of "what ritual does," to "what ritual *can* do" reflects a degree of agency not often seen in ritual studies. Agency here is the possibility to shape perceptions of ritual in order to affect sociocultural dynamics outside the ritual setting: active participants can use their ritual experience to negotiate their identities, relationships, and world-views. Their approach portrays ritual as a way to recognize differences and alternatives, with shared spaces between perceived boundaries (Seligman et al. 2008, 8). Overall, this theory modifies Bourdieu's idea of unconscious strategy and accredits to the participants enough insight and capability to potentially use these strategies for their own self-determination. These scholarly teams from the past two decades show the trend towards agency in modern ritual theory, which likely stems from the increasing concern for representation and empowering applicability in anthropological studies.

As of now, ritual studies have changed dramatically from their origins. From the earliest anthropological involvement with this subject, ritual has been declared a special, extraordinary, significant part of social life that stands apart from the mundane. This label boosted the amount of power that ritual was believed to have, since its above-average position made it seem to be the perfect source for enforcing determinative rules, social structures, revelatory symbols, and performative practice. But by the end of the twentieth century, the various approaches to ritual were becoming ever more entangled with each other, especially with the growing importance of

situating ritual and its theories in full context. As of now, new visions of ritual are coming into play, involving the agents' negotiation of identity and even of the ritual itself.

3.2 Relevant Concepts for Ritual Performance

To study the Nicene Creed in Catholic Liturgy, this thesis draws from various approaches to ritual theory. The study of ritual consists of more than one line of thought and considers how multiple cultural, social, mental, practical, and experiential elements can all reside within a single ritual. Therefore, to narrow this ritual theory for thesis purposes, the focus is on the performance of ritual, interlinked with the effects this practice has on community relationships, interpretation and belief, and affective experience. These multiple angles on ritual performance can be utilized while still staying relevant to the subject of the Creed.

First, the linguistic anthropological approach provides insight on how verbally performed rituals such as the Nicene Creed facilitate community formation and identification. Group identities and relationships are influenced by the language that members use to interact with each other. Those who share the same socializing language are known as “speech communities,” a term used by Alessandro Duranti; he explains that speech communities are a type of group identification formed by the members believing they share the same linguistic reality, regardless of actual speech differences. These communities are reinforced by members speaking together regularly (Duranti 1997, 82). This concept applies to rituals because the people who perform as a group build and maintain solidarity around a common identity of shared speech.

Yet another type of social group formed by speech are “imagined communities,” coined by Benedict Anderson to describe how multiple people can feel related to a larger collective even if they do not know each other personally (1983, 7). Instead, the connection is “imagined” in the

minds of its members. This is not to say that the relationships to and among these communities are not real, but rather that they exist conceptually, beyond the scope of physical connection. For example, Catholics will not meet every single other Catholic in the world, but they still feel part of the same religious community because they share the same religion—as well as set of sacred texts and practices, such as the Nicene Creed. Once the language is affiliated with respected institutions and sacred entities, it no longer forges bonds only between the speakers but also between speakers and revered authority—human or divine. Anderson argues that bestowing a sacred status to religious language is one of the main ways that it has been possible to have expansive religious communities throughout history (1983, 13-15), which makes this theory relevant to Catholicism and its spoken rituals. Community formation is one reason why the Creed was created, and it still works today to create through linguistic practices.

Linguistics and performance have a dialectical relationship, since performing is a way to frame language and speech is a key way to express one's self during performance. Bauman and Briggs propose that this dialectical relationship also heightens the continuity between common social dialogue and formal performances (e.g. rituals), because overarching modes of expression and cultural systems link all kinds of speech among community members (1990, 79). Still, they also recognize that context is an essential component of any particular performance, since the conditions hold distinct influence on the participants' behavior. Many rituals involve speech styles that do not correspond to the people's colloquial discourse, so speaking during ritual can present a different expression of self than people might otherwise have (61). Yet the ideas about selfhood and worldview produced by these performed expressions are based on factors outside the performative context, and they continue to impact the performers after the display is over as well. Abiding by Bauman and Brigg's theoretical viewpoint would mean that Austin's idea of

performative utterances should be compared with other forms of discourse (Duranti 1997, 15), especially everyday communication; therefore, the reality produced in performance is not the only source from which people expressively generate reality, nor does the utterance exist exclusively within the performative context.

Socially, performance has great potential for coalescence. Performing in a group allows the participants to strengthen their bonds within that group. Similar to the sense of linguistic community discussed by Duranti and Anderson, a performance is a special way of expressing profound ideas to an audience that will understand, even if the audience is the other performers. In the case of ritual performance, the concepts that are expressed stem from pre-existing texts and traditional practices. This connects the speakers to established values or beliefs: everyone is linked by this common source. Alexander Henn argues that the ability for rituals to render intelligible shared ideas of belief or concern across the community via its practice is a primary reason for its enduring appeal (2008, 11). Rituals are performed over the course of multiple generations, so they can enforce a continuity of belief, power dynamics, and social structure (Kaeppeler 2000, 269), even if these notions change slightly based on the spatial and temporal context of the performance. The linguistics of performance provide ritual participants with a commonly held font of collective expression, essential for the dimension of unity.

Linguistic experiences during ritual can also be more individualized, based more on the specific person than the common centralized subject. Duranti talks about participant frameworks, which serve as lenses for examining how people align themselves towards each other and navigate various subjects within their spoken interactions (1990, 307). These frameworks recognize that different relationships are formed through shared speech acts, since not everybody who speaks together has the same role. Therefore, each performer is an individual whose identity

or situation determines how they will affect and be affected by their ritual display (313). At the same time, participation in the event can also shape identities further—engagement reinforces and actualizes their notion of self by the role that they hold in the speech community (314). Linguistic scholar Stephen Brasher notes the significance that spoken actions have on individuals as well: through performing a ritual, individuals determine what their inner beliefs and personal relationships with the associated society or religion will be (2017, 67). Based upon this insight, individuality functions with both internal mentality and external interactions. Brasher actually applies this theoretical view to the Nicene Creed, commenting on how early theological views of the Creed's absolute divinity intended to remove the influence that the performance of beliefs had by asserting God's influence as foremost in Christian worship (61), yet arguing that creedal participants still functioned at an individual level to develop their faith and their church (65). As with Bourdieu's view of ritual practice, the members are not subsumed by the collective.

The range of union or independence in performance links to the subject of power in ritual, which is the main focus of another group of theory with relevance to my thesis. The systematic political, social, and religious factors that shape the shared identity and spoken beliefs of communal performances are able to wield legitimate power over people's loyalties and actions. Likewise, the intentions of individual actors from influential positions in a participant framework can be realized as actual power through their discourse in the speech community. In the influential setting of religious ritual, the power of language can be used to promote particular ideologies and define reality. When examining the actions and effects of ritual, one must consider the roles of authority and agency in these formalized settings.

Authority in ritual takes the form of leadership figures and dominant systems, and they impact ritual via its tightly structured format. Kelly and Kaplan assert that partaking in ritual

reduces the autonomy of participants and refocuses power to key traditions, beliefs, figures, and institutions (1990, 141). Rituals are maintained and facilitated by cultural or religious leadership, so their influence over ritual lets them hold sway over the participants themselves. Kaeppler agrees with this theoretical stance, explaining that the popular meanings of ritual actions originate from earlier generations, as opposed to being created by the contemporary performers (2010, 269). Brasher further solidifies this point by explaining how the authoritative status of rituals becomes accepted by progressive generations of participants “who did not have a say in the initial act of legitimation itself, but who must nonetheless abide by the rules of the social configuration sanctioned by the powerful” (2017, 27). Here, Brasher addresses how authoritative power in ritual not only affects religious or cultural understandings, but also social relationships. Radcliffe-Brown and Turner both stress how communities contain distinct roles and positions, which are reinforced by people within these positions behaving in ways specific to their social place. In the case of ritual, participants behave according to ritual standards and in turn cultivate some level of acceptance for the rules and realities promoted by authority. Finally, Bloch argues that rituals imply no alternatives, making them effective means for upholding orthodox authority (1986, 169). Linking back to Kelly and Kaplan, the pressure to follow along with the set precedents in ritual deters pushback against the leading ideals in these sacred, traditional practices. Combined, these theories show how authority has power to influence the experience and meaning of rituals due to the prescribed nature of ritual actions, with participants following the same performances dictated by continuous cultural traditions.

With the continued influence of ritual authority, however, there are also conflicts and changes that can disrupt the status quo often upheld by traditional leadership. Rituals do not only promote conventional ways of belonging under a common system; they can also exclude groups

and sharpen distinctions between those inside and outside the influence of ritual. This inter-ritual dynamic is especially relevant in this modern age, since increased globalization brings ritual beliefs and communities into contact with potentially oppositional groups (Hughes-Freeland and Crain 1998, 10). This conflict may inflict tension and change upon ritual performances. Henn comments on such possibilities by depicting rituals as practices that represent tradition and continuity while in reality they are still involved in contextual particularities and susceptible to change (2008, 11). Sometimes these deviations from ritual norms are kept in check by effective conservative responses from leadership, or at a more local level by group sanctions from more traditional ritual participants; other times, changes take hold and significantly alter the normal repetition of these performances (12). The possibility of disruption caused by conflicts and change weakens the power of authoritative continuities enough to let rituals be sources for self-determined agency as well.

Several theorists stress how agency exists for ritual participants in spite of their popular connection with traditional authority. A prominent example is the work of Tambiah, who agrees that “ritualized, conventionalized, stereotyped behavior is constructed in order to express and communicate...certain attitudes congenial to an ongoing institutionalized intercourse,” yet also argues that people can still “act meaningfully in stereotyped ways [because] the enactment of ritual is the guarantee of social communication” (1985, 133). This kind of agency lets people express themselves and enact sociocultural influence using ritual sources, navigating the authority within ritual in such a way as to turn it into their own deterministic power. Also, although ritual may have original intentions, the performance that brings individuals into active contact with these prescribed messages may also allow them to interpret the practice for themselves. Ritual allows for self-reflection by performers and audience, thinking about the

society that is represented in the ritual (Bell 1997, 75). Through personal involvement, people can hold different ideas about the ritual depending on their personal backgrounds and takeaways (Brasher 2017, 31). This mental agency connects to the power to shape identity, using ideas from the ritual to situate themselves personally and socially. But agency can also function on a larger group scale, as Comaroff explains how some rituals upheld by minority subaltern communities can use their collective solidarity to resist dominant forces, criticizing hegemonic forms and traditions. This viewpoint supports Henn's argument about the disruptive potential of ritual instability: "although they may stand for conservative values, they may just as well be powerfully creative or subversive" (2008, 11-12). Ritual participation has the ability to enact change even outside of its own cultural or religious context.

The kind of ritual deployment expressed by Comaroff exemplifies how ritual agency is often theorized in terms of strategy. For instance, Bourdieu characterizes ritual as strategic practices for transgressing and reshuffling cultural categories in order to meet the needs of real situations. Seligman et al. also identify rituals as strategic practices, specifically for coping with the ambiguity in most sociocultural interactions (2008, 8). Bloch complicates the association of strategy with participant agency, by deeming ritual a "special strategy" of "a special form of authority," which gains power from the ritual (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, 125). Yet Tambiah shows how Bloch's ideas can coexist with theories of strategy within the ritual performance, since he claims that the ritual's influence can be harnessed for either traditional or progressive agendas (1985, 132), which correlate roughly with authority and individual agency respectively. Even when not actively deployed, the way that rituals are taken in can open up new possibilities, as explained by the theorist team of Hughes-Freeland and Crain "some approaches to [ritual] 'consumption' give readers, consumers, individuals and collective groups a great deal of agency"

(1998, 7). The role of strategy in ritual clarifies the intentionality of those who find agency in ritual, using these significant cultural practices to impact their lives and others’.

In sorting these theories on ritual power, the following groups emerge. First, there are those who emphasize the prominent role of rule-governance; this camp includes Staal with form, Radcliffe-Brown with continued traditional leadership, and Bloch with the authoritative direction of practice and interpretation. Then, on the opposing end are those who assert that rituals in fact involve some rule-flexibility that allows for participants to shape their own views and identities. These theorists include Bourdieu with practitioner pragmatism, Comaroff with performed resistance, Hughes-Freeland and Crain with negotiating ritualization, and Seligman et al. with ritual opportunities for new ways of living. A final group consists of those who straddle these two groups, such as Turner and Geertz who see rituals as both systematically guiding rituals with rules yet also allowing a new platform for identification and interpretation with some flexibility. Also straddling are Tambiah, who sees ritual as a mode for either authoritative or practitioner power, and Brasher with his recognition of orthodox regulation and mitigating strategies acting at the same time. This placement of power theories on a continuum aligns with the spectrum of collectivity proposed in my thesis introduction. The first group stressing authoritative ritual influence reflects unity; the second group focusing on participant agency promotes a recognition of individuality; and those straddling these camps fall in between.

The third major group of theory relevant to this thesis’s analysis is the symbolic workings within ritual contexts. With interpretive anthropology, performances can contain symbolic elements, or their entirety could even be viewed as one complex symbol. Geertz approaches religious practices as acting like texts, so performances such as the Nicene Creed are symbolic portrayals of underlying realities that convey cultural beliefs (1973, 447). He also sees religions

themselves as symbolic approaches to life, using active representations of group spirituality to navigate reality and strive for an ideal world (90). Although this study of the liturgical Nicene Creed considers the ritual more in terms of its active participants than its textual meaning, Geertz's point about ritual as an opportunity for symbolically representing elements of life in ways that would be impossible in common society, as well as his note about religions reflecting human efforts to navigate reality, apply to ethnographic details of the Creed. Symbols are especially prevalent in the Creed's connections to divinity and the afterlife. Bell also notes that ritual performances have deeper symbolic meanings for participants, and that the format of ritual allows for symbolic interaction with key religious themes and transformative moments. Ritual keeps the meaning of real world events present across generations and through multiple people, connecting them through the shared symbolism of ritual rather than with specific people's ideas (Bell 1990, 232). Yet communal interpretations of symbols align with unity, Bell also asserts that individual's approaches to religious rituals limit this consensus and impact what ritual means for various participants (182). Ritual symbols affect identity, community, and understandings of religion, so these theories on symbolism are integral to this thesis.

On the opposite side of ritual as symbolic text, theory about the lived experience in the moment of ritual practice is another key group to draw from when analyzing the Nicene Creed. Experience links to the concepts of context and affect. In addition to theorists like Bauman and Briggs or Kelly and Kaplan who note the importance of how rituals are situated in external contexts, other theorists like Teun Van Dijk stress how the contextual setting of the ritual itself determines how the included performance is viewed. He promotes the idea that everyone uses "context models" to navigate their social interactions. When people experience certain types of discourse in a particular setting, they mentally connect different situations with a corresponding

set of proper linguistic behaviors (Van Dijk 2009, 7). When people join a ritual performance, they note the type of activity in which they are partaking and activate a context model that helps guide them to act and think about the ritual in a way that follows their experiences from previous formal religious practices (157). The more often a person experiences a situation, the greater the guidance their context models will provide. Rituals comprise special moments, different than everyday life, so having particular context models for these kinds of religious rituals is especially helpful for understanding how to participate and what the event means.

Context also matters even beyond practice and interpretation, since it is also the source of personal affect. Donovan Schaefer is an affect theorist who argues that anthropology cannot only consider words, beliefs, and relationships when analyzing religious performance, promoting the incorporation of affect as well (2015, 3). Schaefer describes affect as “the propulsive elements of experience, thought, sensation, feeling, and action that are not necessarily captured or capturable by language or self-sovereign ‘consciousness’” (176). These abstract affections arise from the situational context that social actors engage in with their minds and bodies, reflecting affect’s relationship Van Dijk’s context models. During a religious ritual, people are often practicing their faith in a sacred location surrounded by those who believe they are connected to a revered entity; thus, a performer is inclined to feel some combination of awe, gravitas, spirituality, and formality, all of which are supported and instilled by the atmosphere of faith. Schaefer even argues that non-humans can feel affect produced by religious ritual (9), so anybody present for a ritual like the Nicene Creed would be affected emotionally. People’s feel about their involvement in ritual means that they will interpret and relate to that ritual accordingly, and these emotions can be influenced by authority or determined through personal response. Karen Simecek adds further theory that supports the significance of affect on interpretation. Her scholarship shows

that one's affective state highly impacts how content is integrated into the brain, so people's emotions during participation in rituals can shape their views and values regarding these practices (Simecek 2017, 419). These findings are backed by neuroscience (421), grounding the impact of rituals like the Creed in tangible personal changes.

Lastly, this thesis will study the four aforementioned areas of linguistics, power, symbol, and experience by using the conceptual framework of ritual-like characteristics, as presented by Catherine Bell. These qualities of ritual help determine which parts of the ritual are most notable, and they can serve as loose guidelines along which to analyze a particular attribute observed in ritual practices like the Creed. Bell presents six major characteristics in her book *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*, and each of them can be considered on their own or in relation to any of the others. These characteristics are comprised of: formalism, or the way a ritual promotes authority-sanctioned propriety among participants; tradition, or the continued historical practices from earlier generations; sacral symbolism, or the connection with a perceived higher power or greater entity; invariance, or the regularity of action and procedure across repeated rituals; rule-governance, or the strong presence of institutional regulation; and performance, or the active presentation of meaning that rituals can facilitate (1997, 139-161). While rituals can have other attributes as well—such as unity and individuality—utilizing these six characteristics provides a multi-pronged approach to the descriptive study of rituals.

3.3 Conclusions, Assessments, and Applications

When considering the merits and drawbacks of ritual theory, the main question is whether it should still exist. Even earlier scholars such as Hocart noted the flaws of categorization and exceptionalism in the term “ritual.” Using overarching terminology and wide abstract concepts is

only useful when it actually applies to the current ritual being analyzed, while involving dangers of over-simplification or forcing real ritual performances to fit into prescribed categories. Also, anthropologist Talal Asad argued that ritual theory approaches the subject from a dominant western perspective (1979, 607). The idea that ritual should be studied for analysis is itself a historically shaped manifestation of power, one that is intimately linked to the privileges of modern scholarship. Undoubtedly, this theory has been dominated by western anthropologists. Also, many of the early theories were developed through problematic ethnography and representation, which essentialized entire communities and lacked specificity. However, the development within this theory is progressing towards new perspectives, so to be fair this evaluation will consider this growth.

The scholars from before the 1970s helped lay foundational ideas about ritual, and their ideas can be found condensed and critically recorded in the works of later ritual theorists. Yet a flaw in these earlier sources is their treatment of ritual as a universal phenomenon with set characteristics. As Kelly and Kaplan explained, worldview arises from context (1990, 148), and theory similarly arises according to experience and identity. Therefore, the ideas introduced by these earlier theories are helpful when applied to specific analysis. For instance, I personally find both Austin's idea of performative utterances and Turner's discussion of liminal stages to be useful frameworks for approaching any ritual. Whether or not these theorists' ideas fit well with a particular ritual or not, their main ideas can at least be kept in a repertoire of perspectives that can be tested and potentially applied for specific analysis. However, actively *trying* to make one of these broad theories fit a specific instance is more detrimental than helpful, so the best strategy in my opinion is to use these theories for inspiration and then develop them to fit the nuances of the current ritual being studied.

The remainder of the twentieth century from 1980-2000 contained wonderful scholarship that added layers of complication to earlier theories. The two main concepts from this time I identify as power and context. For power, it is important to note how a particular practice, especially one as influential as a recognized ritual, can affect the livelihood, status, rights, and dignity of those participating. As for context, this focus innately demands rituals be taken on an individual basis, so that the analysis is more accurate, *and* it requires the ethnography to be truly reflective of the lives of the people involved, which can lead to better representation. Put simply, context calls attention to the specific case study. It also makes ritual feel like less of a special, separate entity, although not entirely—ritual is just shown to have contact with the regular world. With attention to power dynamics and contextual specifics, ritual theory became much more applicable and appealing.

The most recent developments in ritual studies are also about showing how ritual theory can be useful in the modern world. The key here is agency: ritual has usually been depicted as a practice that takes human agency and redirects their efforts towards prescribed ends: they have to follow the rules, stay within the form, perform the ritual correctly, respect traditional authority, etc. But by expressing the possibility for ritual participants to act on their own, navigate the traditions in ritual, and enact change for themselves, their communities, or their rituals brings great new potential to the field.

Despite this complex development and increasing nuance in theoretical relationships, one factor has remained almost entirely the same: the practices that are studied are called rituals. This label is the key problem with this theory set. Hocart and Asad point out the westernized position inherent in such labeling, and the power of discourse is real: naming something a “ritual” acts like a performative utterance declaring the reality for that phenomenon. It *becomes* a ritual if

studied as a ritual. Even if it should not really be seen as special within its native community, the ritual becomes special via the work of anthropologists. However, the term ritual be carefully employed to use the benefits of having such a closely connected group of theory. First, Bell's "ritual-like behavior" transforms ritual from a thing to a quality, avoiding reification. Also, instead of seeing it as a distinct, separate entity, ritual can be viewed as a group of particular, non-identical practices that are still connected to regular life even if they happen at specialized times. With these precautions, I believe that ritual should still have its own theory.

Overall, ritual theory should continue to exist, bringing a distinct set of perspectives to the various issues that feed into it. This ultimately relies on my belief that ritual is still fine to use as a term. Using ritual as a potential adjective rather than an absolute noun will let scholars consider a practice, event, or performance on its own terms before calling it a ritual and applying some aspect of ritual theory to it. Also, as a collection of approaches that share history and themes, ritual theory serves as navigable way to analyze the same subject from multiple angles. My final evaluation is that ritual *theorists* should not exist, because that would imply that they only look for practices that they can deem rituals and then study them as such. However, ritual theory can stay an option, a set of ideas to be called upon as needed rather than thrust upon a cultural phenomenon as the only way to conduct analysis.

For my analysis on the Nicene Creed's collective and personal significance, I utilize ritual theories on linguistics, power, symbols, context, affect, and descriptive characteristics. These options from the theoretical corpus have been chosen specifically to illuminate my ethnographic findings, rather than approaching my fieldwork to fit the theory. With this mindset, I believe that I have made a ritual perspective functional for considering the spiritual attitudes, formal atmosphere, and spectrum of collectivity in the liturgical Nicene Creed.

Chapter 4

The Nicene Creed as Ritual Performance

A ritual perspective is just one lens out of many for analyzing the Nicene Creed. While I have always intended to address the significance of its liturgical format, focusing on the Creed as an active practice rather than an inert text, my use of ritual theory came about once my fieldwork and research were already underway. A few moments led to this approach, and by relating them here I wish to highlight the relevance of ritual for this Catholic Creed.

First, during a 7am Mass at the Basilica, I noticed a man who did not speak for the entire duration of the creedal recitation. Yet despite his lack of verbal participation, the man performed with his posture and body movement a perfectly respectful following of proper behavior during the Creed. This brought to my mind two ideas about the Creed's ritual qualities. First, the silent man's deferral from vocalized worship helped me realize how apparent an incongruity is when the Creed is being said. Although those around him did not notice due to their own engagement with the recitation, either looking ahead or reading the words from their missals, it only took basic observation on my part to spot him straying from the norm. Rituals usually promote a structured discipline to follow when participating, so seeing an irregular (non-)performance clarified how prominent this quality is in the Creed. Second, this ritual discipline still affected the silent man, since he comported himself in a way that would not disrupt the worship. This again calls attention to how ritualistic it feels to perform the Nicene Creed.

Another prime example came about a month later, I observed leadership for the Creed that I had not seen in a service before. The presiding priest, Father Greenleaf, introduced the Creed by emphasizing how everyone there was joining their voices to profess the timeless faith

in God. He also encouraged people to read along in their hymnals on page 6. This clearly set up the Creed as an important event and motivated people to actively participate. Then, during the Creed, I noticed that the congregation sounded louder than usual; also, everybody I could see bowed at the appropriate time for the “incarnated” birth of Jesus, whereas during other Masses I had attended this gesture was typically only done by about two-thirds of those attendant. My observations and comparisons may be tinged by subjectivity, but they still demonstrate how Catholics act in this event according to hierarchical leadership, venerated tradition, and belief in divinity, all of which are characteristic during rituals.

Yet the decisive moment at which I chose to use ritual for my analysis was one that required much less critical thinking on my part. I was sitting in the parish center, interviewing Fr. Greenleaf about the Creed, Catholicism, and community. Near the end of our talk, we came upon the topic of the Creed’s textual meaning in comparison to its role during liturgy. Fr. Greenleaf, choosing his words carefully to best express his views as a leader and teacher in the church, said this: “the Creed is symbolic, aligning with the faith of the Church...of the people.” Although he did not explicitly describe the Nicene Creed as a ritual, noting its symbolism and alignment with orthodoxy puts the Creed in an analytical perspective. Furthermore, these terms are especially relevant to ritual studies, and they had been applied to the Nicene Creed by a leader of the faith. If the Creed can be recognized as ritualistic from within its tradition—not including my own academic perspective—then a ritual approach holds much potential for cultural analysis.

4.1 The Ritual Character of the Nicene Creed

Although the Catholic Church itself views the Nicene Creed like a ritual, this category is only useful for analysis if the Creed can be described with ritualistic terms. Noting that the Creed

evokes a special quality that stands apart from everyday life is not enough to find meaningful influences it has on participants, let alone its effects on Catholic unity and individuality. In order to analyze the Creed as a ritual effectively, this thesis draws inspiration from Arthur Hocart's strong point that ritual should be looked at specifically (1952, 65). Rather than immediately applying ritual theory to the Creed, it must first be approached as an individual case to be described, making specific connections to ritual instead of holistic categorization. Utilizing Catherine Bell's six major aspects of ritual-like behavior, the Nicene Creed gains a detailed ritual identity, which in turn will increase the efficacy of the theory for addressing this thesis's main questions about Catholic persons' collective and distinctive interactions with their Creed. Each of Bell's ritual-like aspects are applicable to the Creed, and together they show the various ways by which the Creed influences participants' worship and identity.

First and foremost, the group recitation of the Nicene Creed during Sunday Mass involves performance. This thesis focuses heavily on the effects of performing an orthodox statement such as the Creed, so recognizing how this practice involves performative elements is crucial. While this particular performance does not follow the typical relationship dynamic of performer and audience, it is nonetheless a "specific type of demonstration...to signify or denote larger truths," as Bell explains (1990, 160). As observed, when the Creed is being recited, those assembled openly display their fundamental faith to each other; even as we spoke, we also heard those around us and became an audience for the demonstrative performances of our fellow churchgoers. Plus, in addition to the tangible audience in the church, there is also a spiritually symbolic audience that extends beyond the church—saying the Creed reinforces the presence of Catholic beliefs in the world, for the world. This can be seen in Fr. Greenleaf's regular introduction to the Creed, when he tells the congregation that we are joining our voices with

others around the world, all saying the same Creed. Performance allows like-minded believers to express their shared beliefs, supported in their convictions by the group solidarity. This collective action, in turn, emphasizes the communal aspect of the Creed. When beliefs are expressed as performative utterances, as coined by J. L. Austin, they become stronger for the speakers: saying them in the group performance setting gives the words more tangible presence (Duranti 1997, 221). These utterances become so tangible because they enter into the reality of the performers' audience, and for the Creed this includes the other members of the congregation, the imagined yet real community of God and the heavens (Anderson 1983, 7), and even the self in the act of recitation. Performing the Creed adds levels of collective purpose and verbal significance to the liturgical practice.

Another ritual aspect of the Creed is the importance of tradition. Christians have a long history of performing the Creed, discussed in detail in Chapter 1. Since the words of the Creed have remained mostly unchanged since the Council of Constantinople, and it has been widely practiced in Mass starting as early as the Council of Chalcedon in the fifth century CE, all who speak the Creed today are upholding the traditional cosmology from centuries ago. Such a sense of tradition is important for Catholics for reasons of orthodoxy and legitimacy. The Creed was created for the consolidation of power that orthodoxy brings, and the Catholic Church still uses the Creed to define itself and align its followers to its institutional leadership (Brasher 2017, 27). The role of orthodoxy is illustrated in an exchange I had with Fr. Greenleaf, when he pointed out that when I said "forms" instead of "persons" to refer to the Holy Trinity, I was committing a heresy. Straying from the orthodox, church-sanctioned beliefs can remove the transgressor from being included in the Church; to maintain the membership, Catholics strive to adhere to the correct terms and say traditional statements, such as the Creed, correctly. Besides, for Catholics

these traditional ways are right and true, helping them understand and live well in the world, so the potential fear of removal from the church is not necessary for them to uphold tradition. The truth of these beliefs actually comes from the traditional longevity itself, which Bell describes as a “tool of legitimation” (1990, 145). Some Catholics, such as Karen McArthur, value the long traditional use of their religion’s practices as one of its most appealing aspects. As a woman who has experienced multiple religions in her lifetime, McArthur appreciates the Church’s long history as a sign of legitimacy that she can trust. When she says the Creed, she knows that there is a time-tested reason for all of these beliefs to be held by Catholics, adding deeper significance and faith. While not every Catholic shares this sentiment, and there are varying degrees to which the Creed’s past impacts the present recitations, tradition is nonetheless a crucial element of its ritual character.

The role that formality assumes in the Nicene Creed ritual works in tandem with the two previous ideas of performance and tradition. While these determine the content of the liturgical Creed, formality sets the ritual tone. At every Prince of Peace Mass I attended, the Creed was always expressed with respectful, serious, reverent comportment. In this kind of formalism, people express themselves according to proper situational behavior and emotions (Bell 1990, 142). Drawing from Van Dijk’s context models, the wider influence of such formality spread beyond the current moment of formality: since people use expectations from earlier experiences when partaking in given acts (Van Dijk 2009, 157), Catholics will almost certainly recall their liturgical performance when addressing the Creed outside of Mass. Therefore, the reverence enacted by the assembly at Mass also intersects with their personal dealings with the Creed, or even individual concepts in the Creed. This formality guides how Catholics feel towards the Nicene Creed both during and after Mass. Considering Simecek’s point that emotional affect has

major influence on reasoning and interpretation (2017, 419), the continuously formal associations with the Creed has major implications for Catholics' understandings of these core cosmological beliefs. The formality surrounding the Creed boosts its prestige and legitimacy, similar to tradition. However, it can also make them engage in less critical thinking about the words and beliefs themselves, since the liturgical context is one of acceptance while following the Mass's form. Formality may even get in the way of personal reflection. For instance, Deacon Daggett confided that sometimes he has difficulty focusing on the Creed because he has to focus instead on preparing to lead the next part of the liturgy, the Prayers of the Faithful, while still upholding a formal front as he gets ready. Formality can encourage Catholics to have greater respect towards the Creed yet think less about what it really means to them.

However, formality does not restrict contemplation entirely, so the ritual aspect of sacral symbolism is also recognized in the Creed. According to Bell, sacral symbols "effectively merge many ideas and emotions under one image" (1997, 156) to appeal to a higher being or principle, giving it presence in the ritual. While the symbolic "image" is often physical, it can also be an action, such as speaking the Creed. While performing the Creed, Catholics are connecting with God: the ritual act serves as a symbol for God's greatness, specifically His divine love and power. By affirming belief in God, in all His deeds and persons, Catholics situate themselves in a state of sacred holiness with their active symbol, using the Creed to channel their thoughts and emotions about the Holy Trinity of God. Referring back to Fr. Greenleaf's comment at the start of this chapter, when he said that "the Creed is symbolic," he was talking about its quality to represent something bigger than itself—in this case, the converging beliefs of "the church" and "the people" on the greatness of God. Lisa Daigle also expressed a similar idea in her interview. In response to my question about her thoughts during the Creed she told me that she "intently

focuses on valuing and loving the Creed” in order to make a personal connection with God and Jesus. Furthermore, Daigle firmly believes that every time she says the Creed, God becomes even more prominent in her life. She puts such value into the Creed because it is a symbol for her relationship with God. Sacral symbolism in the Nicene Creed stands for love between Catholics and God, providing meaning that goes beyond both the words and the formality.

The final two aspects, rule governance and invariance, supplement the four ritual characteristics described above. Rule governance regulates the behavior and actions that take place during the practice of the Creed, showing the authority inherent within the Creed. Although it is institutionally decided how text and performance of the Creed should be, the liturgical Nicene Creed also has its own established rules that influence the experience of churchgoers. For example, the case of the silent man from the beginning of this chapter highlighted how present rules are in the Creed. Even though he remained formal in demeanor and behavior, he did not follow the unspoken rule that everybody should say the Creed together. Rule governance relates to orthodoxy and demonstrates how it is enforced in the Creed’s ritual; yet at the same time, it can be ignored if the rules are broken, which is unusual.

Invariance further supports orthodoxy, as a companion to tradition. Through constant repetition that unfailingly follows the same rules and principles, rituals like the Creed seem to make their traditions timeless and absolute. Like formalism, invariance promotes an acceptance of the Creed as true, right, and good. Becoming so conventional helps the Creed’s authority, restricting audience response to fit the Creed’s continuing pattern. According to Bloch, this authoritative invariance puts people into defined roles, controlling the possibilities of what participants can think and do regarding the ritual (169). While Bloch’s view is too extreme in limiting the agency of participants, the Nicene Creed does involve some acceptance and

adherence to set roles. For instance, Scott Vaillancourt claimed that although he valued the Creed and the Mass, he often found himself repeating the Creed by rote, rather than appreciating it in the moment. Regardless of actual changes to the liturgy or text of the Creed, like in 2011, it still has unvarying rules that affect its entire image.

Other scholars have noted the utility of viewing the Creed through a ritual lens, as well. For example, Mark Searle agrees that saying the Nicene Creed is a ritual practice, with real effects on worldview and identity. He asserts that stating “I Believe” is important for coming to a sense of religious self, making one’s belief in the Holy Trinity explicit for the speaker *and* the other parishioners in the church (Searle 1987, 465). This repeated phrase adds stronger conviction to the performance, and turns the grand cosmological ideas in the Creed into personal beliefs, linking the divine and human like sacral symbolism.

When taken to describe rather than categorize, ritual terminology can be an immensely useful tool for analysis. This lens will be used to specify what the Nicene Creed looks like as a ritual, since no two rituals contain exactly the same elements and qualities.

4.2 Ritual Distinctions

The Creed is a unique kind of ritual that involves multiple distinct qualities. The specifics of this ritual provide a better understanding of how the Nicene Creed influences Catholic experience and worldview. Again, recalling Hocart, descriptive analysis yields more applicable results for comprehending what a ritual does, how it works, and why this matters.

A first notable quality of the Nicene Creed is its inclusion as part of the larger ritual of the Catholic Mass, in the part known as the Liturgy of the Word. It is one of the final two rituals that bring the Mass back to a more structured format, after the priest has given his homily (which

is personal and creative). Since the second part of the liturgy is about the Eucharist, this becomes far more traditionally-oriented and based on propriety, to respect the great event that happens when the congregation receives the host. Therefore, the Creed serves as a hinge of sorts between the two halves of the Mass. In a broader scope, it brings structure and tradition-based communal practice back after the given daily scripture and homily have added variance to the Mass. Then, on a smaller scale, the Creed happens directly after the homily and before the Prayers of the Faithful. The homily has just explained God's word and shown how relevant it is to the congregation's life, so the Creed serves as an affirmation by the assembly that they believe in the word God that has just been shared with them all (since they believe in Him). Yet it also prepares everybody for the Prayers of the Faithful—Catholics cannot pray to God unless they actually know Him, but He is revealed through the scripture, homily, and Creed. This preparation is clear in Fr. Greenleaf's introduction to this rite, "we have heard God's word, we have said His Creed, now let us [ask for His mercy]." And with the conclusion of the Prayers of the Faithful, the ritual of Mass can move onto its next part, with the Eucharistic rites.

Another distinct feature of the Creed is that its ritual is repeated weekly, on Sundays, the most holy day of the week for Catholics (Deedy 1986, 129). During weekday Mass, the Creed is not said, although other elements of the Mass remain, like the scriptures and the Eucharist. However, the Sunday Mass is the most widely attended and has a special place in the church due to the Commandment about keeping holy the Sabbath Day. So the Creed is not in the ritual all the time, but it *is* present in the most important of these rituals. In contrast, some rituals only occur once in a lifetime, such as initiations (Turner 1957, 53). Other rituals may be repeated, but occur far less frequently than the weekly liturgical Creed; for example, the celebration of holidays such as Christmas and Easter, or annual demonstrations of religious cultural heritage

such as the Maltese *fiesta* parade are all rituals that only happen once a year (Mitchell 1998, 76). Generally, when people are limited in the number of times they can participate in a ritual, that ritual becomes a more significant experience. The Creed happens regularly enough for Catholics to feel less engrossed in the ritual during the moment. Fr. Greenleaf says that he has said the Creed so many times, that he does not feel emotionally invested in its performance unless the congregation is saying it with reverent zeal, although they are usually fairly subdued. Deacon Daggett expressed a similar sentiment, sharing that although he can still feel very passionate about his faith during the Creed, his engagement depends on the situation: “at different times, different things...strike me.” Scott Vaillancourt claimed that singing the Mass usually got the atmosphere more tangibly reverent and spiritual, which gets many Catholic churchgoers more invested. However, due to his role as the organ player, he always has the Creed accompanied with music, so it is not as stimulating. As for myself, I noticed that many people say the Creed quietly, and I rarely feel as invested in the Creed as I do with annual Catholic holidays.

On the other hand, having regular interest with the Creed is not impossible. One younger member of the parish said that even though the Creed can get monotonous, she would always try to think about what it meant. Karen McArthur also said she actively contemplates the Nicene Creed’s meaning in her life, trying to connect its constant beliefs to whatever new developments have arisen. It is certainly possible to feel deep connections to the Creed during its performance; however, the regularity of the ritual keeps it from being a momentous occasion in one’s religious life. The Creed is not exactly a striking event in the lives of committed Catholics. However, the frequency *does* have a profound effect on the lingering influence of the Creed in Catholics’ memories and worldviews. Compound reinforcement makes the Creed’s presence more solid and absolute, since repetition breeds familiarity and attachment. Similar to invariance, the Creed is so

normalized that it is accepted as important, regardless of conscious significance or not (Ortner 1984, 155). When this reinforcement is combined with the emotional response that does come about from the Creed (Schaefer 2015, 200), albeit a weaker emotional climate than that of a one-time or annual ritual, the Creed can have a major impact on how Catholics perceive their faith.

The Nicene Creed as a ritual does not create or change identity, but rather reinforces the identity that the speaker has coming into the liturgy. Some rituals are rites of passage, explained by Victor Turner as experiences in which people are transformed in the eyes of their culture and society, undergoing a liminal period and assuming a new social role by the end (Turner 1957, 302). These types of rituals certainly exist in Catholicism, such as confirmations and weddings, and Catholic identity is not static (Searle 1987, 461). However, the Creed does not transform people to assume new positions in the Catholic religion, instead serving to reinforce a constant fundamental belief in God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Church. Catholics are most commonly reciting the Creed from an established position within the religion, and even newer members who joined recently will still have encountered the Creed multiple times during their catechesis, or the path to becoming a baptized Catholic. Unlike baptism, the ritual of the Creed does not let those undergoing catechesis (i.e. catechumens) obtain a new official Catholic status, and serves the non-transformative purpose of showing them Catholic belief and community.

Although the Nicene Creed is not a rite of passage, its form of ritual still develops the participants. In contrast with the liminal state of some rituals, when the identity of a participant is temporarily called into question so that it can be rediscovered as a new place in society (Turner 1957, 315), the Creed entails steadfast conviction in one's Catholic faith and Divine Trinity. As a straightforward statement of core beliefs, applying to all Catholic identities regardless of their individual roles in the church, the Creed affirms one Catholic religiosity at a basic level. Since

there is no moment of unresolved identity, the creedal ritual works to develop the current identity of Catholic believer, which existed at the start of the performance. Therefore, as opposed to a transformative development, the Creed's is one of enhancement. Lisa Daigle's aforementioned comment about God becoming even more prominent in her life with each creedal recitation exemplifies this form of growth. The Creed's beliefs become firmly rooted in participants through the repeated action of speech and supportive group setting.

Another ritual distinction is the virtual lack of requirements needed to partake in the Creed. In order to speak the Nicene Creed with Catholic weight behind the words, the only prerequisite is to have been baptized. Even then, anyone who is present at Mass can say it, and anybody is allowed to attend Catholic services. However, saying the Creed will not have the same effect of collectivity and faith on someone who is not a Catholic. The exception would be during the catechesis process, since Fr. Greenleaf described how participating in the Creed is one of the key moments in a catechumen's path to confirmation in the Church. Use of vernacular language for the Creed in Mass also reduces the ritual requirements. English, French, and Spanish Masses are all available at Prince of Peace Parish, providing most participants with access and understanding to the words they are saying.

Since the liturgical Creed is such an inclusive ritual, it is most usually experienced via active participation, and this personal engagement with the Creed has multiple effects. For example, context models for an event are sharper when a more active role is taken, so this experience will influence how people will address the Creed whenever they encounter or consider it in the future (Van Dijk 2009, 7). Also, participation effectively embodies traditions and legacies from earlier generations in contemporary performances (Kaepler 2010, 269), so the ideas or form of the Creed become more deeply and widely entrenched as well. Lastly, in terms

of Bourdieu's practiced-based theories, being active in ritual facilitates a strategic application of the Creed to the speakers' modern lives (Ortner 1984, 145). For example, Karen McArthur used such a mindset in pondering the Creed's relevance to her everyday life. By letting every person attending the Mass take part in the Creed, in contrast to some church rituals which only allow the priest and deacons to act, this ritual involves a significant dimension of personal action.

This openness means that there are no restrictions based on class, race, ethnicity, or gender. Multiple rituals, like the aforementioned *festa*, are dependent upon gendered roles to be fulfilled (Mitchell 1998, 75). Although the Creed does not treat gender in such a major fashion, there are still gendered details present in this ritual. The Nicene Creed uses masculine language to describe God and says "For us *men* and for our salvation," (my emphasis), but otherwise gender does not determine who may speak the Creed. However, institutionally the Creed has very masculine undertones, simply because it is part of the Catholic religion. With all-male clergy, a vision of God and Jesus as men, and a group of fore-fathers being responsible for the Creed's existence, the authority in the Creed is certainly working with a patriarchal system. Still, this does not mean that women cannot be influential members of the Catholic community, or that they cannot gain spiritual achievement and strength from their religion. Regarding the Creed, Lisa Daigle and Karen McArthur are just two women out of many at the Prince of Peace parish who see great meaning in the orthodox statement. They reverently love the Church and its Creed, and find personal fulfillment in doing so. Still, several other women across the Catholic world oppose the patriarchal system inherent in Catholicism, hoping to improve gender representation. Some even use the Creed as one of their outlets for these ideals, as one interviewee told me that she refuses to say the "men" in the "For us men..." phrase, and she questions the gendered

pronouns for God as well. Although the Creed is not an explicitly gendered ritual, the underlying issues on this subject must be recognized, nonetheless.

One of the most notable aspects of the Creed is that it is not always performed in the same format. Although most often spoken, it can be sung or chanted instead. However, the entire congregation will do this the same way, depending on how the cantors lead. Some read the Creed while others recite from memory, which have minor differences in performance. In fact, some people do not say the Creed at all. This feature is not unique to the Creed during Mass. Many prayers and hymns are said in different ways depending on who is leading the Mass, what church they are in, or which music is used, if any. While a formal tone remains in both song and speech, the emotional aspect of singing impacts the experienced affect. Affect with the Creed matters because it can shape the opinions that individuals have about the Creed, influence how connected the community feels together, and form associations between the Creed and personal thoughts (Schaefer 2015, 53). Putting the Creed to Music elicits feelings of prestige and grandness, due to the organ instrumentation. Also, associations with the past traditions of classical western music arise from the music style. These can increase the sense of propriety, longevity, legitimacy, and respect in the Creed. The European roots in the Prince of Peace Parish's dominantly French-Canadian heritage is present in this credal music of contemporary Masses, which can be appealing or off-putting depending on the backgrounds from which particular congregants come. Lastly, the music style does not lend itself to being easily followed, with melodies that suit prestige foremost. This keeps many people from singing together, at least to the same degree of unity in which they speak the Creed without music.

Lastly, the performance of this ritual is not a way to stand out. Due to the formality and rule governance that keep actions in check, there is no room for self-expression outside of what

the Creed says. No motivation exists within the ritual to break from the norm, either. Based upon the sanctions that were given to parents whose children acted up during the Nicene Creed, or any part of the Mass, if a mature Catholic were to stand out with a deviant choice of style, volume, action, or speech, then they would almost certainly be put into an awkward position by their fellow congregants. In external behavior, the Creed demands conforming to the reverent setting, fitting in with the other worshippers being the ideal. This means that individuality is internal instead, based on how the Creed is interpreted, applied, and valued by those performing it.

4.3 Conclusion

Every aspect of ritual performance theory discussed in this chapter can be viewed from a perspective of ritual togetherness. The performative aspect of ritual ensures that multiple people are present to form a single group of participants, even if their individual roles differ. Tradition, formality, connection to sacredness, rules, and invariance all also keep people together. At the same time, reality does not allow for such complete homogeneity, and the way that these various elements of ritual are interpreted, valued, applied, or experienced can all differ depending on the individual. Therefore, all of these characteristics will be modes through which to analyze the main concern of this thesis: orthodox unity and its relationship with individuality.

Furthermore, the distinct qualities of this creedal ritual fit the same mold. The Creed is located in the Mass at a position in between more unified and personalized parts of the service, forming a bridge between them. The repetition of the Creed can have the effect of everybody falling into the same patterns of behavior and attitude, but this makes the instances of personal reflection even more significant. The Creed's enhancing effect towards developing faith is mostly traditional, but people may develop at different speeds or along distinct paths. The open

access Catholics have to active participation in the Creed amplifies the potential for perpetuating tradition *and* utilizing ritual for current issues. Dynamics of gender and identity show internal differences among participants, even if the institution that has the Creed as a means of power is essentially patriarchal. The different Masses' use of music or stated speech shows a break in unity, although everybody will still adhere to the same style if they are in the same service; also, the music can divide people with its classic western nature and hard-to-follow melodies, even while it creates a uniform tone of reverence toward the Creed.

The next two chapters will explore these themes, considering the implications of Catholic togetherness and personal difference in the Creed. A complex relationship exists among these key concepts, and fortunately the ritual qualities discussed in this chapter will provide the angles necessary for multiple views of the Nicene Creed on this matter.

Chapter 5

Collective Unity in an Orthodox Creed

When comparing the terms “religion” and “spirituality,” one distinguishing feature is the level of unity involved. Whereas a “spiritual” person can feel a personal connection with some supernatural entity or higher power, those who identify as “religious” engage in collective unity along multiple different relationships. In addition to connecting with divinity, religions also involve unity between laity and leadership, laity and the religious institutions, current followers and earlier generations, and among fellow lay members. These forms of religious unity are all actively present during Catholic Mass.

Since “catholic” means universal, the Church’s mission is fundamentally linked with unifying as many people as possible under the teachings and guidance of Catholicism. Even from the earliest leaders of Christendom, the Apostles, there was a focus on spreading the religious beliefs to everyone, creating one united church (Deedy 1986, 13). This ideal of widespread unification inspired the missionary trips that brought Catholic religion to the Americas in the first place (Albanese 1981, 61), and it is still expressed in Masses today. For instance, during the Prayers of the Faithful there is an intercession to Mary, the mother of Jesus, that prays for those who have left the Church. This prayer is a rallying cry to the congregation about the urgency to get people back together in a united faith for goodness and salvation under God. Catholicism seeks to include as many members as possible, and for them to remain faithful to its teachings. With its core beliefs, the Nicene Creed is an agent for communal religiosity.

The text of the Creed expresses unity repeatedly. From the very first line, Catholics express a belief in “one God” who brings them all together under His sovereignty. This divine

Father is also responsible for creating the entire world, “all things visible and invisible,” so the Catholic connection to God in turn unifies believers with all His other creations as well, even those which do not identify directly as Catholic. The Father’s Son also has a unifying role in the Creed, as “one Lord Jesus Christ,” reinforcing God as the only ruler at the highest level, lord of all. Jesus in the Creed also brings chronology into the idea of unity, seen in the following line: “he will come again in glory / to judge the living and the dead.” Everybody who has ever lived, even if they are no longer in this earthly world, remains under divine judgment. Jesus will act as the sole judge for all, uniting everyone in a shared fate of eventual holy trial. Regardless of whether somebody is Catholic or not, the cosmology of the Creed shows that God’s divinity unites all people. But the Nicene Creed does still include an extra source of unity for those who are professed Catholics, stating that their religious bonds centralize around their joint belief in “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church.” Lastly, along with these explicit markers of Catholic unity, the implicit textual significance of the Holy Trinity and its three-in-one quality also strengthens this point. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all united as one God, “begotten” and “proceed[ing]” from each other despite being distinct persons on their own. This theme of unity in the Creed’s text compliments the unification of its ritual actions.

Approaching the Creed as a ritual helps to clarify its influences when the unity of this text passes into performance. The liturgical practice not only reinforces the themes of a unified Catholicism in the text itself, but also involves new relationships within the practicing church community. If the Creed were simply read silently by individual Catholics, its unifying influences would be far less impactful than they are when it is performed by a group. Whether it is spoken or sung, the act of verbalizing brings the Creed into lived experience (Van Dijk 2009, 6). Ritualizing the Creed gives the words more tangible substance, but it also makes the makes

the act itself a distinct entity apart from the actual text (Duranti 1997, 221). This means that the liturgical Creed both strengthens the unity of its text and derives unity from its practice.

That such an orthodox tradition serves to unite its participants is unsurprising due to the nature of religious rituals in general (Bell 1997, 144). Rather than focusing on the mere existence of unification, this chapter explores the multiple dimensions of unity that come out in a single performance of the Creed. First, speakers experience a stronger sense of community with their fellow participants in the liturgy, sharing their Catholic identity through group performance. The Creed also ritually connects speakers to the central institution of the Catholic Church, recalling its long history and widespread network through elements of traditionalism, formalism, and invariance in the liturgical practice. Lastly, the spiritual and sacred quality of the Nicene Creed supports the heavenly unity felt with both God and the deceased. Each of these modes of unity can be elucidated with examples from Prince of Peace Parish. But before delving into these modes, the relationship between religious unity and exclusion is an essential feature.

5.1 Unity and Exclusion

Unity facilitates cohesion within a group, but inclusion must also involve some level of exclusion as well. In the case of religious organizations, the faith of the collective is deemed correct and true, whereas other religions are not. In order to belong to the unified group, members must distance themselves from outside religions. Therefore, internal religious unity is defined by a shared identity that necessarily excludes external non-members. Catholics can be unified in their worship, values, and worldview, led by the orthodox teachings of the Church, but following this singular religious path sets them apart from other unified (and thus bounded) religions. Just one element, such as their description of God, excludes other faiths such as

Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and even other denominations of Christianity. Individuals from these non-Catholic religions could not truly be a part of the Catholic community without converting, since even though they can participate in the liturgy—there is no physical exclusion preventing attendance—they are not properly practicing the Catholic faith if they do not believe its theology and partake in its sacraments, especially baptism and Eucharist. An “us-them” dichotomy arises in which outsiders disrupt the unity of Catholicism, unless they become insiders by converting and following the same orthodoxy as their Catholic peers. The unifying features that define the Catholic identity do so in contrast to the features of these religious others. Yet although unity begets exclusion, this does not mean that such division must lead to antagonism or that there cannot be tolerance of other faiths, but anybody outside of a religion cannot be held to the same correctness as those in that religion.

Concerning the Creed, this divisive effect of unity means that professing the Nicene Creed consequentially excludes other religious worldviews. While there are plenty of other areas of disagreement between Catholicism and non-Catholic faiths (e.g. institutional organization, worship practices, political views), the Nicene Creed still contributes to the distinctions of what is Catholic and what is not, being such a strong source of unification. Believing and abiding by the Creed is a marker of Catholic identity. Even though nobody I interviewed at the Prince of Peace Parish regards their liturgical practice of the Nicene Creed as a major factor for belonging to the Catholic Church, this does not negate the significant role it plays in locating its speakers within the Catholic faith specifically. The Mass is already a definitively Catholic environment, and the Creed’s statement of beliefs directly addresses core concepts of Catholic cosmology. Also, the Creed said in Mass is a version associated directly with Roman Catholicism, since its wording has been decided by the highest authorities of the Church. Since the Nicene Creed is

also used by other Christian groups such as Eastern Orthodoxy, Anglicanism, and select Protestant branches, having a liturgical Creed administered specifically from Church leadership strengthens the bonds of unity among Catholics, but it also sets them apart from other Christians. With these strict characteristics, the Nicene Creed defines people's identities to be exclusively within the Catholic religion; yet at the same time, it can also affect separation between members of the church if they do not all follow it according to orthodoxy.

Historical examples demonstrate both internal division and how this leads to external exclusion. From the moment of its conception, the Creed has been used for the function of unifying Christians within a single Church-sponsored orthodoxy. Constantine's ecumenical council at Nicaea in 325 CE sought to bring together all the disparate forms of practicing Christianity and create a centralized system (including a common creed) that they could all follow as one. But to establish the Creed that would become the authoritatively correct statement of faith, those who disagreed with the dominant view of Jesus being divine as man were removed and anathematized as heretics (Boyarin 2004, 44). Arianism and Gnosticism became heresies rather than alternate forms of Christianity because there was now only one authentic Christian faith (Coetzee 2008, 218). The procedure of unifying the early Christian world directly opposed any possibility of alternative Christianities, at least for that historical moment; intramural variation became internally divisive and then externally exclusive.

This outcome from pursuing centralized homogeneity was repeated again in the Great Schism, since both Catholic and Eastern Orthodox institutions desired a purer form of Christianity that fit their own ideals (Constantelos 1982, 92). Again, the Creed's unifying influence was a contributing factor in this split, with each branch of Christianity having a distinct Creed, even though these versions are only separated by the Filioque Clause. Also, the Twelfth

Century counter-reformation inquisitions in Europe once again saw the Nicene Creed used as part of a systematic separation between faithful Catholics and heretical non-believers to be punished (“Spanish Inquisition” 2015). The Creed has had a continued potential for exclusive unity across history.

The current relationship between Catholic and Greek Orthodox Communities in Lewiston provides a contemporary example of exclusion connected to the Nicene Creed. Having attended multiple services in both Prince of Peace Parish and Holy Trinity Church, I am struck by the similarities in belief, tone, values, and liturgical atmosphere. Although Eastern Orthodox worship certainly differs in various ways from my Catholic traditions, such as the order of events and form of Eucharistic host, I personally feel that attending the service at Holy Trinity allows me to effectively honor and build faith with God. The more outwardly reserved tone and importance of ritual activities like the Eucharist and the Creed feel comfortable from my position as a Catholic, leading me to relate to a certain degree with the Eastern Orthodox faith. Also, the recitation of the Nicene Creed takes a similar form between both churches, with every layperson rising from their seats and facing the front to speak in assembled unison.

Yet despite their commonalities, these two branches of Christianity are highly separated. Eastern Orthodoxy is not present in the Prince of Peace churches, showing the implicit distance between them. Catholicism is less ignored at Holy Trinity, but only because its separation from Eastern Orthodoxy is made more explicit: they have pamphlets explaining the differences between the two faiths, and the people I spoke with addressed specific distinctions such as the slight alterations of our respective Sign of the Cross. Also, similar practices such as the Creed have enough distinct details to keep them separate in their respective institutions. So although the Nicene Creed was spoken with the same attitude and group atmosphere, the Orthodox service

used a special Byzantine tune, recited it bilingually in Greek and English, and saw the priest performing a different holy practice to prepare the Eucharist during the congregation's creedal performance. All of these factors are absent from a Catholic Mass, sharply dividing the two like-minded experiences. Each practice unifies its respective followers only. Such strong unity makes the churches seem self-contained, so that everything about their faith can be practiced from within each group. They are incompatible due to their own internal comprehensiveness.

Meanwhile, the norms of unification in Catholicism can also lead to internal exclusion. Those who noticeably stray from the traditional ritual form or challenge ritual significance can cause division in the Mass. Because the Mass is so strictly formal and regulated, most deviations from the orthodox take the inoffensive shape of abstaining from certain parts of the service or avoiding Mass attendance entirely, as opposed to disrupting liturgy with alternative religious practices. The same is true for the liturgical Nicene Creed. Nobody is called out for their deviation from the normal expression of the Creed, whether they refuse to take part or omit specific beliefs. These are the only forms of intentional deviance I have seen or heard of, but if somebody started defiantly saying different personal beliefs than the Creed then they would likely receive a group sanction from the people around them (Bell 1997, 71). This negative attention would instill a drive within the deviant performers to return to the orthodox participant behavior (Henn 2008, 12). Yet given the formal, rule-governed, invariable nature of ritual, such standout behavior is discouraged by the very tone and structure of the practice; participants are implicitly encouraged to give up their own voice for the group's tradition, or else not speak at all (Duranti 1997, 293). Since nobody is called out for silence and nobody dares say anything different,⁷ everybody is permitted to stand and follow the formal bodily conventions of the ritual,

⁷ Young children are the exception, and their disruptions will receive attention in Chapter 6.

participating to some degree even if they do not speak and identify as Catholic. Only through directly challenging the entire Creed with a starkly alternate performance, which is unlikely in the ritual setting, or having a large enough group present to all change the Creed slightly in their own united style, such as the historical example of the Filioque Clause, would any division be perceived at the level of practicing Catholics.

Yet while the Creed has a long history of exclusion-via-unity, the extent of this exclusion should be kept in perspective. The Creed may exclude people from being Catholic if they do not abide by its orthodoxy, but its practice is not as exclusive as that of Eucharist. Non-Catholics are not allowed to receive Catholic Eucharist at all, whereas non-Catholics are able to participate in the liturgical Creed to some degree. Similarly, baptism is much more exclusive than creedal recitation as well. Being baptized is essential for the ability to identify as Catholic at all, so those who do not receive it are absolutely excluded from belonging. Meanwhile, the Creed only affirms and strengthens Catholic identity by ritual statement, so its performance does not mark a singular divide in the way that Catholic baptism does. Today, the Creed is most exclusive by being a tangible marker of who is not Catholic and who is. This is a crucial characteristic of the Creed when considering unity and individuality, since it shows how the orthodox Catholic practice need not be as strict in reality as it is according to traditional ideals.

5.2 Becoming One with the Catholic Church: Initiation

In order to be unified with the group, one must first become a member of the group. This simple dynamic makes it impossible to speak of the Creed in isolation, for the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist are crucial for allowing the Nicene Creed to have such unifying effects. Both sacraments define Catholic identity most clearly out of any church practices, certainly more

than the Creed. As such, they are even more strongly unifying and exclusive than the Creed, although the Nicene Creed does allow for an expressive reinforcement of unity that significantly enhances, supports, and adds to these sacraments. Yet baptism and Eucharist directly influence the Creed as well, since the Creed's communal meaning differs depending on where the speaker is in terms of Catholic initiation.

Logically, the Creed is most exclusive for those who are not affiliated with the Catholic Church in any way, not even as catechumens hoping to join. At the times when they visit the church for personal reasons, such as supporting a loved one or simply being curious about the service, the unity among the actual Catholics will perceptibly leave them out.

The most complicated speakers of the Creed in terms of unity are the catechumens on the path to becoming confirmed Catholics. Catechumens are involved in the Catholic Church, and they can feel associated with the practices during Mass, but they are not yet Catholic. Similarly, candidates are those who were baptized at a young age but are still not confirmed adults of the Church. This means that they will have to undergo the sacrament of confirmation to declare themselves Catholic of their own choice. Catechumens and candidates are both in a liminal state in the eyes of the Church, being neither outsiders nor insiders, unable to fully identify as Catholic (Turner 1957, 302). When this group says the Creed, they can feel an affinity for its words and agree with its beliefs, and they can even partially engage in belonging and unity, but they are not as strongly grounded in faith by the Creed as are those who have established their faith officially. Also, the Creed plays an important role in the initiation process into the Church. Leading priest Fr. Greenleaf explained that for a minor rite in Lent, catechumens receive the symbol of the Creed by being addressed by the congregation speaking the Creed; in other words, they become the explicit audience and get closer to the Church by the creedal words and its ritual unity.

The trajectory of catechumens towards full Catholic belonging was apparent in a ritual I observed at Holy Cross Church. Young candidates underwent the Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens, taking vows which left them unconfirmed but still made them more included in the Catholic community. They each had to tell Fr. Greenleaf why they wanted to join the church. All six of them said they looked forward to “the sacraments” of the Catholic Church, and their answer to the follow-up question on what the sacraments offered them was “a path to heaven” for all but one, whose answer used different words but also meant eternal life. After their statements, they were all approved with their common goals and welcomed into the Order of Catechumens, in which they can share in worship of these key values and beliefs, notably the Creed, yet still cannot call themselves confirmed Catholic adults in the Church. This shows how the Church promotes unified motivations and priorities in Catholic development.

Lastly, those who have been baptized and confirmed Catholic are in the absolute in-group that experiences the full extent of unity available by performing the Creed. They belong to the Church properly, and as such their collectively orthodox words and actions with the Nicene Creed continually reestablish them as part of united religion. When unity among Catholics is discussed in the following cases of the liturgical assembly, institutional Church, communion of saints, and God’s leadership, this in-group of confirmed Catholics is the one to which religious unity is referring.

5.3 Group Unity: In the Moment

For members of the Catholic Church, saying the Nicene Creed together is a strong way to feel and express their sense of belonging to the religious community. The tangible and intangible union of all those present during the Nicene Creed’s practice at Sunday Mass are apparent for

those attending and participating in this ritual. I can attest to this claim from my own experience, and those I interviewed agreed that a connection with their fellow churchgoers is often clearly felt. Their feelings of intramural unity were especially notable when I asked them about how they felt during the liturgical Creed.

Lisa Daigle described how her experience of unity comes from feeling very present in the group, with a genuine sense of religious companionship and belonging. She feels connected with her fellow parishioners, due to active physical participation but also from the deep contemplation that the Creed inspires in her. Most celebrants of the Mass feel unity affectively, since they can directly witness how they are practicing in unison and recognize the connectedness transmitted by their group action. The body does not exist in isolation, but undergoes experience via constant exchange of personal, social, political, and religious affects (Schaefer 2015, 59). Daigle's emotional response to unity is natural, and it is the main way that being part of a united group is registered. Also, by thinking more pointedly about her feeling of liturgical connectivity, she gives attention to the unity and therefore makes it even more prominent in the moment. Dialectically, her emotional unity promotes her thoughts in the first place, since people's thoughts are directly influenced by their immediate affective state (Simecek 2017, 420). The emotional register of group solidarity leads her to contemplate what the practice of saying the Creed does for her faith, and she believes that it is valuable for contributing to the holistic Catholic life she leads and shares with those around her. The Creed does not typically evoke a strong emotional reaction, but it does still affect feelings of unity with both the textual topics of God and the church as well as the ritually collaborative fellow members of the Mass. Daigle's sensation of unity is an ideal example of how participants perceive their ritually united congregation and locate themselves within this unity.

Leading the Creed from the front of the Church, Fr. Greenleaf expressed feelings of unity that showcase the importance of the communal setting and others' performances when experiencing a unified congregation. As mentioned earlier, his engagement with the ritual depends on the people in the pews. He has to lead so many services that unless the congregation is invested in their practice of the Creed, he will not feel too much either. He always approaches the Creed respectfully and reverently, but not necessarily with strong spiritual emotions. To feel his faith bolstered by any particular performance, the entire congregation has to be moved by their expression of faith. Sometimes the topic of the homily can inspire a more vigorous rendition, as I witnessed after a talk about community engagement in Prince of Peace. Whenever the assembled churchgoers are noticeably heartfelt in their performance, Fr. Greenleaf feels more in his performance of faith as well. Regardless of whether a rendition of the Creed receives more vital expression or not, the interdependent influence of the priest and the congregation on each other—with the former inspiring their Creed with his homily and the latter impacting his emotional response—shows how consequential group unity in the moment of the Creed can be. The experience of individuals is directly related to the people surrounding them at this event (Van Dijk 2009, 7), so the unified link between Fr. Greenleaf and the people made his creedal worship partially determined by the others in the church. A single performance of the Creed is consequentially a product of group influence, too. Plus, the unity of the assembly can also be seen to include the clerical leadership, based on Fr. Greenleaf's personal account.

An interesting case dealing with unity at Mass is the group participation of Scott Vaillancourt. As the organ player, he cannot actually recite the Creed verbally, but he follows along with the words in his head. This is a different form of active participation, and he shows innovation to still make this moment of the Mass meaningful despite his unique role. Also,

Vaillancourt stays unified with the group by internally accompanying their performance, feeling connected to the Creed with them. The liturgical Nicene Creed is the locus around which the congregation's unity revolves, even if not all members follow it the same way. Vaillancourt's external practice on the organ in fact helps provide a common element of performance for the group to unify itself. His music does more for the practicing group than it does for the actual messages of the Creed, but it still highlights how the Creed unites all Catholics present no matter what their participation looks like.

The ritual characteristic of performance creates this sense of togetherness, since with its rule-governed script everybody is saying the same statement and therefore more connected by their beliefs. Even though they share these beliefs at all times, staying unified outside the Creed or even the liturgy due to collective Catholic worldview, the Creed is a special unifying moment because it makes these bonds of faith explicit (Duranti 1997, 307). The limitations of expression placed upon them by the ritual setting, which Maurice Bloch identifies as "formal oratory" (Bell 1997, 140), keep the attendants in a unified mode of speech during the Creed. At other times in their Catholic lives, they have the freedom to say whatever they want, even while this belief persists inside of them. However, in their performance of the Creed, Catholics must say what is prescribed. Words are supplied to everybody to ensure that they are saying the same thing, communicating the same meaning through the same practice. Through the common act of creedal performance, every Catholic churchgoer centers around the speech and is thus unified with the others via the central words of worship. This unity is true of any Catholic liturgy in general: "In its liturgical worship, then, the Church acts as one, since everything it does is done precisely as the action of the one Body of Christ...the single, unified expression" (Miller 1967, 931). As part of Sunday liturgy, the Nicene Creed becomes one form of this unified expression.

Aside from simply promoting their joined unity, the liturgical Creed is also instrumental in clarifying the shared Catholic identity of all those present in the practice. The Creed is a time when everybody comes together to assert an aspect of their identity that they share with all the other participants in the Mass—their religious integrity. The Nicene Creed is extremely straightforward, optimal for directly claiming the Catholic truths to which they hold. The faith of each person is strengthened and reinforced when they express their beliefs clearly with each other (Searle 1987, 465). The unity felt between the ritual participants enhances the textual beliefs in the Creed, as well as promoting the orthodoxy of Catholicism represented by the Creed. This unity helps define their Catholic identities according to the group experience of sharing formal tradition and central beliefs.

Deacon Daggett provided a relevant example of the performative unity promoting his Catholic identity when he said that the Nicene Creed is “people’s response to the homily.” He views it as a way for the group to acknowledge that they have learned from the priest’s lessons and deepened their faith, since as a foundational creed it positions the speakers as firm believers in the religion that has just been explained to them. They will apply what they learned because they *live* in Catholicism. Unity’s role here is the power it adds to their affirmation; even without the Creed as a response the congregation’s members could still learn from the homily, but their unified creedal statement helps hold them accountable for using what the liturgy of the word taught them to improve their relationship with the God and Church that they believe in. Another way to view creedal unity and faith formation comes from Vaillancourt, who stated that saying the Creed reinforces his belief structure, keeping him “rooted” in fundamental Catholic tenets. Having a group to regularly practice this faith-defining worship supports his own development

and maintenance of his religion. The quality of unity, coupled with its weekly frequency, make the Creed a means for continuous faith renewal and orthodox mindfulness.

An important note is that simply because the context of this creedal practice is communal does not mean that the individuals are necessarily connected as a single unit. There is certainly less agency in this ritual than there is in other life practices (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, 140), but creedal participants still retain some choice in their thoughts and acts. This relationship between the group performance and individual participation is a key theme for this thesis, since it shows that both sides of the relationship can be at work simultaneously and that collectivity in fact functions on a spectrum.

5.4 Catholic Unity: A Historical Institution

Another form of unity expands the scope of Catholic connections, involving the entire institution of the Catholic Church and everyone who lives under this global religion. Such a perceived is possible through the conceptualization of a Catholic imagined community. Even though it is “imagined,” that is not to say that the relationships to and among the community are not real—rather, they exist conceptually, outside the of physical connection (Anderson 1983, 6). The Catholics at Prince of Peace Parish will not meet every single other Catholic in the world, but they still feel part of the same religious community because they share the same religion, as well as the same set of sacred texts and practices like the Nicene Creed. The Creed is not solely responsible for feeling the broader connection with Catholicism, but its ritual invariance and traditionalism does contribute to the broader sense of unity inspired by the practice of a globally shared Mass. Additionally, its placement in the liturgy enhances its role of unification because it directly follows the more personal and less institutional homily from the priest. The orthodox

nature of the Creed makes its unity function at two levels: first, connecting speakers with the historical church, and second, with the current institutional authority.

Since the Creed's continued use in modern Catholic services is a direct result of the Church's traditional orthodoxy, participating in the ritual can provoke a connection to the past. Specifically, it inspires a unity between historical roots of the faith and contemporary practice, unifying Catholics across multiple generations. This unity supports the aforementioned solidarity among parish participants, showing a historical precedent for their connectedness. Ever since its origins, the Creed has been used to promote a single true faith for Christians, and then for Catholics; naturally, this same document would lead to people uniting through religion in modern times, too. Additionally, it bolsters feelings of belonging to the Church, providing a connection across time that makes people feel a part of an even larger group—not only is it an imagined community of the present, but of all Catholics who have ever been united by the Church from all times.

Significantly, credal participants do not have to know the precise history of the Creed to feel connected with the past of the tradition. All the interviewees understood the Creed's origins and historical development to varying degrees, but each of them still knew that the Creed was ancient and deeply connected to the basic early tenets of Catholicism. In fact, even those who did know more about the Creed's past like Fr. Greenleaf and Deacon Daggett considered it to have an almost timeless quality. The archaic cosmological subject matter and invariance in its ritual likely inspire this sense of age. With that feeling of the far past, unity with the historical Church becomes substantial for members of the Lewiston parish.

Karen McArthur voiced her appreciation for Catholicism's upheld history when she told me that her favorite part of the Creed was the line about the “holy, catholic, apostolic church.”

She finds that this quote nicely demonstrates the long history of the church, a fact which she finds comforting. Knowing that the Catholic Church is a well-established institution influenced her decision to ultimately align with this form Christianity, instead of the other branches she has known. The term “apostolic” from the creedal line above is particularly telling, since it goes all the way back to the earliest leaders of Christianity; whereas some Christian churches are newer and less reliant on historical precedents, the ability for Catholic rituals like the Creed to address such a foundational lineage of leadership is highly appealing for McArthur. The long history of study and thought in the Catholic tradition makes it the most trustworthy in her eyes.

Fr. Greenleaf views the pronouncement of the Creed as a symbol of the heritage of Catholic faith. It connects us with the timeless tradition of the Church, keeping us in line with what it has believed from its beginnings. From his priestly perspective, coming together for the Creed, and liturgy in general, means that everyone is symbolically affirming that they are part of the Church and that its tradition is also part of them. His insight touches upon the significance of practicing the Creed as visible affirmation, since traditions remain present through performance (Kaepler 2010, 269). These traditional beliefs are products of the historical Church, since the Creed developed from multiple ancient ecumenical councils, old conflicts, and early theology. As such, Fr. Greenleaf’s feeling that participants keep Catholic tradition alive combines the personal with the historical and creates profound unity between them. His insights also imply that the multigenerational influence of the Creed will effect unity for future Catholics, too.

The early leaders of the institutional church are still relevant to the performance of the Nicene Creed, since they were instrumental in establishing its current ritual form. When speakers of the Creed recall this legacy of leadership and position themselves under the unity of their ongoing Catholic institution, they give strength to the Church, validating its correctness in

upholding the old ways as a source of authority (Brasher 2017, 61). The language of the Creed also honors the past church through its prestige language, or speech that holds high status in a community due to its association with revered entities or institutions (Duranti 1997, 77).

Speaking the Creed aligns members of the Prince of Peace Parish with a formal, traditional set of language that is associated with the liturgy. This speech is highly regarded, being purposefully derived from the antecedent Latin of the Church. Therefore, the action of speaking amplifies the sense of connection to an esteemed past, reminding speakers that their words link them to a valuable, venerable Catholic heritage. Case in point, Lisa Daigle told me that she was pleased with the current English translation of the Creed said at church because it is as close as possible to the “original Latin” of the Church. The creedal ritual of Sunday Mass not only unifies present and past, but asserts the value of past in this relationship, too.

The current institutional leadership is relevant to the ritual as well. The Creed connects speakers, and entire parishes, back to the authorities in the Vatican who continue to make key decisions on how Catholicism is practiced in liturgy. Even though the Church is universal in its ideals, the cultural and national identity of its institutional center means that it promotes a western quality in its parishes (Jakelic 2016, 5). This stems from both the European formal traditions in its liturgy and the role of its active leadership, who determine that the distinctly Western Roman traditions pass on. Since Prince of Peace Parish is already located in a place of highly European-based heritage, the character of the liturgy fits well. The institutional unity then maintains and facilitates the continuation of the parish’s primarily white western identity. Unity with the leading bishops also influences people’s religious actions and beliefs. The modern Church as an institution asserts that to say the Creed is to “profess our faith,” making this creedal statement and its beliefs officially essential to practicing the religion. The leadership also has the

power to shape the ritual they promote, and Catholics follow the guidelines their institutional authority maintains. The reduced personal agency in ritual leads creedal participants to comply unquestioningly with the Creed's words, form, and tone (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, 132), and this ritual obedience is heightened by their unity with the Church's institution.

The power that unity supplies to Catholic institutional authority is present in Fr. Greenleaf's regular introduction to the Creed, when he tells the congregation that we are joining our own voices with others around the world, all saying the same Creed. First, the role of institution in promoting unity can be seen here, since the Nicene Creed is representative of the Church's ecumenically authorized orthodoxy (Edwards 2006, 558), and it is through the global utterances of the Creed that Fr. Greenleaf's description of Catholic unity rests. Then, on the other hand, this unity also supports the legitimacy of the Church. Having so many voices around the world saying the same Creed is evidence for Fr. Greenleaf that it is a significant document, and the members of Prince of Peace Parish should be grateful to be building their faith through such a popularly upheld practice. Similar to how the later ecumenical councils at Ephesus and Chalcedon strengthened the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed's orthodoxy while simultaneously using the Creed to justify their own power, the wide-reaching Catholic unity that Fr. Greenleaf points out before liturgical performance both promotes the impending parish rendition *and* the extramural institutional orthodoxy. Both the local and global-institutional spheres of Catholicism are united together by the Creed, while being mutually supported by the ritual, too.

The broader systems of a religion should never be kept separate from the local group activity, since specific ritual practices reflect wider systemic influences. Meanwhile, the religious systems at play in local spiritual actions are reinforced by each individual ritual. The reciprocal nature of ritual performance and ritual authority is essential to the form, experience, and

influence of any ritual (Ortner 1984, 155), and this especially applies to the Nicene Creed. Some of the larger issues at play in the liturgical Creed include the tension between the orthodox religion of Catholicism and the ever-increasing role of secular values in wider society, the patriarchal leadership of the Church, the Church's need to retain members and keep them active in the faith, and the Catholic ideal of keeping God as close to our personal lives as possible. In every one of these issues, the Creed is working to support the view of the Church. It promotes orthodoxy, its ritual inspires people to maintain a strong religious presence in their lives, and it upholds the masculine cosmology that reflects Church patriarchy. With the total control over authorship that ritual provides to religious leadership (Bloch 1986, 184), the Creed becomes a tool for spreading and maintaining the Church's values and power in their member's spiritual experiences. Also, ritual's limited form works in favor of Church authority as well, since everybody has to promote the same message and undergo the same unification around these ideas (186). The dialectical relationship goes as follows: the Creed reflects these long-standing orthodox goals supported by Catholic leadership, and as such aids the leadership in attending to these goals and prolongs them. Although there is also room for individual agency, the Creed primarily coalesces all Catholic performances to promote the same goals that will best support the traditional values of the Church.

In spite of this tradition, the Nicene Creed has still undergone changes in the makeup of its text and ritual. Religious rituals like the Creed are not isolated events, so they are influenced by major worldly changes (Henn 2008, 11). Alternatively, internal decisions or reorganization in the Church can impact even its most orthodox practices. The Creed has both coped with change and facilitated change, such as in Vatican II when vernacular became the common for its use in the Church, issuing in a new age of understanding while also reacting to this shift from Latin

(Faggioli 2016, 17). Prince of Peace Parish was affected by this sort of institutional intervention as recently as 2011, when the Latin version was re-translated to the English Creed said in the parish today. The Catholic Church can control the language and structure of liturgical practice, so it can use the power of ritual to ensure that Creed's format promotes its institutional values and leadership even in times of change (Brasher 2017, 66). Even though Church authority does not maintain an unfaltering order across time, it still upholds influence in the face of internal and external changes, reflected in practices like the Nicene Creed.

5.5 Spiritual Unity: The Dead and the Divine

Finally, performing the Nicene Creed creates unity between the Mass attendants and an even larger community beyond the worldly Church. This kind of spiritual bond unites the human sphere with supernatural elements that do not exist in the realm of secular life. Namely, the Nicene Creed links Catholic with their departed (i.e. the communion of saints) and with their God. Such a profound unity between humanity, the afterlife, and divinity is in fact a cornerstone of the religion as a whole, since in Catholic theology Jesus was both human and divine *and* his death opened the heavens to humans when they die (Burrus 2000, 88). The Creed actually explains this in its account of Jesus, but this unification extends past the textual into ritual practice. In terms of ritual, the acknowledged role of the afterlife and divine power in the Creed's content matter turns into sacred symbolism with the action of speech (Bell 1997, 157). Speaking of these beyond-human entities brings their spiritual reality to the front of the participants' minds, situating them as first-person subjects within the outlined beliefs of the Creed. The ritual behavior symbolizes the relationship between the Church's current living members and the Catholics who preceded them, and it makes immediately tangible this often underlying reality.

Meanwhile, the holy union between God and His people is also made explicit. Ritual-based symbolism brings together two or more separate entities for negotiation in this special space (Geertz 1973, 447), which creates a subjunctive outlook that lets them share a reality they may not have firsthand with lived experience (Seligman et al. 2008, 9) In the case of the liturgical Nicene Creed, this fusion of human, dead spirit, and godly spheres shows that they are truly united, even if they are sometimes perceived as distinct in daily life.

Beginning first with the union of dead and living, the Creed's ritual role of reinforcement causes it to serve as a weekly reminder of the Church's beliefs regarding the afterlife. The dead cannot be seen or heard, but their spirits are still there nonetheless, so the Creed recalls how its current speakers are not really set apart from the dead; as Catholics, dead or alive, we all share the same fate that is outlined in the Nicene Creed. Therefore, saying that we "look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come" resettles us in this form of unity based on the living and deceased's shared faith in these beliefs. Essentially, this unity stems from the Catholic concept of the communion of saints, which is the "spiritual solidarity which unites the faithful on earth, the souls in purgatory, and the saints in heaven" (Deedy 1986, 330). Solidarity is produced by a common experience of Catholicism, participating in its worship and doing good works on the religion's behalf. The communion of saints is an ideal example of Catholic unity, and the Creed's inclusion of the dead community brings it into association. However, the Nicene Creed never actually refers to "the communion of saints," as this line is one of the few that is *only* present in the Apostles' Creed. Still, the Creed does not reinforce and influence faith on its own, so both the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds should be viewed as means for recalling the significance of the communion of saints, even if only the prior one actually mentions the term

explicitly. Also, this point on the dead's continued importance is a key part of the Prayers of the Faithful, so the Creed has a role leading into this next act of liturgical unity as well.

Insights from members of the parish show how the Creed helps to highlight and maintain unity with dead souls and saints. In the area of teaching, Fr. Greenleaf uses the Creed to refer to topics like "the communion of saints" and recently incorporated "the resurrection of the dead" from the Creed into his homily. He values the Creed as a helpful tool for explaining these less earthly relationships because it is said every week. On a more personal note, Deacon Daggett shared that for him the most striking line from the Creed is the one used by Fr. Greenleaf about how we "look forward to the resurrection of the dead." When he engages with the Creed in Mass, the deacon will try to reflect on what it means, getting into serious subjects such as what comes after life. Accordingly, the Creed's affirmation that the present assembly of believers will stay united with each other and every other Catholic soul even through death, eventually overcoming it together, is a significant part of his faith. Lastly, when discussing the Nicene Creed with me, Lisa Daigle said that she has personally always resonated with the "communion of saints," even though this line is only in the Apostle's Creed. This shows how much the Nicene Creed is associated with the dead and what a powerful tool its practice is for promoting unity along these lines. The ritual quality of the Creed amplifies the text's messages about the communion of saints and symbolically upholds the unity between Catholic life and death.

Even more prominently than the connection with the dead, the act of saying these beliefs forges deeper connections with God. First of all, the liturgy in general is "human sign language of prolonging and containing Christ" (Miller 1967, 930), connecting the practicing Catholics with their divine spiritual leader. During this holy service, every member assembled at church is sacred, meaning that they are functioning in conjunction with the most important figures of the

Holy Trinity (931). The very human nature of those present is made closer to the divine by their continuation of the tradition of worship initialized by Jesus Christ; even if there is always an underlying tie to divinity, as expressed in the Creed, liturgical engagement makes the human a vessel for beyond-human sacredness at that moment. Since the Creed is part of liturgy, a divine quality is already cast upon the ritual for its dealing with sacredness.

Regarding the Creed itself, the subject matter alone leads Catholic participants to think about their God. By actively bringing into practice the issues of God's power, sacrifice, saving grace, universality, and interaction with humanity, those at Mass engage with the religious reality that they are intimately linked to the divine core of their faith. Similar to the way it does with the dead, the Creed's ritual action makes people directly situate themselves as being in unison with the text's discussion of divinity, stating that they "believe" in this Holy Trinity and that its divine force affects them as Catholics. God is clearly present in the Creed for performing Catholics (Ehrman and Jacobs 2004, 252), leading them to appreciate the Creed as a mode of spiritual betterment.

Lisa Daigle intently focuses on valuing and loving the Creed in order to make a personal connection with God and Jesus. She puts herself "into the place of a child of God," showing the familial community that comes with this kind of religion. Her dedication to making this Creed as much of a connection to Catholicism's divine leadership of heaven maximizes the Creed's potential for spiritual unity; without her focus the ties to divinity are still present, but they can be adjusted according to personal engagement, an idea that will become crucial for this thesis's discussion of individuality.

Along the same lines, Karen McArthur noted that during the Creed she often finds herself thankful that God is "one," as it states in the first line. Having a universal God that touches all of

the people and things on Earth helps make her spiritual connection to him stronger, not only because it allows her to focus all of her worship into one locus of faith, but also for reasons of unity. God is “one” with the universe, including the people he has created; practicing the ritual of the Creed brings to mind this essential relationship between human and divine, a cosmological unity expressed in reverent ritual terms. Having the liturgical Creed every week becomes a way to continually recall her love for the one God to which she relates. McArthur is supported in her sentiment one member of the Bates community who identifies with the parish. This Catholic individual told me that he would not always be mulling over the Creed as Daigle or McArthur do, but nonetheless he consistently feels a heavenly quality in the practice. After practicing the Creed, he perceives a solidified connection with God. These few examples represent the ways by which different people within the parish are all unified to God via the Creed, and therefore also connected to each other under his universal divinity.

Church language has ties to the sacred and divine, since it conveys a special connection with God. Latin serves this purpose in Catholicism (Anderson 1983, 15). The Creed’s translations are taken from Latin to respect this prestigious place for the Church’s language. Therefore, it does not have to be spoken in Latin to retain this divine quality, so every Mass at Prince of Peace Parish invokes God’s connection and communication with humanity during the moments of orthodox worship, such as the Creed. The text itself also has ties to the divine, since the Holy Spirit is said to have inspired the Ecumenical Councils (Boyarin 2004, 168). All these manners of unity with divinity serve as an ultimate source of solidarity among Catholics and reason for staying an involved member of the Church.

5.6 Conclusion

The unity in the Creed's ritual practice is meaningful for many reasons, but ultimately it all comes down to a matter of identity. Unity actually takes effects on groups because they are linked by a common aspect of identity, whether it is an attribute, value, or goal that links them. From the Nicene Creed comes increased awareness of being official members of the Church, an affirmation that they value Catholic beliefs, and a common goal of getting closer to God. These all comprise a group identity based on Catholic unity, prompting everybody to value this religious identity and support the Church from which it stems.

Unity has real consequences on worldview as well, affecting how people understand their religion, view their social networks, and the implications of the text's messages. Having a community that supports belief in the Creed can make this specific vision of faith seem more authentic, a part of lived personal experience, and thus directly relevant to the individual's life, at least while they are a member of the Catholic Church.

Chapter 6

Individual Experiences and Interpretations of Creedal Practice

When Catholics attend Mass, they join the group of fellow congregants and go through the service as a religious collective. Yet while their Catholic solidarity is undoubtedly a major part of their liturgical experience, they still participate in the service as individual persons with specifically unique backgrounds, outlooks, and interactions with the Mass. The simultaneous significance of belonging to the group and being a singular member of the church with a life outside the liturgy shapes the complex identities among the parishioners. Individuality complicates the unity of Catholic worship, and therefore adds a new dimension to the ritual performance of the Nicene Creed.

Even before considering the people engaging with the Creed in its ritual setting, bits of individualism are present in the actual text of this Catholic doctrinal statement. After the 2011 revisions to the Nicene Creed's English translation, the opening statement for each declaration of belief changed from "We believe" to "I believe" (MacMichael 2019). This revision switched the subject from collective first person to singular first person, removing the inherent unity among speakers that could be seen in the text alone pre-2011. Now, the beliefs expressed in the Creed belong to the individual reciting it, and are shared only through the context of ritual performance. The change towards individuality was noticeable for some Catholics at Prince of Peace Parish. For example, when she was first adapting to these changes, Karen McArthur did not agree with changing "We" to "I." Instead, she preferred the original textual unity, due to the high value that tradition and community have for her decision to be Catholic. Fortunately, McArthur eventually came to accept the alteration, finding comfort in the fact that at least all the congregants still say

it together. Her perspective reflects how ritual unity coincides with textual individuality to create a blended Catholic experience of the Creed. Similarly, elements of individuality from the Nicene Creed's ritual practice relate to its textual and ritual aspects of unity.

Another example of the Creed's individualistic nature working alongside its unifying qualities is its position in the Mass. Since the Creed directly follows the homily and concludes the Liturgy of the Word before commencement of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, it functions along with the Prayers of the Faithful to transition between these two halves of the Mass.⁸ Although there are traits of unity and individuality in both parts of the Sunday service, the Liturgy of the Word is generally more individualistic due to the priest's homily, whereas the Eucharist is far more unified in its holy sacrament. Therefore, the transition facilitated by the Nicene Creed progresses from individuality towards a greater degree of unity. This shift toward unity is aided by the ritual characteristics that promote group practice and institutional orthodoxy. However, the Creed also has notable individualized qualities to help move the congregation smoothly from the priest's solitary homily to the collectivity of communion. For example, the aforementioned first-person singular "I" make the transition less abrupt. The priest's homily often explains how the particular scripture readings of the day can be applied to the personal lives of Catholics today, so having the Creed recall the importance of individual faith is beneficial to the flow of the Mass. Yet the Creed also serves as the first ritual after the scripture and homily in which the congregation can actively participate, preparing parishioners for more group rituals to follow. These simultaneous dynamics let the Creed fit nicely into its place in the Mass.

This chapter explores the Nicene Creed through the dimensions of demographic intersectionality with the Catholic identities of parishioners, performative variation, affective

⁸ See Chapter 4 of this thesis, pp. 90.

experience, ritual interpretations, and applications beyond the liturgy. Several elements of individuals' particular relationships to the Creed are apparent in my observations and discussions within the parish. These cases of individuality are compared to the forms of unity noted in the previous chapter, to demonstrate how even the orthodox ritual that is the Nicene Creed can become a space for personal agency in the Catholic religion.

6.1 Demographic Diversity

Demographics at the services I attended matter greatly when analyzing the Creed, since individual identity impacts mentality and performance. The way that a ritual such as the Creed is practiced can be influenced by the cultures, backgrounds, personal situations, and values of the people acting in that ritual (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, 135). Everyday life is never fully separate from moments of ritual (Ortner 1984, 155), so while the Creed may affect participants' identities by reinforcing an institutionally orthodox idea of their Catholic affiliation, their sense of self is never completely absent during creedal recitation. The fact that there is no liminal aspect to the Creed ensures that their identities remain continuous influences on the performance (Turner 1957, 302) Conversely, their lives outside the creedal performance are also informed by their participation, since views and behaviors from rituals remain relevant to how people understand their world and interact with others in everyday life (Bauman and Briggs 1990, 63). The Catholic worldview expressed in the Nicene Creed continues to impact participants after the ritual performance, and these all guide social decisions and relationships; therefore, the identities that people have and the communities to which they belong matter for the way the Creed affects them after the Mass is over and they return to their lives in Lewiston.

Prince of Peace Catholics come from diverse backgrounds and live very different lives outside of the liturgy. Religion is just one aspect of their identities held in common, and the various other parts of their selves can influence how they view or live this religious component of ritualized creedal unity. For instance, their individual experiences are integral to who they are, and in this modern world they gain much of this experience from events outside the Catholic Church. Also, people's positions in society put them into complex roles regarding the people around them, which can vary depending on the person or situation with which they interact (Seligman et al. 2008, 46). These social roles help define who they are, creating a grounded yet dynamic identity. For Catholics, this means that their Catholic identity does not remain constant but rather defines them in junction with other roles and identifiers of the moment—being Catholic means something different depending on whether they are in Mass, at their profession, with religiously diverse friends, etc.

This aspect of identity relates to a comment from Scott Vaillancourt, with regard to his agnostic wife and other influences external to the Church, that he always stays Catholic but does not always show it. For him, the Nicene Creed and liturgy in general are a way to keep his Catholic identity an important part of his life, since he values this part of his identity and wants to express it regularly. Parishioners' Catholic identities remain influential throughout their lives, but the extent to which their religion affects them and is recognized for affecting them differs according to their situational social roles. These roles can be personal or based on identifying with larger groups such as ethnicity, race, and gender.

Although the Roman Catholic Church explicitly understands itself as a universal Church, some historical applications of Roman Catholicism also resulted in collectivistic traditions (Jakelic 2016, 2). The term “collectivistic” relates to the discussion of exclusive unity in the

previous chapter, since it signals group identification based upon a common national or ethnic heritage. This form of religion is prominently shaped by its members' sociopolitical solidarity. For example, Greek Orthodoxy is specifically linked to the locus of Greek cultural heritage, and although some of their diasporic communities may not have purely Greek members—such as the Holy Trinity Church's priest, a non-Greek Virginian—Greek Orthodox services differ in identity from other forms of Eastern Orthodoxy, such as Russian or Serbian (Jakelic 2016, 13). The same view can be applied to the dominantly French-Canadian heritage of the Lewiston parish, since people from this diaspora largely make up the church community. In Lewiston, being of French-Canadian descent is equated with being Catholic, even if this is not the religious reality for all members of the population. Likewise, attending Prince of Peace Parish enmeshes Catholics of any ethnic identity into a setting with noticeable features of French-Canadian culture, such as the stained-glass windows with French labels, history of the Church buildings, and the majority of parish leadership of this heritage.

However, the parish is certainly not homogenous, which bespeaks deeper complexity in the collectivistic perspective. Multiple other “western” ethnicities and European nationalities are represented in the parish community. The population of Irish heritage is especially substantial, as those from the traditionally Irish St. Patrick's Church dispersed across the remaining churches. Although no longer active, St. Patrick's is remembered by certain special events in the parish, such as the Irish corned-beef dinner offered to those who used to be part of that church. There are also a significant number of Latinx families attending masses. South Asians represent another ethnic group at the parish, whom I observed both as fellow laity in the pews and as leaders before the congregation, particularly the two Indian priests who preside over masses regularly. A final key demographic is African diaspora, likely comprised of more recent immigrant families.

So, although Prince of Peace Parish may have a traditionally preeminent white, Franco-Canadian culture, the actual collective body comes into the parish with diverse ethnic backgrounds and racial identities, thus approaching this parish culture with individual differences.

Similarly, while the history and institution of the Catholic Church uphold patriarchal views (Burrus 2000, 3), the practicing members at Prince of Peace are not all men under this system. Gender is a sociocultural construct, so the embedded role of language in culture and society makes gendered identity especially connected to traditional religious speech such as the Nicene Creed (Jule 2005, 12). Rituals, in general, often reflect gendered components (Mitchell 1998, 69), and the Creed's ritual is no exception, with its formal Mass setting led by male clergy before all people. As mentioned before, the masculine labels given to God and Jesus in the Creed's words add to the masculine character of the Creed. Participation in and appreciation of the Creed are not limited to only men, but there are no distinctly feminine components to its text or ritual; therefore, men and women may view it differently. As just one example, it was a woman I interviewed who said that the role of Mary was underplayed in the Creed. Yet, despite different perspectives, the shades of masculinity in the Nicene Creed are mostly accepted. Alternatives are not easy to produce in a preset gendered system (Jule 2005, 33) and, while they can still arise among Catholics, there is no noticeable variation in the Prince of Peace Parish during recitation. In my fieldwork, I only saw an alternative practice from one parish member I interviewed, but this does not mean that they must remain limited to a small scale.

Sexual identity is another a key source of consideration and discussion in the Catholic Church, for both clergy and laity. Priests remain celibate in their clerical positions, and the Church has a voice regarding lay sexualities too. For example, the Church's official stance promotes the marital union of men and women, which posits this relationship as the ideal but

neither condones nor condemns orientations outside of heterosexuality (USCCB 2020). This is the dominant perspective in the Catholic community, but individual members can hold differing opinions on inclusion and acceptance (Mitchell 1998, 83). However, the Nicene Creed does not directly address sexuality, so only as far as its ritual reinforces orthodoxy does the Creed connect to this aspect of identity.

Lastly, details of religious identity differ as well. While some of those present in the church may not even be Catholic, even those who are Catholic and thus unified by their group performance can hold different roles and status within the religion. Their level of involvement in leadership matters, along with the amount of time that they or their families have spent in the Church. Everyone may be saying the same Creed, but those more well-established in the faith may be more inclined to state it by memory or feel deeper connections to its messages; even if the ritual performance holds meaning and involvement for all, individual Catholic identities can come into effect. The priest leading the Creed has the same fundamental relationship to its sacred practice as someone in the back pew, but their distinct Catholic identities cause them to have unique perspectives which affect their liturgical involvement.

Overall, the sensation of ritual unity produced by the liturgical Creed does not completely subsume the individual identities of those attending Mass. These personal social roles and cultural stances are intimately linked to the effect that creedal performance has on these parishioners: “however prescribed they may be, [rituals] are always linked to status claims and interests of the participants, and therefore are always open to contextual meanings” (Tambiah 1985, 125). Identity impacts how people relate to their faith, with individual views and positions that may differ from the orthodox ideal. This diversity is a crucial factor in defining the parish collective, for although their similarities in faith, practice, and home instill a felt belonging to the

Catholic Church, the parish members do not relate to their religion or each other in the same way due to their respective positional perspectives. The identities of those who inform and facilitate the following insights on individuality warrant consideration, since their subjective ideas and actions about the Creed stem from a personal place that includes more than just Catholic ideals, ritual formality, or creedal orthodoxy.

6.2 Variations in Group Performance

Although performing the Creed involves group unity, the congregation may be united differently depending on the how their performances relate to each other. While they are all partaking in the same ritualized recitation together, the precise details of their performances do not exactly align, and this allows for a diverse collectivity rather than the homogenous grouping of perfect unity: “performance produces variable forms of social identity which connect with different levels of community and collectivity” (Hughes-Freeland and Crain 1998, 9). Several inconsistencies among parishioners’ creedal engagement at Prince of Peace Masses illustrates how individual variation coexists with the unity of their ritual performance.

First of all, everybody is physically separate during the performance. Even though they are connected vocally and spatially, there is no interaction between bodies. This lack of physical interaction differs from other major rituals in the mass: families and friends hold hands during the Lord’s Prayer, churchgoers shake hands for the Sign of Peace, and the Eucharist involves physical exchange of the host. The Creed is not unique in its lack of interpersonal contact, since the Penitential Rites and Prayers of the Faithful share this quality, but this ritual characteristic is invariable and immediately provides a degree of individuality to the liturgical Nicene Creed. Linguistic anthropologists like Duranti recognize that bodily actions and group positioning allow

expression that supplements verbalized words (1990, 150), so the lack of touch in the Creed underscores how each participant speaks for themselves. Corporeal individuality represents how they are also developing their own personal faith with the Creed.

This insight also connects to another theoretical idea from Duranti: the aforementioned participant frameworks. These frameworks recognize that, even in a group setting, every member of the speech community also their own stance in relation to the others (1990, 307). For the liturgical Nicene Creed, people hold distinct roles in two ways. First, they come from different backgrounds and identities, as discussed in the previous section. Duranti explains that the perspectives of differently identifying participants shapes the way that they interact in shared speech acts; in the Creed, they add solidarity to each other's spoken faith, and their identity can affect how much solidarity they feel with their fellow parishioners or how impactful this sense of communal support is for their faith. Second, social relationships often form according to verbal interactions (Duranti 1990, 308), and the univocality is the model for interaction provided by the Creed. However, this ideal model is, in fact, more complex in reality due to the way that Catholic voices during creedal ritual do not all sound as one.

Not everybody performs the Creed the same way, displaying the most tangible form of individuality for this liturgical practice. From what I observed during my several Masses at Prince of Peace, parishioners differ in the body language they display, as some stand upright and face straight ahead during creedal recitation whereas other may shuffle their feet, slouch, or fidget their head or limbs more restlessly through the ritual. Another variable feature is the volume at which each speaks or sings, with those who are louder seeming to have more zeal in the expression of the Creed, although the quieter parish members can still have deep attachment to the Creed or a stronger affinity for subdued formality.

Another difference in performance is the choice people make to read the Creed from their Mass booklets or to recite it from memory, and each decision reveals how people feel they fit into the participant framework of the Mass. Amongst other reasons, those who read could do so either so that they can ensure a correct recitation, or because some priests encourage the congregation to turn to page 6 and read along; this reflects how they care about following along with the Mass properly but may not have a close enough comprehension of the Creed (or its recent English translation) to show their faith independently. Meanwhile, those who recite without reading have a similar dedication to professing their faith and engaging with the Mass correctly, but they do so in a way that also lets them show their knowledge of the Nicene Creed—this could be for status or out of habit. One last mode of difference is how some have a delayed start to their recitation, coming in later than the priest and others. This attribute of the parish performance highlights the priest's role in these participant frameworks, since the level of congregational togetherness correlates to how clear of an introduction the priest provides for the Creed after his homily.

At first glance, all the minor inconsistencies among those performing the Creed may seem insignificant. They do not create major disruptions, still allowing for the same tone and structure to be maintained in the communal worship as a whole. However, these individual actions and behaviors *do* matter. The participants' humanity comes through in these behavioral differences, demonstrating the practical view of Bourdieu that ritual norms cannot completely define or control participants. Also, any ritual practice reflects larger systems of influence (Ortner 1984, 152), so the practices of Catholics during the Creed can serve as indicators for how much authority the institutional Church and theological orthodoxy have in the parish. The small inconsistencies demonstrate that this authority is not absolute, leaving room for more intentional

agency with the liturgical Creed. Lastly, using Van Dijk's concept of context models reveals that every little detail can impact how people encounter a ritual like the Creed in the future or the way they recall it after the moment has passed (2009, 7). Even if these performative variations occur unconsciously, they can still influence the way that people view the Creed and differentiate them from the group to some degree.

Additionally, the ability to perform sacred rituals well is often associated with being a legitimate, respected member of a given religion (Mitchell 1998, 80). Even though performing the ideal way has benefits for personal standing in the Catholic community, people still move off; this reality is likely due to the kind of ritual it is, since the liturgical Creed does not put members of the congregation on display. Instead, the majority of people stare straight ahead, look down, or read the Creed in their missal; only rarely did I observe somebody else paying attention to other participants during the Creed. One would have to be intrinsically motivated to perform this ideal, so those who do likely value a traditional practice of Catholicism, whereas those focusing less on performing with utmost formality and norm-abidance appear less interested in this orthodox aspect of the Catholic religion.

It was at a mid-September service that I first witnessed somebody staying silent during the Creed, a middle-aged man who read along with the missal but never actually spoke, and after that day I observed the same phenomenon occur multiple other times. There are a number of possible reasons as to why this man's participation was non-verbal, and the range of these speculations reflects how the particular dispositions of individual attenders of Mass influences their engagement with it. The reason for the man's silence could have been physical, as he may have had a sore throat or some other medical condition preventing him from speaking. Or he may have joined the Mass to see what it was like, either out of curiosity or interest in joining the

religion, and then felt uncomfortable saying such a bold statement of faith. Or he could be a fully capable member of the parish, and he only kept silent out of a personal preference—on other Mass days, he might even speak the Creed regularly. This kind of silence is an extreme form of deviation that removes the person from any active participation with the expression of the Creed; however, this man and others who stay silent during the Nicene Creed are still able to participate without performing. They add to the credal audience, contributing to the performers' credal experience, and their own faiths can also be shaped by simply being present in the moment of ritual (Schaefer 2015, 14). They can still feel the connection with others in the church, and to the religion. However, they may not relate to the actual Creed itself if they are not actively professing their belief in its tenets, and the connection they feel to the church is less unified than for those who partake in the performative utterance.

Although many people who stray from ritual conventions do not have great intentionality behind their behavior, some alterations to Nicene Creed performance can be strategic, engaging with the Nicene Creed in a pointed manner that resists tradition in favor of personal views. The interviewed parish member who refuses to say “men” in the phrase “For us men and for our salvation,” mentioned earlier in Chapter 4, fits this model. Comaroff and Henn both note this strategy of resistant agency in their theoretical studies. The omission of “men” resists the dominant gender forces of masculinity, altering the performance to thoughtfully express ideas not found in its authoritative significance. This variation addresses systematic issues that extend beyond the Catholic Church, even though they are also present in the Church's language and leadership. In a different way, Scott Vaillancourt's unusual participation from behind the organ shows a kind of individuality that aligns with the Creed's traditions instead. He stays involved

with a different performance. These distinct variations show the strategic ways performance can be used.

On the other hand, the individuality displayed by children is not strategic, but these actions have an impact on the ritual nonetheless. Their deviations usually disrupt the Creed more than any of the previous examples because they are noticeably louder and not in line with any semblance of formality. Also, they force their parents or other family members to break from the traditional performance of the Nicene Creed to attend to them during this ritual, hindering their ability to feel the same sense of belonging or religious significance in the moment as are other Catholics in the church. Children's disruptions are a fantastic example of how the authority of ritual only exists in the minds of the participants. While it is true that ritual qualities such as formality and rule-governance are external factors compelling Catholics to conform to the conventions of the Creed, the only limitation on their agency is their mental concern over social and religious consequences. Out of respect for their church, belief in the Creed, or fear of making a scene, nobody I saw during my fieldwork seriously disrupted the performance aside from children, but if they had wanted to express ideas different from the Creed's, adults could do so through a dramatic ritual disturbance (Henn 2008, 12). Although children's outbursts come from a lack of concern for consequence, their ability to disrupt the liturgical Creed in fact demonstrates how consequential forceful performative agency could be.

As a final point on performative variation, some unorthodox renditions of the Creed may be practiced by groups rather than completely independent individuals. Sometimes the entire assembly at mass will perform differently than the standard liturgy because an alternative will be used to replace the Nicene Creed. For example, on November 3rd there was a baptism during mass, so the Nicene Creed was not used. However, the sacrament still included the elements of

creedal beliefs through its initiation vows. Everybody renewed their baptism in the church by expressing their belief in God as Trinity (i.e. Father, Son, and Spirit), the afterlife, a community of saints, and salvation. Still, this was more based on the Apostle's Creed than the Nicene Creed. Also, while the baptized was the center of attention, everybody came together around this shared moment. A new member entering the faith community provides not only an opportunity for renewal of vows to the church but also of the sense of togetherness. Issues outside the church's control may also alter group performance, such as technology failures or medical crises that affect one or more people. Even if a particular group is unified together, any given particular performance may not align with historical or institutional ideals.

6.3 Experiencing a Moment of Faith

While parishioners' physical performances differ at individual levels, their affective experiences of creedal performance are especially personal. The commencement of the Nicene Creed in liturgy produces distinct emotions in those assembled at Mass. Affect sways emotions through interactive means, based on the relationship between social actors and their current environment (Schaefer 2015, 176), so the context in which Catholics find the Creed leads to their feelings at that moment. Since everyone at Mass encounters the same ritual setting for the Creed, that is, it takes place in the same location, with the same words and format, and among one group for all, the liturgical Creed evokes similar affective sensations among the Catholic participants. However, interaction is dialectical, so rather than creating absolute unity of affect experience for all in the worshipping assembly, the Creed affects people according to their *own* perspectives and predilections coming into the ritual. Individualized emotions shape the experiences, making people feel contemplative, reverent, moral, righteous, excited, disinterested, etc.

The importance of experienced feelings derives from their ability to influence the way that people regard and reflect upon these rituals, when they make the ritual meaningful to them in their own worldview. At a neurological level, affect directly influences how information is processed and emotionally categorized by the brain (Simecek 2017, 419). Essentially, when a ritual produces an affect within someone, that person acts and thinks according to these personal feelings towards the ritual. The Nicene Creed and its straightforward messages are made more complex by the presence of affect: “religious creeds [should] be understood as including not only what one believes and does, but what one knows and feels with respect to the divine or sacred [and the] consequences of such belief, action, knowledge, and emotions” (Winter 1977: 11). Together, these ritual dimensions shape personal identity both inside and outside the ritual (Seligman et al. 2008, 14), and affect plays an integral role in ensuring that individuality will be present even in the midst of a highly unified and authoritative setting, like the Nicene Creed.

When asked how they feel during the Creed, parish members shared a range of different emotions that demonstrate the variety in possible experiences.⁹ One younger member of the parish said that even though saying the Creed so frequently can get monotonous, she always tries to think about what it means. Her emotional reaction is weakened by the Creed’s regularity in mass, with its unchanging and formal ritual template, so to stay engaged with this worship she stays invested mentally. Karen McArthur also actively considers what it means, with feelings of fostered interest and awe at its cosmological significance. Like McArthur, Lisa Daigle feels thoughtful reverence while expressing the Creed, but it manifests more for her as adoration than

⁹ Recall from Chapter 4 that the weekly repetition of the Creed and formal setting limits the degree of emotion felt by ritual participants. However, they can still feel a range of sentiments about the Nicene Creed and Catholicism, even when their performance is fairly subdued.

contemplation. While these affective experiences are similar, they are also dependent upon these members' individual feelings towards the Creed and Catholicism.

The importance of personal situation in matters of affect is clear in Deacon Daggett's usual interaction with the liturgical Creed. Although he loves the Catholic Mass and feels close to the tenets of the Nicene Creed, the ritual form of the liturgy can get in the way of his personal reflection and appreciation of the Creed's performance. Specifically, when everybody else is concentrated only on the Creed, Deacon Daggett has to prepare for the Prayers of the Faithful which he will lead next in the Mass. Although he can participate somewhat, the deacon told me that he finds it difficult to focus, especially at the end of the Creed, due to his other duties as a liturgical leader. His experience perfectly exemplifies why an individual's relationship to the shared context of ritual Creed recitation influences their affective feelings toward this practice. Still, Deacon Daggett is able to overcome the emotional difficulty of his performance to still feel awe for various moments in the Creed, both during and after its practice in Mass.

Affect is the part of experience that acts beyond thought, and the affect produced by Prince of Peace parishioners' interactions with the liturgical Nicene Creed influences them as individuals in a group setting. The external similarities lead to internal affects with shared elements of reverence and contemplation, but this same internality also allows for unique differences in the particulars of these emotions. Similarly, the internal aligns with individuality in the way that Catholics interpret their ritual practice of the Nicene Creed.

6.4 Personal Values and Understandings

Catholics interpret the Nicene Creed to better understand their lives, their world, and their God. Even though everybody reciting the Creed utters the same beliefs, the meaning that they

derive from these performed beliefs can vary (Brasher 2017, 65). Different parts of the Creed stand out to people as more important—the Holy Spirit, the communion of saints, the Virgin Mary, the holy catholic and apostolic church, and the Trinitarian God are all subjects that stood out as personally significant by the Prince of Peace Catholics I interviewed. They value some beliefs from the Creed more than they value other sections, and not necessarily in ways that align with the Nicene Creed’s historical emphases. The Creed was originally used to stress the consubstantiality of Jesus (Coetzee 2008, 218), yet for several individuals there are other creedal details that seem more essential than this. Alternatively, some Catholics advocate for viewing the entire Creed as a holistic text of equal significance throughout, a viewpoint expressed by Lisa Daigle. These multiple points of focus among parish members reflects individuality in the form of agency, as they have the power to develop their own thoughts on this orthodox ritual.

The ability to focus on particular aspects of the Creed is influenced and enhanced by the ritual format in which it is encountered. Rituals may act as texts with sociocultural messages engrained in their practice, but how ritual participants view these messages depends on personal or situational circumstances (Geertz 1973, 95). The Nicene Creed expresses a textual cosmology when spoken in Mass, but the practical reading of this ritual text varies due to differing foci and sensibilities. The direct interaction and immersion provided by the formal performative setting allows for self-reflection (Bell 1997, 75), which helps Catholics think deeply about the Creed and what it means to them in their individual lives. The perceptual frame of ritual also helps people recognize and accommodate their relationships with various religious entities, addressed via the ritual (Seligman et al. 2008, 46). The Nicene Creed involves Catholic matters such as the three persons of God, the Catholic Church, the saints, and the sacred scriptures. Prompted by the

ritual recitation, many parishioners focus on how they connect to these different entities in their religion, considering what associated roles they have beyond that of the believer.

Any personal interpretation depends on the background information an individual knows about the given subject. Drawing from the anthropological work of Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann, Alan Winter argues that “the role of a religious creed in the life of an individual is changed by the existence of a plurality of normative and cultural systems” (1977, 83). For the Nicene Creed, Winter’s point elucidates how Catholics’ comprehension of the Creed depends upon its relationships to social, cultural, and religious forces, ranging from inside the Church to external entities, as well as past and present development. For the most extensive perception of the Creed, Catholics should have some understanding of all these relevant forces. Given the expansiveness of such information, I only focused on the subject of the Creed’s history when comparing the amounts of background details known by those I interviewed.

The question posed to my interviewees plainly asked how much history they knew about the Nicene Creed, and each person responded with differing levels of familiarity. Most of them discussed the earliest ecumenical council at Nicaea, several mentioned that the Creed played a role in setting Catholicism apart from heretical views, and a few noted that it was developed over time through councils and key events like the Great Schism. A small number of parish members answered with historically inaccurate details, such as one person who said it had been formed to address Protestant issues. These varying levels of knowledge indicate how interpretations will differ due to simple differences in details informing their views. However, the perception of having knowledge is important for interpretive analysis as well. The most common response from interviewees was that they did not know as much about the Creed as they should. This self-aware response reflects how so many of the ideas and values cultivated by individuals about the

Creed come from them applying their own experience of the Creed to their own lives is far more personal than the large-scale systematic analyses of scholars like Winter, even though these systems are still influential in their Catholic lives.

In addition to having individualized points of focus and different background information with which to understand them, Catholics' interpretations of the same creedal beliefs can also be distinct in the way that they make these beliefs meaningful to themselves. The statements made in the Nicene Creed are outright and straightforward, but their significance is determined at an individual level according to the reflective thought of those who speak them. Although these participants' interpretations are influenced by other Catholic texts such as biblical passages or other practices in the Mass like the Eucharist or homily, it is ultimately in their own minds that they decide how to process all these sources of Catholic belief and use them to find relatable meaning in the worldviews of the Creed (Ortner 1984, 146). This interpretive dynamic of individuality is demonstrated in the Prince of Peace Parish by the varying views held on what kind of God the Nicene Creed is showing in its text and practice.

Due to his clerical perspective, Fr. Greenleaf understands the Creed's representation of God in official terms, as the Trinitarian God of abstract theological mystery. The Nicene Creed clarifies who God is, but only partially: God is three persons in one, and He is intimately and powerfully related to humanity, but fully understanding this kind of divinity beyond worldly possibility. Fortunately, God has revealed Himself in the Catholic religion, allowing His followers to express belief in Him using this Creed. Fr. Greenleaf recognizes that the Creed is dogmatic, because that is how it is supposed to be: there is some disagreement among Catholics over what ideas and practices define Christianity, but the Nicene Creed includes the beliefs about God that are non-negotiable. Fr. Greenleaf's explanation of God is in line with the perspective of

Church authority, since he views the Creed as a means of faithful expression that should be used and treasured but not necessarily interpreted. With the vision of God in the Nicene Creed being an officially recognized holy mystery, he encourages trusting acceptance as the best show of devotion towards this God. However, Fr. Greenleaf did refer to the role of individuality and agency when he said that people can be confused about the Trinity's "consubstantiality, as long as they realize that it's a part of the mystery." This sentiment notes that parishioners should be positioning themselves to the Creed and its view of God in such a manner that will render it significant to them. Confusion and realization can take different forms in people, even if they all stay true to the Church's view of "mystery" (Tambiah 1985, 133). Additionally, Fr. Greenleaf acknowledges room for personal understanding of God, which he demonstrates in his thoughtful homilies, although for him it does not arise in the Creed.

Based on these observations and analysis, it is important to note that Church authority is not against individual interpretation. Rather, the Church strives for a large collective following and promotes a unified goal among its members for salvation via loving devotion of God. These ideals are expressed through the liturgical Creed, but devout Catholics can still use the Creed to better relate to God, even if they cannot comprehend the holy mystery behind this divinity.

Musical director Scott Vaillancourt's conceptual relationship with the Nicene Creed's depiction of God exemplifies how interpretive involvement can make its beliefs meaningful at an individual level. Vaillancourt draws from the official Catholic perspective by locating in the Creed an awe-inspiring multifaceted God, the mysterious creator of the world. He explained that God is infinitely complex and wonderful, and that it is through liturgical practices like the Creed that God is reflected to Catholics. This understanding is an example of orthodox ritual acceptance (Kelly and Kaplan 1990, 125), with the power to relate to God in the hands of the

Church with its authority over the Mass. However, Vaillancourt then commented that God was born as Man, as Jesus the Trinitarian Son, so that we humans can better relate to Him. He asserted that the person of Jesus makes God more personal in our Catholic understanding, so in spite of the mystery that the creedal Trinity involves, it also has elements of familiarity (Bell 1997, 78). The Creed explains that Jesus became human and then died for humanity in an act of salvific love, and Vaillancourt uses these beliefs to form his appreciation and closeness with God. His views on the Creed's God even extend to other parts of the Mass, as he noted that the divine are constantly brought closer to the congregation through worship, especially during the Eucharistic transubstantiation turning earthly bread into the Christ's body.

Similar to Vaillancourt, Karen McArthur also sees in the Creed a God with distinctly different persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. Yet she rationalizes these identities in a unique way that is separate from the previous two examples, comparing the Holy Trinity to human identity for purposes of relatability. When McArthur explained her views to me, she used an analogy that God being "three-in-one" is similar to every person having different roles in life, referring to the example of someone being a father, husband, and son at the same time. While her explanation puts the Trinity of the Creed in more understandable terms, it likens divinity to humanity in a way that differs from the unimaginable mystery upheld by the institutional Church's. McArthur does not go so far as to equate human and divine persons, and she highly values the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church, but nevertheless her reasoning demonstrates an individuality separate from the unifying authority of the orthodox model. This personal perspective is also evident in her stronger association of God with the Father, more than with the other two divine persons. McArthur knows from the Creed that Jesus and the Holy Spirit were preexisting consubstantially with the Father, yet even so she still thinks of the Father first when discussing God.

However, she does not see Him as just an “old man painting,” and she credits the Nicene Creed as one reason for her to look beyond such depictions. Her rejection of the image that God is an elderly man reflects her agency to see God in a way that supports her, particularly her identity as a woman (Hughes-Freeland and Crain 1998, 8). All of these ideas came from her own mind and are products of individual thoughtful engagement with the Creed.

When asked what kind of God she sees in the Nicene Creed, Lisa Daigle immediately responded, “a God so loving that He is willing to give every part of Himself to us.” This idea adds new unique meaning to the classic understanding of the Trinitarian God, because Daigle’s mention of “every part” implies that all three persons of the Holy Trinity are devoted to their love of humanity. God having three persons gains powerful impact when they are all seen to be working for the same goal of love, even though only one divine person might seem sufficient. This Trinitarian dedication supports the dimension of unity in the Catholic Creed, but it also arose from the individual creative mind of Lisa Daigle. She showed individuality again in her interview when she confided that the Holy Spirit is particularly significant for her own faith formation. Daigle expressed far more interest in the Holy Spirit than the interviewees discussed above, making the orthodox vision of the Nicene Creed still distinct for her.

All of these parish members noted the orthodox Trinitarian God in their explanations of the Creed, but their understandings differed by finding significance in particular details of His divinity. Through their unified involvement with shared ritual practice of the Creed in the same parish, they still provided distinct interpretations of the God at its center. The individuality was shaped by their varying background information on the Creed, along with particular identities and experiences; these features were amplified in the thoughtful interpretive processes used to comprehend the Nicene Creed through the lens of their own lives (Simecek 2017, 421). Other

parts of the Creed are available for interpretation as well, such as the Catholic Church and the afterlife, creating further means of individuality in the liturgical Creed.

Several Catholics in Lewiston do not contemplate the Nicene Creed as substantially as those described above. If they do not attend Mass regularly, they will be less inclined to think about this summary of their faith, since they will not actively engage with its beliefs in the same ways that they would in church. Also, even those who do recite the Creed at Mass can simply go through the motions, saying words without thinking. This kind of relationship to the Nicene Creed simply accepts it as part of the faith, which is more closely linked to superficial unity; a lack of personal reflection also puts people on terms with institutional authority, since they accept the orthodoxy only because it is given to them by the Catholic Church (Brasher 2017, 61). However, minimal interpretive engagement is still a personal decision, one that is set apart from approaches of focus and significance, so these less contemplative positions contribute to the diverse individuality with the liturgical Creed.

Such a variety of personal meanings relates to the way that Christians value interiority as a central part of their religious lives. Ritual practice is an integral part of the Catholic Mass that exists in the realm of tangible behavior, but ideal religiosity relies on an inwardly directed Christian devotion: “The chief element in worship must be interior in order to ensure the integrity and sincerity of its external forms” (Miller 1967, 930). A Christian focus on internal righteousness is displayed in the New Testament of the Bible. For example, the biblical passage of Matthew 19:16-23 sees Jesus explaining that to receive eternal life in Heaven one must abide by the Commandments—laws about proper behavior—but beyond this one must also maintain complete devotion to God and the faith of Christ. Inner piety should accompany any practice done for Christianity. Similarly, the Nicene Creed is a product of these influences while also

retaining some emphasis on tangible actions. Upon establishing the Nicene Creed as an orthodox summary of Christian faith, early Church leaders expressed that “debate was no longer considered appropriate for the determination of Christian truth” (Boyarin 2004, 193). However, while the beliefs in the Creed may be absolutely true for Catholics, they do not remove the need for faithful reflection and meaningful interpretation of this orthodoxy. This external-internal dynamic also connects to the theme of unity and individuality: external forms are unified, while internal piety is informed by collective beliefs yet deeply personal.

6.5 Different Applications

A major benefit of interpreting ritual individually is the gained ability to apply its practice and messages to personal life. Catholics use the Creed to develop their own faith, with ritual agency that helps them negotiate their roles and identities as members of the Church. The act of ritual helps participants manage their ambiguous social or religious roles (Seligman et al. 2008, 62), to appreciate how various aspects of their identities coexist. The Nicene Creed does the same for Catholic participants, showing different roles that they have in their Catholic religion that can function together under the same self-affirming Creed. For example, God is both an “almighty” supreme being and one who died “for our sake” to offer salvation for humanity. There are multiple relationships that can be forged between the Catholic speakers and God, and none of them are static or even mutually exclusive—as subjects to a divine ruler, as indebted to a savior, as central to God’s world, as tiny parts of a greater cosmos, as essential members of a heavenly family. The ambiguity involved in these beliefs ties into individuality. Even though there is a confident affirmation of belief, and hence a belonging to the Catholic group identity,

the way that this identity is perceived and lived is not automatically established by ritual performance and in fact leaves room for differing approaches among practitioners.

The most individualistic application of the Creed is its use among Catholics to develop personal faith, which serves as their self-identity in the religion. The understandings they have of the Nicene Creed help them navigate Catholic life beyond the liturgical context in which their ideas form. Even though rituals are often viewed as special moments set apart from normal actions, they are not totally separated from the rest of their participants' lives (Tambiah 1985, 126). Rather, rituals are an integral part of cultural experience and remain relevant outside of the immediate ritual setting, due to the agency of participants to frame their actions and choices with the experience (Seligman 2008, 7). In short, the ritual of the Nicene Creed can affect Catholics' lives like any non-ritualized experience can, providing a widely influential mode of individuality. I asked my interviewees what impact the liturgical recitation of the Creed has on their faith outside the service, and each response to this open question varied from the others.

Fr. Greenleaf finds great personal meaning in the Creed because it is "a symbol of our faith." He sees the Creed connecting Catholics with the timeless tradition of the Church and keeping them in line with what has been believed from the Church's beginnings. He stresses that coming together for the Creed means more than what is performed superficially: symbolically, Fr. Greenleaf sees himself and his fellow Catholics affirming that they are all part of the Church. Likewise, this tradition is also part of them. Partaking in rituals lets people apply its ideas and experiences to their lives outside the ritual, but perceptions of authority promoted by ritual also shapes how this external agency works (Henn 2008, 10). Fr. Greenleaf reflects this complex relationship of unity and individuality in practice, explaining how Catholics actively make Church traditions a part of their lives.

Karen McArthur claimed that the act of saying the Creed in liturgy does not affect her life outside the Mass. She does not personally feel any significance in the ritual itself. However, McArthur does not disregard that the Creed as unimportant, saying that the actual beliefs do impact us. Her view is that Catholics should constantly live in a state of prayer, and creedal recitation just acts as a refresher. McArthur indirectly acknowledges that the ritual matters, but only because it is a moment when the beliefs come to her mind. If it were not in this format, she would see the Creed as exactly the same level of importance. Initially, she did not know what to say about the liturgical performance of the Creed, but with her background experience of its ritual practice she was able to clarify them. She used this as a strategy to bring her ambiguous views on the subject to the forefront, while keeping them ambiguous for herself at the end (Seligman et al. 2008, 55). Her basic consumption of the liturgical Nicene Creed as simply a given part of her religion allowed her to express her own beliefs about religiosity and faith to me (Hughes-Freeland and Crain 1998, 7), determining where she stands on the matter and how she lets it impact her life.

Other members of the congregation expressed similar ideas that the Creed is important for the way it builds their Catholic religiosity. Deacon Frank Daggett asserts that the Creed acts as a reminder of the faith, which will subconsciously influence his daily life and ministry. Scott Vaillancourt claims that saying it reinforces his belief structure, keeping him “rooted”. This is similar to Deacon Daggett’s insight, but Vaillancourt is referring to the core of his religious beliefs as opposed to the deacon’s overall lived identity in the faith. Lisa Daigle asserts that just saying the Creed will lead to an epiphany with the Holy Spirit. Every time she says it, God becomes more prominent in her everyday life. These three parish leaders view the importance of

ritual creedal practice for boosting personal faith and religious competence (Ortner 1984, 52), with an awareness for its consistent impact on their Catholic identities.

One additional Catholic member I interviewed claimed that the Creed never affected him outside of Mass. He said other prayers away from liturgy, but not the Creed. This lack of creedal application keeps it entirely located within the ritual setting. But even though he does not acknowledge using it beyond the Mass, it certainly shaped his understanding of God and his relationship to the church, which pops up in daily life whether intended or not. Ritual life and personal life can never be kept completely separate (Bauman and Briggs 1990, 79).

One more application of the Creed is its pedagogical utility. Fr. Greenleaf uses the Creed to refer to topics like the communion of saints, and just recently he connected the “resurrection of the dead” in his homily. Similarly, Deacon Daggett also keeps the Creed in mind when he is writing a homily. He does not want people to just treat the Creed like routine, but to really think about it and apply it to their lives. In prison ministry program, Deacon Daggett explained that they talk about scripture and then say the Creed together, and he feels strongly that this combination of religious education and orthodox ritual is reformatory for the inmates. For these clerical teachers, the practice of the Nicene Creed is a helpful tool because the repetition of the ritual means that Catholics say it every week and should be familiar with its ideas.

Also, Lisa Daigle’s vision of faith formation moves beyond the Creed in isolation and puts it into context with not just some parts of Catholicism but the entire religion. Every part of Catholicism has profound personal meaning for those who look to see it, and the Creed helps people learn to appreciate God in all parts of the faith. Daigle sees this personal growth of faith as particularly essential for catechumens, especially in this modern world where everybody is so busy that unless they directly make a connection with Jesus they may never develop their faith.

Her sentiment reflects the type of agency described by Comaroff that notes rituals as special ways to assert one's stance against a social climate that disagrees.

The Nicene Creed has meaning that applies beyond the conventional liturgical setting of its ritual informs the way that parishioners identify themselves with God and Christianity outside the Mass, but their liturgical practice inspires and rejuvenates this faith with its group solidarity and formal weightiness. The ritual performance of the Nicene Creed influences the members of the congregation both during and after the Mass, so the range of its influence is impossible to quantify assuredly. Still, the agency that Catholics have to live their faith both within the Church community and the increasingly secular environment of the United States (Tambiah 1985, 133) certainly draws some strength from the Creed's assured application.

6.6 Conclusion

The main idea of this thesis is that unity and individuality run through the Nicene Creed of the Roman Catholic Mass with a dialectical, intertwined relationship. Any insights about the Nicene Creed from these past three analysis chapters have started from the premise that its liturgical performance occurs in the form of a group ritual. The Creed has a role in connecting the personal homily of the priest to the orthodox rituals of the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and this role exemplifies how the Creed involves both unity and individuality. The congregation performs the Creed as a collaborative unit, but not everybody's performances are identical. The group performance inspires sentiments of solidarity *and* personal significance. In vocalizing the Creed's messages, the ritual participants share in the traditional values of faith, connecting to Catholic spirituality and Church institutions. These messages, however, can be interpreted and applied in unique ways depending on the individual. Lastly, the Creed reinforces a Catholic

identity, but religion is just one aspect of selfhood, so this creedal Catholicism can differ across participants of varying gender, race, ethnicity, family, and so on.

Even the small selection of Masses and interviews presented by this thesis supports these conclusions about the Creed on the spectrum of collectivity. Hearing the voices of more Catholics may reveal more specific details about how unity and individuality influence churchgoers via the Nicene Creed, but the main idea that both the collective and the personal shape the complicated reality of creedal participation remains confirmed. Although an ideal Nicene Creed for Catholicism would only promote the orthodox experiences and interpretations of the Church, personal agency complicates the matter in reality.

Conclusion

The Nicene Creed is just one part of the Catholic Mass, which is only one hour of the week for only one form of Christianity, which is only one religion out of many in an endlessly diverse human world. However, for me and my fellow Catholic believers, the Creed also goes beyond that one hour of Mass and defines the entire cosmos, and its ritual performance situates us personally within shared worldviews. The Nicene Creed is simultaneously a small part of our lives and a major truth of our existence, and I believe that degree of significance it has for each of us depends on how we have been shaped by global Church doctrine and practice, local experiences of Catholic identity, and our own preferences for worship and lived belief.

In my own case, I found the Nicene Creed important enough to study deeper with this thesis. Before I started on this line of scholarship, I had already memorized the Creed and would frequently recite it in a personalized set of prayers for spare moments. I focused on the words more than the performances, but in a way I still created my own private ritual derived from the far more common liturgical format. This personal example encapsulates the levels of influence cited above. I only knew the Creed due to attending Mass throughout my entire life, and this reality was only possible from the global institution of Catholicism continuing those services. At a local level, the sense of religious significance I felt from my parish prompted me to learn the Nicene Creed by heart and practice it on my own time. My personal preference for expressing my faith with predetermined prayers also led to this choice of the Creed for my prayer set. When I professed the Creed in this unusual context, speaking alone in a soft voice, I still directed my words towards God. In my mind, this unorthodox execution of an orthodox statement effectively communicated my faith, but it was entirely dependent upon my Catholic background and former

experiences with its liturgical ritual form. The place that the Nicene Creed holds in my life comes from the Church, my parish, and myself, and these differing scales of unity and individuality are inseparable in their joint influence.

Final Thoughts

On History

The Creed may be timeless for many Catholics, but the orthodox statement of faith has actually gone through multiple changes to become what it is today. The precise words spoken at parishes like Prince of Peace are not the original form of the Nicene Creed, so its practice depends more on a perception of tradition and correctness than an actual continuation of purely divine text. This history captures the way that its ideological significance stems from a Catholic acceptance of the authorized Creed as the right thing to do, simply because it is. This does not diminish the impact that the Nicene Creed has on practitioners' beliefs and identities, but the reason that the Creed can influence them so is due to its accepted orthodoxy.

Additionally, history reveals how the Creed has been the subject of much disagreement among Christian communities. In the ecumenical councils that formed this sacred statement, some perspectives were removed due their differences from the Creed, and the Nicene Creed became orthodoxy due to its dominance over other versions of a cosmological Christian worldview. The Great Schism also exemplifies separation over creedal disagreement, dividing Catholicism and Eastern Orthodox Christianity. When Catholic congregations recite the Creed on Sundays during modern times, they are supporting one side of a centuries-old controversy, even if it is an absolute truth for them. The Nicene Creed's history of development and disagreement illuminates that it is not as static and stable as it appears at first glance.

On Ethnography

The method of fieldwork I utilized relied on a blend of detailed participant-observation and lengthy interviews with members of the Prince of Peace Parish. These methods ensured that I would be able to remark upon the experience of reciting the Nicene Creed while also hearing how other Catholics at the site view the liturgical Creed from their own unique positions in the religious community.

While the methods of learning about the Creed ethnographically may have been sound and useful, there was some demographic dissonance between the people I saw in church and the members I was able to interview. Although those involved as both clergy and laity at the parish come from multiple different identities and backgrounds, my interviews were almost entirely with Catholic adults who identified with the dominant cultural influence in the parish: French-Canadian. Ideally, I would have liked to have spoken with more people of color and younger members of the congregation, which would have been particularly helpful for my themes of unity (across difference) and individuality (with more unique examples).

Being a scholar-believer helped me better empathize with the people I interviewed, and I was able to supplement my year of deliberate fieldwork with twenty additional years of Catholic experiences from my life. Since my position aided my representation of the people, practices, and beliefs in my study, I consider the added challenges of navigating conflicting interests well worth the effort; also, my stance prompted additional critical thinking.

On Ritual Theory

Ritual theories are well suited for studying orthodox practices because they provide guidance for recognizing both collective faith formation stressed and room for individual agency,

which often goes overlooked when discussing orthodoxy. As a scholar, I determined that the Nicene Creed was ritual-like before applying specific views in ritual theory for analysis. The wide array of theoretical stances included under the broad heading of ritual theory cover multiple elements that can be found in ritual, although not necessarily exclusively in rituals. For instance, the areas of linguistics, power dynamics, symbolic interpretation, and affective context are all present in practices outside the ritual setting—e.g., any typical daily conversation between friends could also be analyzed with ideas from these various theories. However, within ritual these topics tend to take certain shapes that make them ideal for having a theoretical background to start from. The qualities of ritual influence each of these areas, and their theories reflect this influence by using particular ideas to approach rituals specifically. Ritual theories expedite the process of theoretical application by directly addressing particularities about subjects with ritual-like qualities, but that is all.

On the Spectrum of Collectivity

Unity and individuality are two interlocking principles that exist as two extremes on a continuous scale of conformity and independence for people engaged in any particular belief, event, or practice. Almost all cases of such engagement involve elements that both unite *and* individualize people, even if one factor seems more dominant than the other. This is certainly true of orthodox rituals like the Nicene Creed, which appears far more based upon unifying the participants than letting them assert any individual approaches to the credal practice. Unity in the Creed comes in the form of connections among those reciting the Creed, the ritual linking the congregants to the institution of the Catholic Church, and the performance promoting unification between humanity, divinity, and spirits of the deceased. At the same time, the Nicene Creed

involves individuality based on how people perform it, what their affective experience of it is, how they interpret and apply it according to their personal faith, and how their particular identities situate them in relation to the Catholic traditions the Creed represents.

In fact, unity and individuality mutually impact each other, since a unified group arises from the role of each single person gelling in relation to the others', and any individual perspective will be somehow influenced by the mindset of the group. By focusing on the combined effects of unity and individuality, rather than only considering *one* of these features in the Nicene Creed, this thesis analytically shows that the Creed involves religious authority and religious agency from its position between these two principles. This model for collectivity is one of the key scholarly contributions from this thesis, and it can be applied to religious and cultural practices to avoid oversimplified dichotomies of unity and individuality.

Further Ideas

My thesis on the Nicene Creed serves as an example for how religious orthodoxy allows for individual agency within its authoritative unification. I stress that it is an example, one which offers an analytical model that can be applied to other orthodox rituals. However, to apply the main idea of a spectrum of collectivity to phenomena aside from the Nicene Creed in Catholic Mass, I highly recommend a careful consideration of how that cultural or religious practice compares to the specific case of my own fieldwork.

On a related note, this thesis can also help inform further research on the subject of the Nicene Creed, for scholars intending to use different methods, theories, and ethnographic examples. There are many ways to interpret the Nicene Creed and its effects on those speaking it in a Mass setting, and some may be more appealing or relevant to other people than mine have

been. My thesis does not prove anything about the Creed, Catholicism, or ritual performance, but instead tries to convince readers that my interpretation is valuable (Geertz 1973, 71). The main findings of this thesis highlight the importance of personal identity, creativity with faith, and parish community as intertwining factors in developing an understanding relationship with Catholicism via the Creed. However, other studies that focus on different areas of the Creed are extremely helpful in constructing a more complete picture of this Catholic phenomenon, whether they complement or contradict my own interpretations. Studies are meant to work off each other, supplementing the perspectives and interpretation, so I hope that the thesis I have presented here will be of use to further scholarship, in any capacity.

I do not presume to make any suggestions for how the Catholic Church should change the Creed or its ritual performance. However, there are two minor efforts that could improve parishioners' connection to the Creed at both personal and communal levels. First, when priests such as Fr. Greenleaf firmly introduce the Creed, parishioners appear more involved in their performance. An introduction stimulates physical engagement with the Creed before it starts, helps everyone begin together through the leadership of the priest, and inspires laity to ponder its words during and after the performance. Second, at a much higher institutional level, the masculine language used for the congregation in the line "For us men and for our salvation" could be altered to read "For us people..." or simply "For us..." Since the current translation is based upon older connotations of "men" meaning humans in general, re-translating the word to something more gender neutral would be an understandable move for wider inclusivity. I recognize that issues on the gender of God are also related to this point (Jule 2005, 33), but that theological debate goes beyond than what this thesis covers, and should be left for other works on Catholicism to critically approach in greater detail.

Finally, this thesis still leaves several questions unanswered. *How does be a believer-scholar impact anthropological religious studies?* Having just gone through this position myself, I can honestly say that I do not know, although I am sure my particular subjectivities led me to approach ideas about God and faith differently than a secular scholar would. *Where does the Nicene Creed precisely fall on a spectrum of collectivity?* Again, I cannot answer with exact figures, and even though I would propose that it is more unifying than individual, other theorists may disagree. *What will the future hold for the Nicene Creed?* I have no way of being sure, but I do not foresee it losing its place in the Mass, and I also believe that it will change slightly according to new developments, just as it and its translations have been in the past. The vague persistence of continuity and change will certainly accompany the Nicene Creed through future times, bringing with it amorphous trends of unity and individuality.

With this thesis, I have provided readers with a deep case study on the Nicene Creed and its use in Catholic liturgy. I hope that readers now have a better understanding as to why the Creed matters in the Catholic faith, as well as an appreciation for how complex something as seemingly straightforward as a statement of blunt beliefs can be. This same level of complexity exists in all religious, social, and cultural phenomena. Multiple influences penetrate, refract, and rebound off any aspect of human life. For the Catholic Nicene Creed, I chose to focus on just two of these influences, to show how the apparently oppositional forces of unity and individuality in fact have an intertwined relationship. I used ritual theory critically and symptomatically to best highlight the ways in which the Nicene Creed contained elements on either side of the spectrum of collectivity, neither remaining purely unifying nor entirely individualistic in any aspect of its influence. Now that the mutually-sustaining and dialectically-informing dynamics of this spectrum have been shown on the Nicene Creed, the simplicity of its orthodoxy is no longer a

given. Yes, there is a correct way to view God according the Church and its Creed—but rather than a strict line of dogma, orthodoxy in reality takes the form of an intricate web, catching and holding together so many distinct ideas that all I feel I can do is add more threads of analysis when it is time to say “I believe.”

References

- Albanese, Catherine. *America: Religions and Religion*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Corporation, 1981.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections On the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London, UK: Verso Publishers, 1983.
- Asad, Talal. "Anthropology and the Analysis of Ideology." *Man, New Series* 14, no. 4 (1979): 607-627. doi: 10.2307/2802150.
- Badcock, F. J. "The Council of Constantinople and the Nicene Creed." *The Journal of Theological Studies* 16, no. 62 (1915): 205-225.
- Bauman, Richard and Charles Briggs. "Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life." *Annual Anthropology Review* 19 (1990): 59-88. doi: 0084-6570/90/1015-0059.
- Bell, Catherine. *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*. New York: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1997.
- Bloch, Maurice. "The Social Determination of Ritual." In *From Blessing to Violence: History and Ideology in the Circumcision Ritual of the Merina*, pp. 1-11. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.
- Brasher, Stephen H. *A Rhetoric of Divinity: The Nicene Creed as Disciplined Discourse*. University of Minnesota, 2017.
- Boselli, Goffredo. *The Spiritual Meaning of the Liturgy: School of Prayer, Source of Life*. Translated by Barry Hudock. Collegeville, MN: Order of St. Benedict, 2014.
- Boyarin, Daniel. *Border Lines: The Partition of Judeo-Christianity*. Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2004.

- Burrus, Virginia. *“Begotten, Not Made”*: *Conceiving Manhood in Late Antiquity*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.
- Castelli, Elizabeth A. *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2004.
- Coetzee, C. F. “Gnosticism, Church Unity, and the Nicene Creed.” *In die Skriflig* 42, no. 2 (2008): 207-233.
- Constantelos, Demetrios J. *Understanding the Greek Orthodox Church: Its Faith, History, and Practice*. The Seabury Press, 1982.
- Deedy, John. *The Catholic Fact Book*. Chicago: The Thomas More Press, 1986.
- Duranti, Alessandro. *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Edwards, Mark. “The First Council of Nicaea.” *The Cambridge History of Christianity* 1 (2006): 552–567. doi: 10.1017/CHOL9780521812399.
- Ehrman, Bart and Andrew Jacobs. *Christianity in Late Antiquity: 300-450 C.E.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Faggioli, Massimo. *The Rising Laity: Ecclesial Movements Since Vatican II*. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2016.
- Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- Greer, Rowan. *Broken Lights and Mended Lives: Theology and Common Life in the Early Church*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1986.
- Henn, Alexander. *Ritual in an Unstable World: Contingency, Hybridity, Embodiment*. New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2008.
- Hocart, Arthur M. *The Life-Giving Myth, and Other Essays*. London, UK: Methuen Publishers, 1952.

- Hughes-Freeland, Felicia and Mary Crain, eds. *Recasting Ritual: Performance, Media, Identity*. London, UK: Routledge, 1998.
- Jakelic, Slavica. *Collectivist Religions: Religion, Choice, and Identity in Late Modernity*. Routledge, 2016.
- Jule, Allyson. *Gender and the Language of Religion*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005
- Kaepler, Adrienne. "Interpreting Ritual as Performance and Theory Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania 2010 Distinguished Lecture." *Oceania* 80, no. 3 (2010): 263-271.
- Kelly, John and Martha Kaplan. "History, Structure, and Ritual." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990): 119-150, doi: 134.181.124.234
- Lias, John James. *The Nicene Creed: A Manual for the Use of Candidates for Holy Orders*. Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1897.
- MacMichael, Brian. "The New Translation of the Holy Mass: The Creed, Part 1." *Catholic Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend*. Last modified 2019. <http://www.diocesefwsb.org/Data/Resources/814db8e48f430c57449fe00375d64206-Article-8-Creed-Part-I.pdf>.
- Massa, Mark and Richard Viladesau. *World Religions: A Sourcebook for Students of Christian Theology*. Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1994.
- McGrath, Alister E. *Historical Theology: An Introduction to the History of Christian Thought*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 1998.
- Miller, J. H. "Liturgy." In *New Catholic Encyclopedia, Volume VIII*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1967.
- Mitchell, Jon. "Performances of Masculinity in a Maltese *Festa*." In *Recasting Ritual: Performance, Media, Identity*, edited by Felicia Hughes Freeland and Mary Crain, 68-92. London, UK: Routledge, 1998.

- Ortner, Sherry. "Theory in Anthropology since the Sixties." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 26, no. 1 (1984): 126-166, www.jstor.org/stable/178524.
- Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. *Structure and Function in Primitive Societies: Essays and Addresses*. New York: The Free Press, 1952.
- Reeves, Andrew. *Religious Education in Thirteenth-Century England: The Creed and Articles of Faith*. Boston: Brill Publishers, 2015.
- Ross, J. Elliot. "The Roman Catholic Religion in Creed and Life." In *The Religions of Democracy*. New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1941.
- Schaefer, Donovan. *Religious Affects: Animality, Evolution, and Power*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.
- Searle, Mark. "The Rites of Christian Initiation." In *Between and Between: Patterns of Masculinity and Femininity Initiations*, edited by Louise Mahdi, Steven Foster, and Meredith Little, 457-470. La Salle: Open Court, 1987.
- Seligman, Adam B., Robert Weller, Michael Puett, and Bennett Simon. *Ritual and Its Consequences: An Essay on the Limits of Sincerity*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Simecek, Karen. "Affect Theory." *The Year's Work in Critical and Cultural Theory* 25, no. 1 (2017): 418-435, doi: 10.1093/ywcct/mbx022.
- Tambiah, Stanley Jeyaraja. *Culture, Thought, and Social Action: An Anthropological Perspective*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985.
- Tentler, Leslie. "Catholicism in America." In *The Columbia Guide to Religion in American History*, edited by Paul Harvey and Edward Blum, 321-337. New York: Columbia University Press, 2012.

Turner, Victor. *Schism and Continuity in an African Society*. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1957.

Van Dijk, Teun A. *Society and Discourse: How Social Contexts Influence Text and Talk*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Ware, Kallistos [Timothy]. *The Orthodox Church*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964.

Winter, J. Alan. *Continuities in the Sociology of Religion: Creed, Congregation, and Community*. New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1977.

Woods, David. “‘Veturius’ and the Beginning of the Diocletianic Persecution.” *Mnemosyne* 54 no. 5 (2001): 587–591.

“History.” *Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland*. Last modified January 2015.

<https://portlanddiocese.org/diocese/history>.

“Prince of Peace Parish.” *Prince of Peace Parish*. Last modified March 2020.

<https://princeofpeace.me/>.

“Spanish Inquisition.” *New World Encyclopedia*. Last modified October 15, 2015. [https://www.](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Spanish_Inquisition&oldid=991350)

[newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Spanish_Inquisition&oldid=991350](https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/p/index.php?title=Spanish_Inquisition&oldid=991350).

“Love and Sexuality.” *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops*. Last modified January

2020. [http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/love-and-](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/love-and-sexuality/index.cfm#communion)

[sexuality/index.cfm#communion](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/love-and-sexuality/index.cfm#communion).

Appendix: Christian Creeds

The Nicene Creed - 2011 Catholic English Version

I believe in one 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.

Historical Developments of the Nicene Creed

Council of Nicaea

325 CE

We believe in one God, the Father, almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten from the Father, only-begotten, that is, from the substance of the father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things came into being, things in heaven and things on earth, who because of us humans and because of our salvation came down and became incarnate, becoming human, suffered and rose on the third day, ascended to the heavens, will come to judge the living and the dead;

And in the Holy Spirit.

But as for those who say, “There was when he was not” and “Before being born he was not” and that “He came into existence out of nothing” or who assert that the Son of God is of a different hypostasis or substance or is subject to alteration and change—these the Catholic and Apostolic church anathematizes.

Council of Constantinople

381 CE

We believe in one God, the Father, almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things came into existence, who because of us humans came down from heaven and was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became human and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate and suffered and was buried and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures and ascended to heaven and sits on the right hand of the Father and will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose kingdom there will be no end;

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and life giver, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is together worshipped and together glorified, who spoke through the prophets;

In one holy Catholic and apostolic church.

We confess one baptism for the remission of sins; we look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

(Translations from Ehrman and Jacobs, 2004)

Eastern Orthodox Nicene Creed - English Translation

I believe in One God, Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible.

And in One Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages.

Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father, through whom all things were made.

For us and for our salvation He came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became Man.

He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and He suffered and was buried.

On the third day He rose according to the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again with glory to judge the living and the dead. His kingdom will have no end.

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets.

In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

I expect the resurrection of the dead; and the life of the age to come.

Amen.

The Apostle's Creed - 2011 Catholic English Translation

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell. The third day He arose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

Amen.

Catholic Nicene Creed - John Paul VI Version, Pre-2011

We believe in one God, the FATHER, THE ALMIGHTY, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, JESUS CHRIST, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God. Begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father.

Through Him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation He came down from heaven: (bow) by the power of the Holy Spirit He was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate; He suffered, died, and was buried. On the third day He rose again in fulfillment of 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 dead. And His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the HOLY SPIRIT, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son He is worshiped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

<cdn.bartoncotton.com/images/uploads/4200_5311_large.jpg>