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Theological Observer

Pope Paul

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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

Pope Paul recently read a lengthy new Credo which he had prepared for the Roman Catholic Church to amplify the Nicene Creed for this day. The Credo is interpreted by some Roman Catholic "watchers" as a victory for more conservative elements within the church body. The following excerpts will be of special interest to our readers. We reprint them from the text which appeared in The National Catholic Reporter, July 10, 1968.

We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ by the sacrifice of the cross redeemed us from original sin and all the personal sins committed by each one of us, so that, in accordance with the word of the apostle, "where sin abounded, grace did more abound."

We believe that Mary is the mother, who remained ever a virgin, of the Incarnate Word, our God and Saviour Jesus Christ, and that by reason of this singular election, she was, in consideration of the merits of her Son, redeemed in a more eminent manner, preserved from the stain of original sin, and filled with the gift of grace more than all other creatures. Joined by a close and indissoluble bond to the mysteries of the incarnation and redemption, the Blessed Virgin, the immaculate, was at the end of her earthly life raised body and soul to heavenly glory and likened to her risen Son in anticipation of the future lot of all the just; and we believe that the Blessed Mother of God, the new Eve, mother of the church, continues, in heaven her maternal role with regard to Christ's members, cooperating with the birth and growth of divine life in the souls of the redeemed.

We believe in one, holy catholic, and apostolic church, built by Jesus Christ on that rock which is Peter. She is the Mystical Body of Christ; at the same time a visible society instituted with hierarchial organs

and a spiritual community; the church on earth, . . .

We believe in the infallibility enjoyed by the successor of Peter when he teaches ex cathedra as pastor and teacher of all the faithful, and which is assured also to the episcopal body when it exercises with him the supreme magisterium.

Recognizing also the existence, outside the organism of the church of Christ, of numerous elements of truth and sanctification which belong to her as her own and tend to Catholic unity, and believing in the action of the Holy Spirit who stirs up in the heart of the disciples of Christ love of this unity, we entertain the hope that the Christians who are not yet in the full communion of the one only church will one day be reunited in one flock with only one shepherd.

We believe that the Mass, celebrated by the priest representing the person of Christ by virtue of the power received through the sacrament of orders, and offered by him in the name of Christ and the members of his Mystical Body, is the sacrifice of Calvary rendered sacramentally present on our altars. We believe that as the bread and wine consecrated by the Lord at the Last Supper were changed into His body and His blood which were to be offered for us on the cross, likewise the bread and wine consecrated by the priest are changed into the body and blood of Christ enthroned gloriously in heaven, and we believe that the mysterious presence of the Lord, under what continues to appear to our senses as before, is a true, real and substantial presence.

Christ cannot be thus present in this sacrament except by the change into his body of the reality itself of the bread and the change into his blood of the reality itself of the wine leaving unchanged only the properties of the bread and wine which our

senses perceive. This mysterious change is very appropriately called by the church *transubstantiation*.

We believe in the life eternal. We believe that the souls of all those who die in the grace of Christ, whether they must still be purified in purgatory or whether from the moment they leave their bodies, Jesus takes them to Paradise as He did for the good thief, are the people of God in the eternity beyond death, which will be finally conquered on the day of the resurrection when these souls will be reunited with their bodies.

We believe that the multitude of those gathered around Jesus and Mary in paradise forms the church of heaven, where in eternal beatitude they see God as He is, and where

they also, in different degrees, are associated with the holy angels in the divine rule exercised by Christ in glory, interceding for us and helping our weakness by their brotherly care.

We believe in the communion of all the faithful of Christ, those who are pilgrims on earth, the dead who are attaining their purification, and the blessed in heaven, all together forming one church; and we believe that in this communion the merciful love of God and His saints is ever listening to our prayers, as Jesus told us: Ask and you will receive. Thus it is with faith and in hope that we look forward to the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.

Blessed be God thrice holy. Amen.