



# Theology Corner

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**“The Creed: “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 life of the world to come.”**

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We have now made our way to the end of the Creed. In these final two lines, we profess the four marks of the Church, our understanding of the effects of baptism, the resurrection of the body, and the belief in the afterlife (heaven, hell, purgatory).

We profess that the Church is *one* because its source is One. The Church does not possess unity of itself, but inasmuch as it derives its unity from God himself as its head. It can be said, then, that the Church is one by grace. We are one in **faith** inasmuch as that which we believe is one and the same. We are one in **hope** inasmuch as we are all strengthened in our one hope of attaining to our ultimate end – union with God in the beatific vision. We are one in **charity** inasmuch as we are all joined together in the love of God. This love of God is manifested in our love for one another by this gift of love that we receive from he who is love itself.

We confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins because baptism is a spiritual rebirth into a life of God. Just as we cannot be born naturally more than once, we cannot be born supernaturally more than once either. Through baptism, we become adopted sons and daughters of God, with our spirit being ordered towards him in order to receive God’s grace. This one baptism cleanses us of our sins and by the merits of Christ, removes our guilt and punishment from the Fall and restores us to a life of grace.

We also look forward to the resurrection of the dead (both of the soul and body). Surely, we are given a participation in the Resurrection of Christ, which is to say, that because of his Resurrection and Ascension, we too are able to rise to life after our human death. We believe that our soul leaves the body for union with God in heaven, but at some point, the body is also reunited with the soul. Why? Because it is of the nature of the human person to be both body and soul. We are not pure spirits like the angels, so in order to be truly human in heaven, we must be integral as both body and soul. Now, this is not to say that we will have a material body in heaven in the same way that we do now, but that we will be reunited with our *glorified* body. The glorified body will be our true body, but wholly incorruptible as St. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:53, “This perishable nature must put on the imperishable...”

This glorified body will be given to us in the “life of the world to come” which is what we refer to as heaven. What is the nature of this life of the world to come? Eternal happiness. We can be happy here on earth, but the happiness that we experience here on earth is incomplete. The manner of which we are happy here on earth is why happiness can often be fleeting. We know that true happiness consists in doing the will of God and living a life in a way that is consistent with how we were created to live. But our complete happiness in heaven consists of a complete union with God himself in the beatific vision. When we “see” God face to face, our intellects are enlightened by the light of glory and our wills are perfectly satisfied. As Augustine famously stated in his Confessions, “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.” This is to say, our desire is never fully quenched until we are united with who we were made for. This life of the world to come for which we anticipate in joyful hope, is life in abundant fullness – living with God, the source of which all life flows.