

Ten After Ten: Session 9: I Believe in One God

199. “I believe in God”: this first affirmation of the Apostles’ Creed is also the most fundamental...The other articles of the Creed all depend on the first, (and) help us to know God better as he revealed himself progressively to men.

200. The confession of God’s oneness... is inseparable from the profession of God’s existence and is equally fundamental. God is unique; there is only one God: “The Christian faith confesses that God is one in nature, substance, and essence.

201. To Israel, his chosen, God revealed himself as the only One...Through the prophets, God calls Israel and all nations to turn to him, the one and only God.

202. Jesus himself affirms that God is “the one Lord”... At the same time Jesus gives us to understand that he himself is “the Lord.” To confess that Jesus is Lord is distinctive of Christian faith. This is not contrary to belief in the One God. Nor does believing in the Holy Spirit as “Lord and giver of life” introduce any division into the One God:

We firmly believe and confess without reservation that there is only one true God, eternal, infinite and unchangeable, incomprehensible, almighty, and ineffable, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; three persons indeed, but one essence, substance or nature entirely simple.

203. God has a name; he is not an anonymous force. To disclose one’s name is to make oneself known to others; in a way it is to hand oneself over by becoming accessible, capable of being known more intimately and addressed personally.

204. The revelation that proved to be the fundamental one for both the Old and the New Covenants was the revelation of the divine name to Moses in the theophany of the burning bush.

205. God is the God of the fathers... He is the faithful and compassionate God who remembers them and his promises; he comes to free their descendants from slavery. He is the God who, from beyond space and time, can do this and wills to do it, the God who will put his almighty power to work for this plan.

206. In revealing his mysterious name, YHWH (“I AM HE WHO IS,” “I AM WHO AM” or “I AM WHO I AM”), God says who he is and by what name he is to be called... It is at once a name revealed and something like the refusal of a name, and hence it better expresses God as what he is—infinity above everything that we can understand or say.

207. God, who reveals his name as “I AM,” reveals himself as the God who is always there, present to his people in order to save them.

208. Faced with God’s fascinating and mysterious presence, man discovers his own insignificance... But because God is holy, he can forgive the man who realizes that he is a sinner before him.

209. Out of respect for the holiness of God, the people of Israel do not pronounce his name. In the reading of Sacred Scripture, the revealed name (YHWH) is replaced by the divine title “LORD” (in Hebrew *Adonai*, in Greek *Kyrios*).

211. The divine name, “I Am” or “He Is,” expresses God’s faithfulness: despite the faithlessness of men’s sin and the punishment it deserves, he keeps “steadfast love for thousands.” By going so far as to give up his own Son for us, God reveals that he is “rich in mercy.” By giving his life to free us from sin, Jesus reveals that he himself bears the divine name.

212. God is unique; there are no other gods besides him. He transcends the world and history. He made heaven and earth... In God “there is no variation or shadow due to change.” God is “He who Is,” from everlasting to everlasting, and as such remains ever faithful to himself and to his promises.

213. God alone IS... God is the fullness of Being and of every perfection, without origin and without end. All creatures receive all that they are and have from him; but he alone is his very being, and he is of himself everything that he is.

214. God revealed himself to Israel as the one “abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” These two terms express summarily the riches of the divine name... He is the Truth, for “God is light and in him there is no darkness”; “God is love,” as the apostle John teaches.

215. God is Truth itself, whose words cannot deceive. This is why one can abandon oneself in full trust to the truth and faithfulness of his word in all things.

216. God’s truth is his wisdom, which commands the whole created order and governs the world. God, who alone made heaven and earth, can alone impart true knowledge of every created thing in relation to himself.

217. God is also truthful when he reveals himself—When he sends his Son into the world it will be “to bear witness to the truth.”

218. In the course of its history, Israel was able to discover that God had only one reason to reveal himself to them, a single motive for choosing them from among all peoples as his special possession: his sheer gratuitous love.

219. God’s love for Israel is compared to a father’s love for his son. His love for his people is stronger than a mother’s for her children. God loves his people more than a bridegroom his beloved; his love will be victorious over even the worst infidelities.

220. God’s love is everlasting; “For the mountains may depart and the hills be removed, but my steadfast love shall not depart from you.”

221. God’s very being is love; God himself is an eternal exchange of love, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and he has destined us to share in that exchange.

222. Believing in God, the only One, and loving him with all our being has enormous consequences for our whole life.

223. It means coming to know God’s greatness and majesty.

224. It means living in thanksgiving: if God is the only One, everything we are and have comes from him.

225. It means knowing the unity and true dignity of all men: Everyone is made in the image and likeness of God.

226. It means making good use of created things: faith in God, the only One, leads us to use everything that is not God only insofar as it brings us closer to him, and to detach ourselves from it insofar as it turns us away from him.

227. It means trusting God in every circumstance, even in adversity.