

“I Look Forward to the Resurrection”

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As we pray the Nicene Creed during Mass, we state, “I look forward to the resurrection of the dead.” This Creed, written in the fourth century, is our basic statement of faith. We have an opportunity with the revised translation of *The Roman Missal* to ponder again what the words we proclaim every Sunday tells us about our faith and what we believe.

It may seem strange to us that one should “look forward to” any aspect of death. The phrase does not mention only death, but Resurrection. The words of the Creed suggest that we should have hope in the Resurrection of the dead.

In our colloquial speech we often hear expressions that it is God’s will that he takes life in death. When my grandfather died, about 80 percent of the people at his vigil said one of two things: 1) God must need him in heaven or 2) it is God’s will. Neither of those statements comforted me. Rather, they made me angry. Granted, I realized later that we really don’t have—colloquially—adequate words in the mystery of death. That day I asked, “Why would God want death?” “Isn’t God the Creator, the one who wants life?” Sin, death, inequity are not what God wants for human persons. God wants for us life, equity, and our participation in his very life (the opposite of sin which breaks down our communion with God). Jesus’ own death by humans was not the end. Rather, God exulted him, resurrected him. Death would not be the end, but rather the mystery of God’s gift of Resurrection.



The same holds true for us. In the accounts of the Gospel, Christ gave us hope that death would not be the end, but rather God will resurrect us, raise us up at the end times. This is, indeed, a reason for hope, a reason to “look forward to the resurrection of the dead.” Notice the words “the dead.” It is not “a dead person.” Christ will resurrect not one person, but will resurrect human persons which we know as the final judgment. Through Baptism, we entered into the communion of the Church and participation in God’s life. The communion of the Church spans time, space, and history. Baptism, this communion with the Church and with God, incorporates us with those who have gone before us throughout history and those who will be baptized that have not yet been born. Communion with God

and the Church is not broken in death. Rather, throughout all of life, death, and the final Resurrection of the dead, the baptized are in communion with God and the Church. At the Resurrection of the dead, our whole beings—mind, body, and spirit—will be resurrected in order to be in total communion with God and the Church. As long as sin infects human persons, total communion cannot be possible for us with God. Sin breaks down communion. This is why we “look forward to the resurrection of the dead.” We, with hope in our good and loving God, will join the communion of saints and be in total communion with God’s very self.