

EDITORIAL

CREDO OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

In 2,000 years the bark of Peter—a seaworthy ship indeed—has sailed its course through the “eye” of many a hurricane to the balmy shores of tranquility.

Today not a few are trying to get their “sea legs” as the winds of change churn up the new channels and lanes through which the bark has set its course. New currents are swirling violently around the Bark. We are suffering from sea-sickness in this rough, unaccustomed passage. As in times past, it is to the man at the helm that we look for guidance in bringing the Bark once more into tranquil waters. We are not disappointed. The Captain has spoken out with a thunderous profession of faith

The setting—during a Mass at St. Peter’s Square before 50,000 people; the occasion—the closing of the “Year of Faith” give to the message a decidedly additional solemnity, weight and clarity which closes every avenue of doubt or misinterpretation.

In obedience to the ardent and persistent pleas from Bishops and faithful all over the world, the Pope came out to confirm his brothers in faith, to emphasize his duty of protecting the teaching authority of the Church and of warning the People of God against being taken in by interpretations of Catholic dogmas that are strange interpretations of the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church.

There was no question of any dogmatic definition—the Pope made this very clear nor was there any need for such—but the form in which the Credo is couched, the occasion and the very introductory words give evidence to all and sundry that there is here a question of a real Symbol of Faith, a rule of faith, a veritable synthesis of the fundamental dogmas.

Inevitably adverse criticisms will spring up from certain quarters as to the prudence or validity of the condemnations of theological novelties and the reaffirmation of traditional teachings at this time. A widely circulated secular weekly has already done so in one of its recent issues. The Credo of the People of God will be challenged on the ground that it is unsuited to contemporary intelligent society, incomprehensible to pagans and very clerical. It will be accused of confusing what is a new approach for an alteration of doctrine.

These are the winds and the waves in the voyage of the Bark of Peter which have to be expected and met with equal firmness and vigour of faith from the part of the People of God.

It is now the task of theologians and preachers to search with persevering effort for a more profound understanding of this Credo. It is for them to give a more perfect expression of these mysteries and in this way to do all they can to provide an answer to the new questions which contemporary world brings to the fore. The freedom of investigation is not curtailed, but if it must be true freedom, it must always be contained within the limitations set by the word of God as it has been constantly preserved and as it is taught and explained by the divine magisterium of the Church and especially of the Vicar of Christ. Finally, it is made more urgent to impress in their minds that in communicating their conclusions they should see to it that it is made in such a way as to imbue their brethren with a spirit of love and reverence toward the Word of God and the Teaching Church.

In this way, we, the pastors and the faithful of the Church, will, in union with Paul VI, make the Credo of the People of God the norm of our belief and life, and do justice to the very meaning of the closing of the "Year of Faith".