

On the Revised Translation of the Mass  
Bulletin Insert 12  
“The Creed 3”

In the translation of the Nicene Creed we currently use we say Jesus is “one in being with the Father.” “One in being” will be replaced with the single word, “consubstantial.” The Council of Nicea chose the word, “*homo-ousios*,” or same-being, to describe the relationship between God the Father and God the Son.

*Homoousios* is not found in the Bible, but *ousia* is found twice in the Parable about the Prodigal Son. In Luke 15:12 the prodigal son says, “Father give me the share of your *estate* that should come to me.” When Saint Luke wrote his Gospel he used the Greek word *ousia* to describe the portion of the estate that the Prodigal Son wanted. We often think of an estate as something someone owns, or leaves behind when they die, but, in a sense, that which belongs to us is part of our being, or existence at that moment.

This is the point of using “consubstantial” in the Creed. Jesus Christ is of the same estate, or existence, as God. He is not simply one with Him, as we currently express in saying “one in being with the Father.” Instead, Jesus *is* God. In ancient philosophical terminology, substance didn’t mean the material out of which something is made, but it described the essence of what a thing is.

To say that Jesus is “consubstantial with the Father” is to say that He is of the same nature as God. In the Gospel of John, Saint Philip asks Jesus to show him the Father and Jesus replies, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?”

When God came into the World, He came Himself, not some substitute of lesser stature. Consubstantial may not be a word we use often, but there’s no better word to describe the relationship between God the Father and God the Son.