



A Lent Course
Celebrating Nicaea:
seeing afresh the faith which holds us together

Session 1
Setting the Scene

Handout

On the next two pages you'll find material to look at in the session.

First, the text of the Creed which emerged from the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, which here we call 'The Creed of Nicaea', set out side-side with the text of the Creed which emerged from a later Council, held in Constantinople fifty-five years later, which is 'The Nicene Creed' which we say in church..

When comparing the two texts it becomes clear that the second is an expanded version of the first. Dotted lines separate the different sections to make it easier to compare them.

Second, the words of a hymn composed by a previous Bishop in Europe, Geoffrey Rowell. Its words are theologically rich, and owe a debt to The Nicene Creed. We'll therefore be looking at them, verse by verse, in the coming weeks. We're also invited to sing it in our chaplaincies on Trinity Sunday, 15th June. This week, look at verse 1, and see if anything particularly strikes you.



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The Creed of Nicaea
from First Council of Nicaea (325)

We believe in One God,
Father, Almighty,
the Maker of all things visible and invisible.

.....
And in One Lord Jesus Christ,
the Son of God,
begotten from the Father, Only-begotten,
that is from the substance of the Father;
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten not made,
consubstantial with the Father,
by whom all things were made,
both things in heaven and things on earth;
who for us men and for our salvation came down,

and was incarnate, was made man, suffered,

and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven,

and is coming to judge living and dead.

.....

And in the Holy Spirit.

.....

Appendix

And those who say 'There once was when He was not' and, 'Before being begotten He was not,' and 'He came into being out of nothing,' or those who pretend that the Son of God is 'from another hypostasis or substance', or 'created', or 'alterable', or 'mutable', the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.

The Nicene Creed
from First Council of Constantinople (381)

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is,
seen and unseen.

.....
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,

God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven;
was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary
and was made man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.

On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

.....

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father [and the Son]*,
who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

.....

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of
sins.

We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

.....

[*the words 'and the Son' (known as the filioque clause, filioque meaning 'and the Son' in Latin) were a later addition to the Creed, which caused great distress to the Eastern Orthodox churches, because of the way it was done. We explore this further in Session 5]

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Hymn to the Trinity
Bishop Geoffrey Rowell

To the tune of Abbot's Leigh ('Glorious things of thee are spoken') or Blaenwern ('Love divine') or Hyfrydol ('Alleluia, sing to Jesus') or Lux Eoi ('Alleluia! Alleluia! Hearts to heaven and voices raised')

Light of light, Love's radiant Glory,
 Blessed Trinity adored!
 Well of life, our shaping story,
 Source of beauty, life outpoured!
 As in heav'n the angels worship,
 'Holy, Holy, Holy!' sing,
 Let us now their praises echo,
 And our lives in homage bring.

God the Father, first Beginning,
 Fountainhead of life and grace,
 Love eternal, all-creating,
 Energising time and space,
 Seen in all creation's beauty,
 Fragile flowers and stars above,
 Particles whose hidden myst'ry
 Praise your all-creative love.

God the Son by Love begotten,
 Loved from all eternity,
 Life outpoured for our salvation,
 Through whom all was brought to be,
 Perfect image of the Father,
 God from God, and Light from Light,
 Healing through our human weakness,
 For sin's blindness giving sight.

Holy and life-giving Spirit,
 Bond of love, God's living Breath,
 Presence which the Church inherits,
 Raising us to life from death;
 Drawing us to deep communion,
 Kindling in our hearts desire -
 Longing prayer for perfect union,
 Tears of joy and tongues of fire!

Triune God we bring our praises,
 Low in adoration fall,
 Awesome Wonder that amazes
 As our hearts now hear your call,
 'Share in me the life of glory,
 Lives transfigured by my Love!
 Saints on earth and saints in heaven,
 In the Trinity above.