

Camp St. Raphael 2006

Campers book group 2

CREDO. I Believe...



Day 1: Creeds and Councils and God the Father

What is a Creed?

A creed is a description of what a person or group considers to be important. Creeds have long been used to define groups of people. The creed of the Jews is the *shema* found in Deuteronomy 6:4. It states: "Hear O Israel, the Lord your God is one God." This creed set them apart from their neighbors, who worshipped numerous gods.

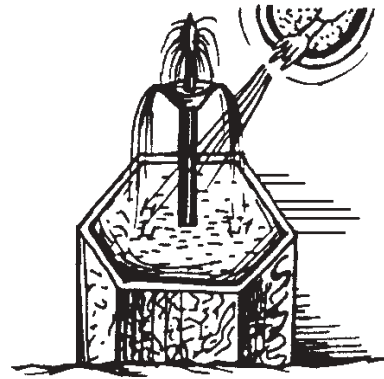
In the early Church, creeds were written and used locally in order to oppose those (heretics) who were teaching specific theological errors (heresies) at the time. These creeds were also used in baptism as a statement of faith recited by the newly baptized and chrismated Christians. A "heretic" (Gr. from *airoumai*, to choose) is someone who chooses his own doctrine against the doctrine of the Church. Thus, creeds were used to define the Faith, and to protect her from heresy.

One of the Earliest Christian creeds is the Apostle's creed. It dates back to the 2nd century, and developed into its current form between the 2nd and 9th centuries. It was used at baptisms in a question and answer form as a summary of the Faith. This creed emphasizes the true Humanity, including the material body, of Jesus, since that is the point that the heretics of the time (Gnostics, Marcionites, and later Manicheans) denied. The Apostles creed is the work of a regional group of Churches for their use in baptism, and preserving, and teaching the faith.

We call the Nicene creed the statement of Faith, because the words used describe clearly what it is that we believe about our Faith. It was drawn up in the fourth century by the 1st and 2nd ecumenical councils in Nicea (323) and Constantinople (381). It is the work of the whole Church, and inspired by the Holy Spirit. It was intended to be the statement of Faith for the whole Church. According to Fr. Michael Najim, (Antiochian Archpriest and Dean of Balamand University) in his article *Early Orthodox Creeds*, "it was not the intent of the Fathers to replace the local baptismal confessions of the faith, but rather to produce a definition of Orthodox faith." The Nicene Creed is used by all Orthodox Churches in the Divine Liturgy, as the symbol of Faith. Again, Fr. Michael sums up the importance of creeds:

"In general we can say that Creeds played a significant role in the teaching of the Church. They served as bases for the Catechetical teaching and to transmit the faith of the Apostles. They had a hermeneutical function (interpretation of Scripture and Tradition) in the work of the Church, because they represent the rule of faith. The rise of heresy was another

occasion which required creeds. Their task was to defend the Church against heresies. In addition to these tasks, the Church found them helpful in times of persecution, and as a guide for preaching. The Symbol of faith (the Nicene Creed) is essentially a liturgical formula, an act of worship and a profession of the revelation."



What Does the Nicene Creed Teach?

The Nicene creed is emphatic in affirming the Deity of Christ, since it is directed against the Arians, who denied that Christ was fully God. The statements that make up the Nicene creed explain who each person of the Trinity is, and how they relate to one another. It tells what each one did for us, and our salvation. Finally, it defines the Church, describes how one becomes a part of the Church, and our hope for the future as Christians. The creed was written in the First person. We continue to say it in this form today because it is our personal statement of Faith in the Trinity and in the Church. We renew our baptismal covenant with God each time we pray the Creed. This is why it is important for us to include the Nicene creed in our daily prayers.



What Happened at the first Ecumenical Council?

An Ecumenical council is a meeting of those in the Church who have been given the authority to decide what is faithful to the Tradition of the Church and what is not. Usually, those who meet are Bishops, but sometimes they were priests or deacons sent by Bishops to represent them. Because the Church is the body of Christ, the whole Church must be unified in what she teaches, and how she behaves. The councils meet to decide questions of theology, and to write canons or rules that the Church must follow. The council members pray and ask the Holy Spirit to inspire and direct all of the proceedings and decisions that are made.

St. Constantine, a Roman Emperor and convert to the Faith had made Christianity legal in the empire. He called the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 to settle a dispute regarding the nature of Christ. There were about 318 Fathers present from all over the world at the council. The Church met to confront the teachings of Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria and the founder of Arianism. Arianism is a Christological doctrine, first put forth by Arius of Alexandria, stating that Christ is a creation of the Father, and therefore of an entirely different nature.

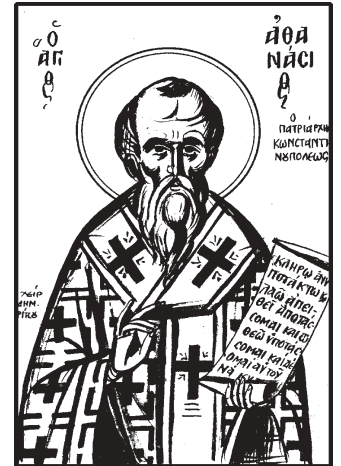


While admitting Christ the Logos' special status as the first and most perfect creation of God, Arius still considered Christ a lesser being than the Father. Arius' pupils Aetius, and the brilliant rhetorician and philosopher Eunomius took this basic doctrine further, declaring Christ to be of an entirely different substance (*ousia*; *ousia*) than the Father. Drawing upon the Neoplatonic concept of a primordial and unchangeable One whence all things emanate or are generated, Eunomius denied any true divinity to Christ or the Holy Spirit, declaring that only the Father is properly called God — for only He is eternal and unchangeable, the source of all existence. Arianism was fiercely opposed by the Fathers at the first ecumenical council.

At first the Fathers tried to talk to Arius, and to get him to change from his heretical teachings back to the truth. But Arius would not change his mind, and clung all the more tightly to his position. Arius argued that the Son was created, not begotten, and further, was of a different substance than the Father. There was a time,

Arius said, when the Son was not. When St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra, heard this statement, he was so enraged that he struck Arius across the face! Since the canons of the Church forbade the clergy to strike any man at all, his fellow bishops were perplexed about what disciplinary action they should take against this hierarch whom all revered. In the mean time, St. Nicholas was arrested and taken to prison. That night our Lord Jesus Christ and the Blessed Lady Theotokos appeared to certain of the bishops, informing them that no action was to be taken against St. Nicholas, since he had acted not out of passion, but extreme love and piety. The next morning, St. Nicholas was released and pardoned by the council.

St. Athanasius of Alexandria, then a deacon, was the champion of Orthodoxy. He was clear and firm in his defence of the true Faith. His arguments countered Arius' heresy point by point. St. Athanasius stressed the oneness of God while maintaining three distinct Persons (hypostases) within the Godhead. St. Athanasius said that the Son was the *same* substance as the Father (*omoousios*; *homoousios*) and hence, was fully divine. He argued for the eternally personal existence of the Son. St. Athanasius used Scripture, Apostolic teachings, and Wisdom from the Saints to back up his points. In short, his position was to affirm that which had been taught from the beginning without change.



In an effort to try to bring both sides together, Eusebius of Caesarea argued that the Son was of a *similar* substance with the Father (*omoiousios*; *homoiousios*). After considerable debate, St. Athanasius' arguments won out, and Christ was recognized by the council as being of the same substance (*omoousios*; *homoousios*) as the Father, and on a level with the Father as an uncreated Being. The Holy Spirit had guided the council to this truth.

At the end of the First council, the first seven articles of the Nicene creed were written about God the Father and God the Son. The second council held in Constantinople in 381 reaffirmed the first seven articles, and added the last five articles regarding the Holy Spirit and the Church. The council defined the position of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity; it described the Holy Spirit as proceeding from God the Father, coequal and consubstantial with him.



Who is God the Father?

Did you know that there was NEVER a time when God did not exist? In fact, God has neither a beginning nor an ending; He always has existed. He is eternal. Our minds have a very hard time grasping this concept because nothing else in our experience is eternal. People, and animals have a beginning and an end to their earthly lives--they are born, live, grow old, and finally die. Plants have a life cycle. Their seeds sprout, and the young plant grows and matures to produce seed for the next generation, and then withers and dies. Even the oldest trees on earth (some are over 2000 years old!) will eventually die. The very rocks, old as the Earth itself, are not eternal. They had a beginning and since that time, are being changed slowly over time as they react to the forces of Earth's weather and internal pressure and heat. God, however, has just been--always existing--never changing or growing older. He exists outside the boundaries of time and space. Actually, He encompasses time; He is the author of both time and space. Only we, His creation, exist bound to time and place. If we think about this for a long time, we will be amazed at our God, but we can never fully understand God's essence.



Because God's existence is so different from our own, it is very hard for us to explain it using human language. Many of the Fathers used apophatic or negative language to speak of this aspect of God. In other words, they did not describe who God is, and what He is like, directly. Instead, they used words like UNcontainable, UNlimited, INcomprehensible, UNcreated, UNending, and IMmortal. These words are a way for human language and experience to come close to describing God. Nonetheless, any words we choose to describe God directly, like Good, Holy, or Loving, will always fall short of how Good, Holy, and Loving God really is. This is because we can only understand these words in terms of our human existence. God is beyond this---way beyond this. In fact, so beyond our human existence is He, that no matter what words we try to use, he is always more, bigger, and better!

How can we know God? The Fathers of the Church, especially St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and later, St. Gregory Palamas said that although we cannot know God's essence, we can know God's energies or active presence in the world. The Greek word that was translated as energies or operations into English is "energeia". In other words, we can come to know God through His actions in the world. These actions include both natural phenomena and divine grace. We see God in the world and its natural laws, both created by and subject to God. We also know God through the grace He gives so freely to all who will accept it.

We come to know God's energies in a couple of ways. First, we know Him by experience. The more we allow ourselves to

become dependant on God, the more we will experience His presence in our lives. St. Basil says that we should strive to be as dependant on God "as infants feel dependant on their mothers." It has been said that we are all born with a "God sized hole" at our very center. Only by drawing close to God, asking Him for and feeling His presence in everything we do, will we be able to build a relationship with God. And, through our relationship, fill this space. It is by speaking to God in prayer, and in worship; and by our participation in the holy mysteries that we develop a relationship with God.

Once we begin to know God by experience, we can learn to recognize God in our lives. The truth is that our entire existence is united with Him. When we learn to recognize this, St. Basil tells us that we will become as familiar with God as "the cattle are familiar with their manger." We know God when "we breath Him," when we feel His presence any place we are or go; we know God when we constantly depend on Him, when our lives belong to Him, when our lives become a constant praise of His Holy Name.

Thus, our experience of knowing God is both *transcendent* (far away) and, *immanent* (intimately close). One of the feelings of truly authentic experience of God is that of awe, that of feeling quite small next to His awesome and distant Presence. The opposite feeling is also a part of true and authentic religious experience: that is to feel God's Presence near to us and ever present. St. Basil, expanded upon by St. Gregory Palamas give us the theological explanation of the Orthodox tradition regarding both God's immanence and transcendence. It is simple: God is present to us through His *energies* (operations, activity) which "descend toward us," whereas He is completely transcendent, far away, unapproachable in His essence.

The Fathers present at the First Council knew this. They were very careful in selecting words that described His eternal being (One God) and in more detail, His energies or actions in the world (the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible). And this is exactly the words of the Creed. It tells us that God is: One God, the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth, of all things visible and invisible.



What does the Nicene Creed teach about God the Father?

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

Let's look at the specific words of the Nicene Creed regarding God the Father. The Creed says that He is One God. The Fathers wanted it to be clear to all that God is One God from the first line of the creed. Our God is the very same God referred to in Deuteronomy 6:4--"Hear O Israel, your God is one God". At no time do we consider God to be more than One God. "God is one because the Father is one," said Basil the Great in the fourth century.

The next line of the creed teaches that God is the Father Almighty. This line begins the explanation that our God is a Triune God--He is one God with three separate persons. This means that God always exists as three distinct "persons" (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), but He is one God, each "person" having full identity as God himself, and is of the same substance. (This is a Holy Mystery, and we shall speak more about the triune nature of God in the lessons to come.) Each of the three persons of the Trinity has a specific personality and a specific job to do. God the Father is Almighty, the source of everything, that is His personality.

What does it mean to be Almighty? It means that there are no limits on God the Father's power. He can do whatever He wishes because He is the *source* of everything. Again, we have a very hard time explaining clearly and specifically anything about God the Father directly, using human language and examples. This is because God the Father is so different from what we are! He is so great that nothing we can think of is big enough or strong enough to hold Him. Try it. Close your eyes and imagine the



biggest, strongest box you can. Even one millions of miles wide and millions of miles long and millions of mile deep is far too small and weak to contain God the Father! This is why the fathers of the Church have used words like UNcontainable, and Unfathomable to describe God the Father. He is Almighty. There is nothing that God the Father cannot do, see, know, be....and the list can go on forever!

The next lines of the creed teach us that God the Father is the source of all things--that is His job. He is the Maker of Heaven and Earth; of all things visible and invisible. Out of nothing God made the heavens and the earth. He made all things (creatures) visible and invisible (heavenly host). God did this not for His benefit, but because He is Almighty Love. Out of Love God made all things--material and spiritual.

In the next few days, we will continue to study the Nicene Creed and what it teaches us about the Holy Trinity, specifically that the Father is the eternal source of the Godhead, from Whom the Son is eternally begotten, and from Whom the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally.





Got Faith?

1. Who called the first ecumenical council? Who was he?
2. What was the purpose of the council in Nicea?
3. Who was Arius?
4. Who was St. Athanasius?
5. What did he do to help write the Creed?
6. What was St. Nicholas' part at the first council? Who saved him? How?
7. Who is God the Father?
8. What is the type of theology, whereby we can not directly describe God called?
9. We can not describe the person of God the Father directly, but what can we describe about God?
10. How do we know Him?



11. What does the Nicene Creed teach us about God the Father?
12. What is the main theme of the Nicene Creed?
13. Why was the Nicene Creed written?
14. Why is it called the Symbol of Faith?



Living the Creed.

Consider the story of Marthy Barulas, a Christian child, who lived at the beginning of the 2nd century (100's)A.D.

Marthy Barulas became a martyr with St. Romanus in 303 A.D. St. Romanus was a deacon of the Church in Caesarea. He zealously preached the Gospel in Antioch. One day, he happened on a feast being given by the worshippers of one of the temple idols. One of the high officials of Antioch, a man by the name of Asclypiades, was about to enter the pagan temple to offer his sacrifice. St. Romanus stood in his way and said: "You sin, O Governor, when you go to the idols. The idols are not gods. Christ is the only true God." The Governor became enraged and ordered his guards to arrest and flogg Romanus without mercy. As he was being tortured, St. Romanus saw a child, Marthy Barulas. St. Romanus said to Asclypiades: "Even this young child has more understanding than you, old man, for he knows the true God, and you do not." The Governor questioned Barulas about his faith, and he confessed Christ the Lord as the One True God, contrary to the false idolatry to which Asclypiades ascribed. Asclypiades turned a hardened heart against both St. Romanus and the child Barulas. He commanded that Barulas be beheaded, and St. Romanus to be strangled in prison. Thus, both of these martyrs inherited the Kingdom of Christ in the year 303 A.D.

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Holy Martyrs Romanus and Barulas

Barulas beheld the tortures of St. Romanus,
And Romanus beheld Barulas, sad and tear-stained.
Barulas had a child's innocent soul;
Barulas had a heart purer than a lily.
And the wicked eparch asked Barulas:
"Come, my child, without bribery, speak the truth:
Is Christ better, or our gods?"
"Christ is far better than your idols!"
"Had I known, O Child, I would not have asked you!
How is Christ better? Come, tell me."
"Christ is the Creator of the world,
Idols are fancies of the demon's kingdom."
The governor, now furious, beat the child.
But this was pleasant to the child, and he spoke louder:
"O people, abandon the cursed demons,
Christ alone is God; He enlightens men."
Barulas's mother stood by, and encouraged her son:
"Become worthy, O Son, of the rank of martyrdom."
As a lamb beneath the sword, Barulas bent his neck,
And glorified Christ, himself and his mother.

From volume 18 of the Prolog of Ochrid St. Nikolai Velimirovich

St. Romanus recognized right away that there was something special about the young child Marthy Barulas. This child was living the faith, he was not perfect, but he was faithful. And when he was questioned, he proclaimed that faith without hesitation. Here in America, we may not be tortured or even put to death for our faith, but we probably will be asked about our faith. Perhaps we will even made fun of at some time in our lives, because of who we are as Orthodox Christians. What will we say? Will we have developed a strong enough relationship with God to be able to say: "Yes, I do believe!"? Will we shrink away and say nothing? Or worse, will we deny the One True God? It is all about building a close relationship with God through prayer, worship and living our Orthodox Faith. A good first step is learning the Creed by heart and to understand what each part really means. That is the goal for this week at Camp St. Raphael. Through our hard work may God grant that we will be recognized, as Marthy Barulas was, by those around us as Christians. And may we be able to stand firm, with His help and say: "I do Believe!"



"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches" (Revelation 2:7)

Day 2: God The Son and The Incarnation

The Word Became Flesh and Dwelt Among Us

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-Begotten, Begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten, not made; of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man;

Who is God the Son?

Just as we learned yesterday that there never was a time when God the Father did not exist, the same is true for God the Son. There never was a time when the Son was not. The Father is the source, and the Son is eternally begotten of the Father, and the Spirit is eternally proceeding from the Father--no beginning and no end. God is One in Three--the Trinity, with each person of the Trinity having their own distinct personality and job, yet they are all One God; of the same essence or substance. Today, we will learn about the second person of the Holy Trinity, God the Son.

God the Son has a name like you or I because He took on human flesh and became man. Jesus is the name of God the Son. He is God the Son, because even when He became man, He still was God; He never stopped being God. He took on another nature; that of humanity, in addition to the first, that of God. That is why we say that Jesus has two natures; He is at the same time, separately, both God and man. The two exist together, equally and never mix. This is His personality, that He is fully God and fully man. Just like the Father's personality, the Son's personality is hard for us to understand. But unlike the Father, who is all spirit, the Son took on flesh, and became man, so we can see, hear, and touch Him. We can see His face in icons, we can hear His voice in the Gospels, and we touch his body and blood in the Liturgy. It was our Saviour, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, in His preincarnate form as the Word or *Logos*, the Angel of the Lord, the Lord God of Sabaoth, the Angel of Great Counsel, the Ancient of Days, Who revealed Himself to the prophets and seers of the Old Testament.

Jesus' name, which was given to Mary, Ever Virgin, by the angel Gabriel, means "saviour". This is his job; to redeem mankind. He is our saviour. He brings us back to the Father, and He gives us eternal life. We call God the Father Jesus Christ, and some people mistake "Christ" for Jesus' last name. Christ means "anointed" or "messiah", so it is really a title. We could call the Son: "Jesus, the Christ." So, God the Son is both savior and the long awaited Messiah--God's anointed who was foretold in the Old Testament.

What does the Nicene Creed teach about God the Son and the Incarnation?

Yesterday, we looked at the lines of the Nicene Creed that told about God the Father. Today, we will continue with our close look at the Creed, as we study what we believe about Jesus, God the Son. It may have become evident in the few lines of the Creed regarding God the Father, that sometimes the English words do not convey the full meaning that the original Greek words of the Creed did. Therefore, just as we did yesterday, we will look at the original Greek words to help us understand what the Fathers were teaching.



And in one Lord Jesus Christ, The title Lord teaches us that Jesus is the master of all. The Hebrew word *adoni* and the Greek word *kyrios* both mean Lord, and were applied to Yaweh (the Name of God in Hebrew) in the Old Testament. The very name Jesus Christ tells us a lot about who Jesus is. "Jesus" means "Savior" and "Christ" means "anointed", the Greek translation of the Hebrew word rendered "Messiah". Applying English grammar to His name, it could be rendered as "Jesus the Christ"-- the Anointed One, the Messiah. This title (Christ) of our Lord occurs five hundred and fourteen times in the New Testament.

the Son of God, Just as God the Father is the name of the first person of the Holy Trinity, God the Son is the name of the second person of the Holy Trinity. This is the first stone in the foundation of the Truth that Jesus is fully God and fully Man. If He is the Son of God, He must also be God.

the Only-Begotten, In the Creed, and in Scripture, such as John 1:14, where the Greek words are *MONOGENETOS HUIOS*, an English translation may read either "only Son" or "only begotten Son." The Greek is ambiguous. The root *GEN* is found in words like "genital, genetics, generation," and suggests begetting. However, it is also found in words like "genus" and suggests family or sort or kind. Accordingly, we may take *MONOGENETOS* to mean either "only begotten" or "one-of-a-kind, only, sole, unique."

Begotten of the Father before all worlds, One might suppose that this means, "before the galaxies were formed," or something of the kind. But in fact the English word "world" used to mean something a little different. It is related to "were" (pronounced "weer"), an old word for "man," as in "werewolf" or "weregild." Hence a "world" was originally a span of time equal to the normal lifespan of a man. Often in the KJV Bible, one finds "world" translating the Greek AION ("eon"), and a better translation today would be "age." So here we have "begotten of the Father before all times, before all ages"--before time itself. Furthermore Jesus is "begotten of the Father". To "beget" is to cause to exist. It also can also mean "to father", or sire. Both meanings are present here, but the begetting of Jesus was eternal - a special begetting, outside of time itself, which only began with the creation of the universe. The term "Only-begotten" emphasizes this special begetting, it **does not mean** that Christ was created. In order to be created, something must previously not exist, and subsequently, be brought into existence. Since Christ was begotten before all ages, there was never a time when He was not. Read what St. Gregory of Nyssa has to say about the eternal nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit:

"...The Only-begotten (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit are not to be looked for in the creation but are to be believed above it; and that while the creation may perhaps by the persevering efforts of ambitious seekers be seized in its own beginning, whatever that may be, the supernatural will not the more for that come within the realm of knowledge, for no mark before the ages indicative of its nature can be found."

Light of Light, Very God of Very God, A favorite analogy of St. Athanasius was the following: Light is continuously streaming forth from the sun. The rays of light are derived from the sun, and not vice versa. But it is not the case that first the sun existed and afterwards the Light. It is possible to imagine that the sun has always existed, and always emitted light. The Light, then, is derived from the sun, but the Light and the sun exist simultaneously throughout eternity. They are co-eternal. Just so, the Son exists because the Father exists, but there was never a time before the Father begat the Son. The analogy is further appropriate because we can know the sun only through the rays of light that it emits. To see the sunlight is to see the sun. Just so, Jesus says, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." (John 14:9)

Begotten, not made: This is the third time that the word "begotten" is used. Now remember yesterday when we said that God the Father was the *source* of all things? We learned that God *made* all things. Today, we read that Jesus was *begotten, not made*, although His source is still that of God the Father. It was stated this way by the Fathers to condemn the teaching of Arius, who taught that the Son was the first thing that the Father created. Arius said that if the Father has begotten the Son, then the Son must be inferior to the Father, as a prince is inferior to a king. Athanasius replied that a son is precisely the same sort of being as his father, and that the only son of a king is destined himself to be a king. It is true that an earthly son is younger than

his father, and that there is a time when he is not yet what he will be. **But God is not in time--He made time, He encompasses time.** Time, like distance, is a relation between physical events, and has meaning only in the context of the physical universe. When we say that the Son is begotten of the Father, we do not refer to an event in the remote past, but to an eternal and timeless relation between the Persons of the Godhead. Thus, while we say of an earthly prince that he may some day hope to become what his father is now, we say of God the Son that He is eternally what God the Father is eternally. In *Oration 29.8*, he describes the folly of his Arian opponents who dismiss the Eternal generation of the Son. Quite simply, they don't know what they are talking about. They misunderstand the mystery of God!

This Generation would have been no great thing, if you could have comprehended it... But if you assert that because you cannot comprehend it, therefore He cannot have been begotten, it will be time for you to strike out many existing things which you cannot comprehend; and first of all God Himself. For you cannot say what He is, even if you are very reckless, and excessively proud of your intelligence... How was He begotten?? I repeat the question in indignation. The Begetting of God must be honored by silence. It is a great thing for you to learn that He was begotten. But the manner of His generation we will not admit that even Angels can conceive, much less you. Shall I tell you how it was? It was in a manner known to the Father Who begat, and to the Son Who was begotten. Anything more than this is hidden by a cloud, and escapes your dim sight.

of one essence (substance) with the Father,

This line: "of one essence (substance) with the Father," (in Greek, HOMOIOUSIOS TW PATRI) was the one statement that directly opposed the teachings of Arius. All of the other statements preceding this one could be interpreted by the Arians in such a manner as to support their teachings. But, in this one statement, the Fathers make clear that Jesus is fully God--not created, but of the same substance as God the Father Himself.. In saying that He is of the same essence as God the Father make the Arian position untenable. If God the Father and God the Son are of the same essence, then they are both God. CoEternal and Consubstantial. The Trinity consists of three HYPOSTASES (persons) united in one OUSIA (essence or substance). To illustrate the concept of "homoiousios tw Patri", try this: take two tall drinking glasses. Fill one of them with water, and observe. Now, pour some of the water from the first glass into the second, and observe. Is the water the same? Did it change in anyway? Was there anytime when the water, now present in the two glasses was not the same water? No. At all times the water was the same--more importantly, it was and is the *same substance*.

by whom all things were made;

This is a direct quote from John 1:3, which states: *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."* God the Son is not a created being. Rather, He is God, the agent through Whom all created things come to be. St Paul shows explicitly that God the Father and God the Son are creators: *"there is no other God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), yet for us there is only one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live."* 1 Cor 8:4b-6 In fact, we can place all three persons of the Holy Trinity at the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth. Genesis 1:1-2 says: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters."* Here we find both God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. John 1:1-3 says that God the Son (The Word-Λόγος) was there as well. And furthermore there was nothing made without Him. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."*



Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, This line of the Creed begins to explain the job of God the Son. God the Father is the source of everything; God the Son is the saviour of all. For us--out of complete love for us--that is why He came down to earth from heaven where He has always existed. He came to save us from death, and to show us the way back to the Father. In the Greek, the word used for "men" is "anthropos" which means "human". Had the Fathers wished to specify a gender, they would have used "andropos" (Male human) or "anerpos" (Female human). They chose the gender neutral "anthropos, so it is clear that Jesus came to save mankind--all humans, both male and female.

and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man; These lines of the Creed refer to Jesus Christ coming "in the flesh". The eternal Son of

God the Father assumed to Himself a complete human nature from the Virgin Mary. He was (and is) one divine Person, fully possessing from God the Father the entirety of the divine nature, and in His coming in the flesh fully possessing a human nature from the Virgin Mary. Our Beloved Bishop Basil has said "If Christ had brown hair, He got that from His Mother; if He had brown eyes, He got them from His Mother." His humanity was taken entirely from the Theotokos. By His Incarnation, the Son forever possesses two natures in His one Person. The Son of God, limitless in His divine nature, voluntarily and willingly accepted limitation in His humanity in which He experienced hunger, thirst, fatigue — and ultimately, death. The Incarnation is indispensable to Christianity — there is no Christianity without it. The Scriptures record, *"...every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John 4:3).* By His Incarnation, the Son of God redeemed human nature, a redemption made accessible to all who are joined to Him in His glorified humanity. *From the Antiochian Archdiocesan website.*

This is what St. Gregory of Nyssa said in oration 37 about the two natures of Christ. *"What Christ was, he laid aside; what he was not he assumed. Not that he became two; rather he deigned to be made one out of two. Both are God, that which assumed and that which was assumed; two natures concurring in one, not two Sons."* And again in oration 39 about the nature of the Trinity. *"When I say "God", you must be illuminated in a flash by One Light and by Three: three in Personalities or Hypostases, or, if anyone prefer to call them so, Persons, for we will not quarrel about names if the syllables convey the same meaning: One by reason of essence or Godhead, they are distinguished among themselves indivisibly. . . and connected among them selves undividedly. The Godhead is One in Three, and the Three are One"*



"For the Son of God became man so that we might become God" St. Athanasius to the First Council at Nicea



Got Faith?

1. Who is the second person of the Trinity?

2. Where did He come from--Who was His source?

3. How did Jesus come from The Father?

4. How long has Jesus existed?

5. What is the difference between begotten and made?

6. Why did the Father say three times in the Creed that Jesus was begotten?

7. What does it mean to be of the same essence or substance as the Father?

8. How do the Fathers show that God the Father is the source of God the Son ?

9. Why did Jesus come down from heaven?

10. Jesus is fully _____ and fully_____.

11. Who is Jesus' Mother? What does the Church teach that He gets from her?

Living the Creed.

Light from Light! Make a light switch cover to remind yourself each day that Jesus is truly God--Light from Light, and the Light of the world.

Icons are theology in color! They help us to live and pray what we believe. Look at the icon of the Nativity. Read the Gospel accounts of the Nativity of Christ. Answer the following questions based on the Creed, the Gospel accounts and the Icon.

1. Who is in the Icon?

2. Where is the scene portrayed in the Icon?

3. When does this story take place? How do you know?

4. What statements in the Creed, and in the Gospels are also in the Icon? Describe them.

5. How does this Icon help you to understand what the Fathers were teaching in the Creed?

6. How does our Tradition work together to bring us closer to God?

Challenge: Read the Prologue of John (John 1:1-14). What parts of this Gospel are reflected in the Creed? In the Icon?



Day 3: The Death, Resurrection, and Ascension of Jesus

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; And ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end.

What does the Nicene Creed teach about God the Son and His Death, Resurrection and Ascension?

The last two days we have studied what the Nicene Creed says about God the Father and God the Son. We have learned that God is One in essence (ousia) and at the same time He is Three separate persons (hypostases). We have also learned that God the Father is eternally unbegotten; the source of all things. God the Son is eternally begotten of the Father. He chose to become incarnate to live with us here on earth. Today, we will continue with our study of God the Son. We will look at His life on earth as He dwelt among us. We will see how the salvation of mankind, the will of the Father are accomplished in the workings of the Son. Finally, we will see how the One True God, out of love for mankind, submitted to pain and humiliation in order to bring about the joy and glory of the Church, reunited with God.

And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, This line of the Creed reminds us that Jesus was a real person. He lived during a specific time period, when Pontius Pilate was governor over Judaea (A.D. 26 and A.D. 36). He was not a mythical character like many of the gods that were worshipped at that time who died and came back from the dead. He was not a legend like King Arthur whose story grows and changes over time. No. Jesus' life is historical fact recorded, and preserved in Holy Scripture and referenced in the Creed.

and suffered and was buried; Jesus' suffering began before they nailed Him to the cross. He was betrayed by a friend, with a kiss. He was denied by Peter three times. He was beaten. He was scourged. He was mocked, and spit upon. He was led through the busiest streets in Jerusalem carrying his cross, stumbling and falling. And finally, He was nailed to the cross. He suffered all the pain of crucifixion; a slow and agonizing death.

Only His Mother, His disciple John and a few of the women were there with Him. All of the others abandoned Him, and hid fearing for their lives. He died there on the cross. The Apostles creed specifically mentions that He died because the Gnostics were teaching that He only appeared to suffer and die on the cross. This was not just an appearance! It was real and true suffering that our Lord endured for us! He felt real pain, He shed real blood and He really died. But by the time of the Nicene creed in 323 A.D. the heresy was Arianism, and it was not the humanity of Jesus being questioned, but His divinity. The Fathers intended for us to understand that at the conclusion of Jesus' suffering was His death on the cross.



And the third day He rose again, The Jews believed that a person was not actually dead until the third day. They would visit the tomb each day for three days to see if the spirit would return to the body. After the three day period, they had little hope that it would. This is why God let Jesus stay in the tomb for three days--to convince all the unbelievers that He was really dead. And, having died, His resurrection is indeed a miracle--a feat only the One True God could accomplish! The Roman guards themselves were a witness to the removal of the stone, and the empty tomb! The subsequent accounts of many who actually saw, touched, worshipped, and ate with the Risen Lord are recorded in the Gospel accounts.

according to the Scriptures; In this line of the Creed, the Fathers were affirming that everything happened just as the scriptures foretold. It all points to the Messiah, who was described by the prophets, and was much anticipated by Israel. The Messiah has come and He is a real person, fully God and fully man, Jesus Christ. St. Paul sums up the last four lines of the Creed in his letter to the Hebrews *"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings."* Hebrews 2:9-10

And ascended into heaven, When Jesus came down from heaven, He took on human flesh. He became man. He did not



cease to be God; rather when He became incarnate, He took on another nature. Jesus has two natures, He is at one time both God and man. When He ascended into heaven 40 days after His resurrection, He took both natures with Him back to heaven. And, He has made the way for us also to ascend. By His death, resurrection and ascension He has proved that man was made for heaven, not for the grave, for glory not for corruption. (Coniaris)

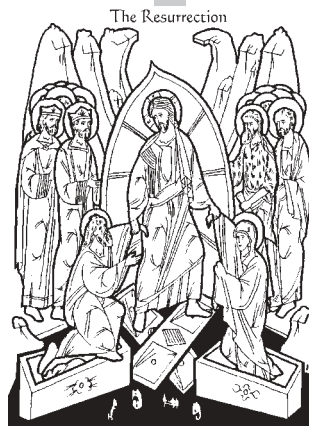
and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; Since God the Father is incorporeal; He has no body, and therefore no right or left hand. When the Creed tells us that Jesus now sits at the right hand of the Father, it means that He is at a place of highest honor. This place of honor is a reference to the divinity of Christ. Who but a King may sit at the right of the King?

And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Jesus promises to return. *"And there will be signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars; and on the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven will be shaken. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near."* (Luke 21:25-29) This is the second coming. The first time, He came as an infant, with only His Mother and earthly father there to greet Him. When He comes again it will be as God the Son, with glory, and the whole host of heaven around Him. He is coming to judge the living (those who are alive at that time) and the dead (those who have fallen asleep in the Lord). He will separate the sheep from the goats.

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:'" (Matthew 25:31-34).

The sheep He will gather to Himself and the goats He will send away. Will you be ready--like the wise virgins in Matthew 25:1-13?

"Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming." (Matthew 25:1-13).



We are told by the Fathers to be ready, for Jesus' return. Jesus tells us that even He doesn't know the time. *"But of that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is."* (Mark 13:32-33) If we are not ready for His return *before* He comes, it will be too late to get ready *when* He comes.

Whose kingdom shall have no end. When Jesus comes again in glory, He will reign forever. Many of the Old Testament prophets speak of the second coming and the new kingdom of God. In the Psalms we read: *"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever;"* (45:6), and *"But You are the same, And Your years will have no end."* (102:27) and *"Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, And Your dominion endures throughout all generations."* (145:13) Hear what St. Ignatius teaches about the everlasting God, and His kingdom, quoting the prophet Daniel. "He, being begotten by the Father before the beginning of time, was God the Word, the only-begotten Son, and remains the same for ever; for 'of His kingdom there shall be no end,' says Daniel the prophet." (Ignatius to the Magnesians 6:4-6). As sons and daughters of the Most High, this kingdom is ours. We have to choose to believe, and then live our lives like we do believe!



Got Faith?

1. Why did the Fathers mention Pontius Pilate in the Creed?

2. What kinds of suffering did Jesus endure? Why did He do this?

3. What is understood in the phrase "and suffered and was buried"?

4. Who was at the foot of the cross with Jesus?

5. What was the heresy that was being taught that said Jesus was *not* really God?

6. Why did God let Jesus stay in the tomb for three days before He was resurrected?

7. What does the phrase "according to the scriptures" mean?

8. How is there a Man in heaven at the right hand of the Father?

9. What does it mean that Jesus is at the right hand of the Father?

10. Compare and contrast Jesus' first coming, and His second.

11. What do the Scriptures say regarding the kingdom to come? What part do we have in the kingdom to come?

Living the Creed.

What can you remember about God the Son? Cut out the matching card game. Turn all of the cards face down. Match the Icon of Christ with the explanation. Retell the story of the second person of the Holy Trinity: God the Son, who is fully God and fully man.

Icon Study.

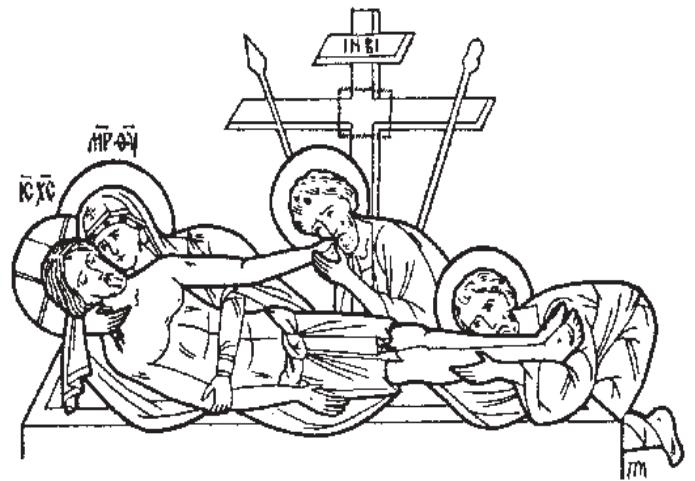
Look at the Icon of the burial of Christ. Compare this Icon with the Icon of the Nativity.

1. Who is in the Icon?

2. Where is Christ in both Icons? What does this position tell you?

3. What is Christ wearing in the Icons? What does this tell you?

4. The epitaph is a form of the burial Icon. Where might you find this image in the Church?



Day 4: God The Holy Spirit

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, and Giver of Life, Who proceedeth from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Who spake the Prophets;

Who is God the Holy Spirit?

In the previous three lessons, we have discussed God the Father and God the Son. We have learned that they each have a distinct personality and a specific job, and all the while they are one in essence and undivided. Today, we will turn our attention to the third person of the Holy Trinity: God the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is God who lives inside of us. He was given to each of us at our Chrismation.

His personality is that He makes His home in each of us. His job is to guide us in all things back to God the Son, and ultimately back to God the Father. He accomplishes this by teaching us: "He will teach you all things" (John 14:26), by reminding us of the truth: "He will bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14:26), and by bringing new truth: "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit comes, he will guide you into all the truth." (John 16:12-13). God the Holy Spirit is present in all of the sacraments. It is He who changes the creatures of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. It is He who makes two into one flesh in marriage. It is He who, at the ordination of a Bishop, bestows a special gift of teaching the Faith on the newly consecrated. And it is He who, at our own Baptism gives each of us the gift of His indwelling.

Teaching is not all that the Holy Spirit does for us. John uses the Greek word "parakletos" as a title for God the Holy Spirit.

The English translation is "comforter", but this is a limited understanding of the word. A paraklete is someone who helps whenever needed and in any way that is needed. Thus, according to St. John, the Holy Spirit is both a comforter and helper--He is the one who can help us cope with any



circumstance life presents for us. He has the ability to change us, and our hearts. Where the Holy Spirit is present, there will be found the fruit of the Spirit: Love, joy, peace, kindness, patience, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. If the Holy Spirit is working in us, we will bear those same fruits in our life.

According to St. Seraphim of Sarov speaks of the true aim of the Christian life: "However prayer, fasting, vigil and all the other Christian practices may be, they do not constitute the aim of our Christian life. Although it is true that they serve as the indispensable means of reaching this end, the true aim of our Christian life consists of the **acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God**. As for fasts, and vigils, and prayer, and almsgiving, and every good deed done for Christ's sake, are the only means of acquiring the Holy Spirit of God" Fr.

Anthony Conairis adds: "It has been said that the words of St. Seraphim sum up the whole spiritual tradition of the Orthodox Church. For, what is greater than to possess the Holy Spirit? And what is easier than the means by which He comes to us: prayer?" (Orthodoxy: A Creed for Today 1972).

It is by prayer that we come to know the Holy Spirit. In prayer He will teach us, lead us, guide us, and direct us. He will comfort us, heal us, strengthen us, and correct us. He loves us beyond measure. He prays for us when we know not what to pray. He is the way by which we can remember every holy thing. He is our still small voice Who tells us right

from wrong. He is God, Who proceeds from the Father, and leads us back to the Son.

Some of the most beautiful prayers and hymns of the Church are to the Holy Spirit. Read the words of the familiar O Heavenly King and also the Sequence Hymn for Pentecost Veni, Sancte Spiritus (Come Holy Spirit), from our Western Orthodox Tradition. Come Holy Spirit! Fill us!



O HEAVENLY KING

O Heavenly King, O Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art in all places and fillest all things; Treasury of good things And Giver of Life; Come and dwell in us And cleanse us from every stain, And save our souls O gracious Lord.



Sequence Hymn for Pentecost Veni,
Sancte Spiritus (Come Holy Spirit)

Come, Thou holy Paraclete,
And from Thy celestial seat
Send Thy light and brilliancy:
Father of the poor, draw near;
Giver of all gifts, be here;
Come, the soul's true radiancy.

Come, of comforters the best,
Of the soul the sweetest guest,
Come in toil refreshingly:
Thou in labor rest most sweet,
Thou art shadow from the heat,
Comfort in adversity.

O Thou Light, most pure and
blest,
Shine within the inmost breast
Of Thy faithful company.
Where Thou art not, man hath naught;
Every holy deed and thought
Comes from Thy divinity.

What is soiled, make Thou pure;
What is wounded, work its cure;
What is parchèd, fructify;
What is rigid, gently bend;
What is frozen, warmly tend;
Strengthen what goes erringly.

Fill Thy faithful, who confide
In Thy power to guard and guide,
With Thy sevenfold mystery.
Here Thy grace and virtue send:
Grant salvation to the end,
And in Heav'n felicity. Amen. Alleluia.



What does the Nicene Creed teach about God the Holy Spirit?

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal 4:4-6)

The time had come for efforts for the Church to become clearer about the Holy Spirit. Thus the work of Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers (St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory of Nyssa, and St. Gregory of Nazianzos) and St. Ambrose, led the Church to understand what it meant when it said 'the Holy Spirit'. For instance, St. Gregory of Nyssa pointed to the Holy Spirit's work in Baptism to show that the Spirit is God. St. Basil argued that the Spirit was to be worshipped as God, based on what the Spirit gives us, including adoption as children of God and the inheritance of God's blessings now and to come, and for giving us cause to rejoice. St. Gregory of Nazianzos undertook the practical task of leading the church in Constantinople away from Arianism. Another key leader, St. Hilary of Poitiers, wrote about the Spirit's role in 'divinizing' the faithful.

The First ecumenical council in Nicea wrote and affirmed the first 7 articles of the Nicene Creed regarding God the Father and God the Son. The last 5 regarding the Holy Spirit and the Church were written at the second ecumenical council in Constantinople (381 A.D.). By 381, the Arian heresy was still being taught in some places. Other heresies had also arisen also. The 2nd Council met to confirm the true teaching on the Holy Spirit and to oppose the false teachings of Macedonius. He rejected the divine origin of the Holy Spirit. Since the Council of Constantinople (381), the Orthodox Church has taught that the Holy Spirit is God and is the third Person of the holy Trinity.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, The Holy Spirit is called Lord, because He is God. Like the Father and the Son, there was never a time when the Holy Spirit did not exist. In this line of the Creed, the Fathers expressed their belief in the Holy Spirit as God. He is God the Holy Spirit;



The third person of the Trinity, and of the same essence as the Father and the Son. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit upon the Church (John 16:7) and the Church in turn bestows the Holy Spirit to each of its members through the sacrament of Chrismation. In fact, the Holy Spirit is present in all the sacraments of the Church. It is God the Holy Spirit who acts to change mere creatures of bread and wine into the most precious Body and Blood of God the Son. Who but the One True God could do this?

and Giver of Life, As we just mentioned, the Holy Spirit does divine things. Another movement of the Holy Spirit is giving life. He was present at the creation of the world (Genesis 1:2). The Spirit is viewed as active in the conception that occurred in the womb of the Virgin Mary when she became the mother of Christ (Luke 1:35). Jesus tells of another important action of the Holy Spirit, that of guiding the Church into all truth (John 16:13). It was this movement of the Holy Spirit that was active at the councils. Because we have the Holy Spirit's guidance of the Church, her clergy, monastics and the faithful, we can trust Holy Tradition.

Who proceedeth from the Father, God the Father is the source of all things. Jesus told His disciples, "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). It happened in that way, and God sent the Holy Spirit, that is He proceeded from the Father, to remain with us forever. This is the mystery of the Holy Trinity: The Father is eternally unbegotten, Jesus is eternally begotten, and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father.

Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, Each person of the Trinity is fully God, and each has the same dignity and honor. The Holy Spirit is equal to the Father and the Son, in every way, and of the same essence, and is therefore to be worshipped and glorified. In fact whenever we mention God, we automatically are speaking of the Trinity, one in

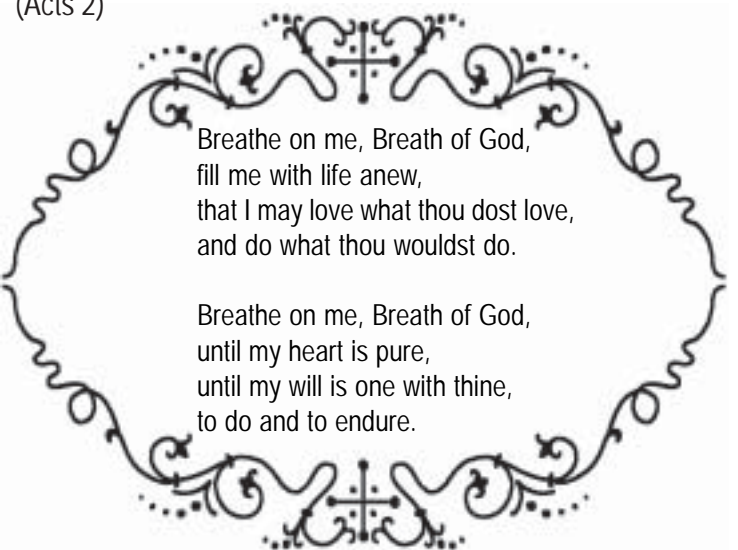
essence and undivided. When we make the sign of the cross, we are praying to the Trinity. Here is what St John of Damascus said about the Holy Trinity: "Whatsoever the Son has from the Father, the Spirit also has, including His very being. And if the Father does not exist, then neither does the Son and the Spirit;



and if the Father does not have something, then neither has the Son or the Spirit. Furthermore, because of the Father, that is, because the Father is, the Son and the Spirit are; and because of the Father, the Son and the Spirit have everything that they have".

Who spake by the Prophets; God, the Holy Spirit inspired the

prophets in the Old Testament to speak about God. Ezekiel says describes his experience with the Holy Spirit in this way: "Then the Spirit of the Lord fell upon me, and said to me, "Speak!" (Ezekiel 11:5a). Samuel hears God call his name three times before he understands who is speaking to him. (1 Samuel 3:1-10). And Elijah hears God in a small still voice (1 Kings 19:11-13). In the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit had not yet been sent to permanently dwell in God's people. Christ had not yet come in the flesh, nor died on the cross to redeem humanity. Until the incarnation, the Holy Spirit is sent periodically to inspire God's people through the voice of the prophets like Ezekiel, Samuel, and Elijah. At Pentecost, this all changes. Jesus prays to the Father to send the Holy Spirit to not only come upon prophets, but on all who will believe. On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit comes as a great rushing wind, inspiring the people to hear Peter's sermon in their own native language. So great a miracle was this, that about 3000 were baptized on that day! (Acts 2)





Got Faith?

1. Who is the Holy Spirit?
2. What are the ways that God the Holy Spirit guides us back to the Son?

3. Give a full translation for the Greek word "parakletos". Why is this word chosen by St. John as a title for the Holy Spirit?

4. According to St. Seraphim, what is the true aim of the Christian life?

5. How do we possess the Holy Spirit?

6. What are some of the images that the prayers of the Church bring to your mind regarding the Holy Spirit?

7. When were the specific statements about the Holy Spirit added to the Creed? Why were they added?

8. How did the Fathers support the teaching that the Holy Spirit is God?

9. What are some of the divine movements of the Holy Spirit? Which one is specifically mentioned in the Creed?

10. By what method is God the Holy Spirit sent by God the Father?

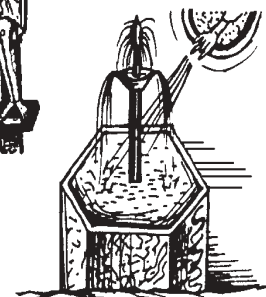
11. What is meant by the phrase "Who spake by the prophets"?

Living the Creed.

The Holy Spirit! Make a pinwheel and let the wind blow over its blades. The Holy Spirit has been described as a rushing wind. The Spirit of God hovered over the waters in the newly created world.

Icon study

Look at the Icons. Find the symbol depicting the Holy Spirit in each of them. Identify the movement of the Holy Spirit in each. Can you identify the Scripture passage or Holy Tradition that is represented in each Icon?



Day 5: The Church

And I believe in One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the Resurrection of the dead. And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

What is the Church?

In the Old Testament, the Jews carried the Ark of the Covenant everywhere they went. This is where they believed God to dwell. As long as they had the Ark, God was with them. Inside the Ark were the stone tablets that Moses had brought down from Mount Sinai. Outside, the Ark was covered with pure gold and on the top were gold statues of angels facing each other. In between the angels' wings, there was a throne. This was the mercy seat, the place where God met with the Jews. There were hard and fast rules about who could and who could not touch the Ark. It was all up to the tribe of Levi to take care of the Ark. For the first 480 years the Ark resided in the tabernacle, which was a large tent. The tent was divided with a separate place for the Ark and a place for the Levites (the Priests) to do their work. The people remained outside the Tabernacle. The place where the Ark resided was called the Holy of Holies. God, Himself was present there.

In the time of King Solomon, the first Temple was built in Jerusalem. This was the first time that the Ark had a permanent home. Like the Tabernacle, the Temple had divisions. There was a place for the Ark that was screened off with a veil--the Holy of Holies. This was the place of sacrifice and worship for the Jews.



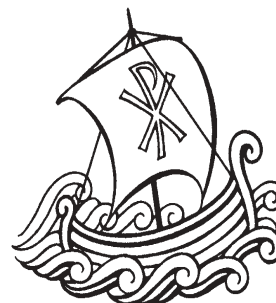
In 567 BC, the Temple of Solomon was destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar, and the Jews were exiled from Jerusalem. During this time the people gathered to pray together and study the Scriptures. The exile lasted 70 years. When the exile was over, many people did not choose to return again to Jerusalem. What had been a way of keeping the faith during their captivity became a part of Jewish worship--the Synagogue. There could be no sacrifices in the synagogue because there is no altar, and no Holy of Holies.. The only place for sacrifice for the Jews was in the Temple. The second temple was built in Jerusalem, and that is the Temple that we read about in the New Testament. Jesus prayed in both synagogues and at the Temple in Jerusalem.

In the early Church, recorded in the book of Acts, we read of the Christians attending both the synagogue and after, meeting in private homes for the Eucharist (Gr.

thanksgiving) to pray and receive Communion. At the Jerusalem council, the Church affirms that new converts do not have to become Jewish to become Christian. At this point, the Church is no longer a Jewish sect, but a separate entity.

During the first 2 centuries following the Pentecost, numerous persecutions of Christians occur. The result was that Christians had to meet and worship in secret. They continued to meet in homes, but one of the most famous worship sites was the catacombs in the city of Rome. By the fourth century, St. Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, (318 AD) which made Christianity legal throughout the Roman Empire. With this new legal status came the freedom for the Church to build permanent places to worship. The Church, which had existed from the day of Pentecost (~37 AD) finally had *churches*. One of the earliest church buildings is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, which dates back to ~330 AD.

The Church is the Body of Christ on earth. The Church is us--God's faithful people! No longer are we tied to the old covenant, where God's presence was on the mercy seat. The Incarnation changed all of that! God, Himself came down from heaven to dwell among us. In the Greek the word John uses for dwell is "eskenosin" which has as its root the word "skene", meaning tent. So, God has chosen to "pitch His tent" with us--to live with us, along side, in the midst of us. He is with us, to dwell forever. And with the coming of the Holy Spirit, He is in us, literally. Wherever we go, He goes. The early Christians knew this, and that is how they survived and grew even during the hardest of times. God doesn't need a church building, but we do. We need a place to gather as the Body of Christ, to worship and give thanks together, and to receive the sacraments.



The Church is our ship guiding us to the port in the heavenly kingdom. Inside the ship, there is warmth and nourishment; fellowship and guidance. Everything that we need for our salvation is in the Church. She contains all of Tradition: the Scriptures, the Sacraments, the Liturgy, the Icons, the work of the Councils, and the Communion of the Saints.

What does the Nicene Creed teach about the Church and the Life to come?

And I believe in One Holy, The Church is One because God is One. St. Paul says in Ephesians 4:4-6: *"There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."* The Church is Holy because God is Holy. We believe that the Church is the Bride of Christ, pure and undefiled. We also say that the Church is the Body of Christ, and since Jesus is Holy, then so is His Body Holy.

Catholic, The Church is Catholic, meaning universal. The word "Catholic" here does not mean only the Church in Rome. At the time of the council in Nicea (and for nearly 700 years after that) the Church was one. There was only the Church--no Orthodox, no Roman Catholic Church--just the Church begun by Jesus Christ. *Catholic* comes from the Greek *katholikos*, the combination of two words, *kata* (concerning), and *holos* (whole). St. John tells us that *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."* (John 3:16-17) The Church is for the whole world, for all peoples; all who will believe. St. Paul tells us that in Christ "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all" (Col 3:11). God's love is so all encompassing, that no part of the creation is excluded, therefore, the Church reaches her hand out to the whole world. The Orthodox Church is catholic because she has preserved the wholeness of the faith, without change from the beginning unto ages of ages.

and Apostolic Church. The Church is Apostolic because she continues to teach the same faith that was taught by Jesus to His Apostles, and that which they in turn taught and handed down unchanged. Our Bishops

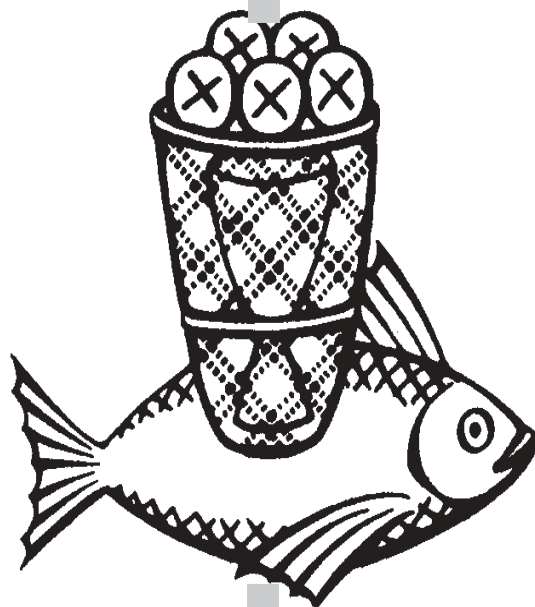
can trace their ordination back to Christ. The lineage between the present shepherds of the faith and the Apostles is unbroken. This is how we know our Faith is authentic--its historic roots run deep.

I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. The first mystery (sacrament) of the Church that we experience is Baptism. Most of us do not remember our Baptism because it happened when we were very young. Baptism is the entry into the Holy Church. It was commanded by our Savior: *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen."* (St. Matthew 28:19-20). Baptism is not only the entry for the

believer into the church; it also washes him clean of all sins prior to his holy baptism. Jesus spoke these words to the paralytic, whom He healed not only of his physical infirmity, but of his sins also: *"Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee"* (St. John 5:14). In Baptism, we die to our old self and put on Christ. We are reborn as new members of the body of Christ. We are accepted as sons and daughters of the Most High, heirs to the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord said: *"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."* (John 3:5).

Therefore, baptism is necessary for our salvation. Our Baptism (and Chrismation) is our beginning as Christians. Through these mysteries all of the other mysteries of the Church are made available to us for our salvation.

I look for the Resurrection of the dead. Even in Judaism, there were those who did not believe in a bodily resurrection. The Sadducees denied any resurrection of the body even though there are references in the Old Testament to it. The prophet Daniel, speaking about the future of the divided kingdom of Israel says: *"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame and everlasting contempt. Those who are wise shall shine like the brightness of the firmament, and those who turn many to righteousness like the stars forever and ever."* (Daniel 12:2-3) Matthew tells of the events that happened when Jesus died on the cross.



He tells not only of the graves opening and the saints being raised, but that they were in Jerusalem three days later, and many saw them.

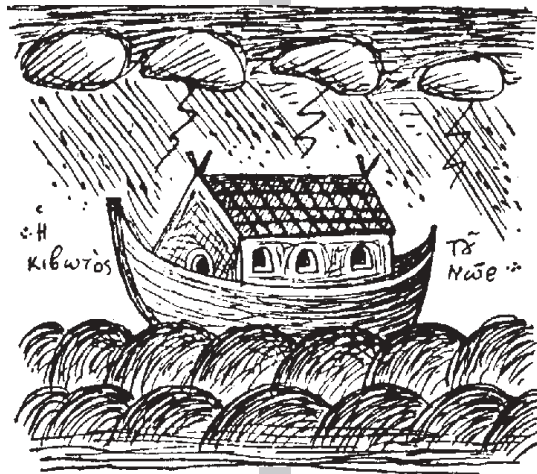
“Jesus, when He had cried out again with a loud voice, yielded up His spirit. And behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.” (Matthew 27:50-53)

Perhaps the most clear reference to the bodily resurrection is the account of the myrrh bearing women when they arrive at Christ’s tomb and are greeted by angels. *“But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, ‘The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.’” And they remembered His words.” (Luke 24:2-8)*

In the early Church, we know there were those who questioned the resurrection of Jesus, as Paul writes this to the Church in Corinth.

“Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised

up Christ, whom He did not raise up if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable. But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who are Christ’s at His coming. Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death.” (1 Cor. 15:12-26)



The Fathers at the council in Constantinople wanted to make clear that there is going to be a bodily resurrection. We are to look forward to that day when we will be raised up with Christ, for on that day, we will meet our God face to face. This awesome meeting is only possible when we have received our

resurrected, and glorified body. Only then can we stand to be in the very presence of God.

And the Life of the world to come. Jesus promised everlasting life. *“I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die.” (John 11:25-26).* And, He promises to be with us there. *“Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also.” (John 14:1-3)* The reality of the life in the world to come is the ultimate conclusion for us if we really believe the words of the Nicene Creed.

Amen. The word amen, comes directly from Hebrew. Its original meaning was “truth”, but it is most commonly used as an adverb “surely”, “truly”, “verily”. As an ending to prayers, it is taken to mean assent; “so be it”. It is our verbal signature to our prayer--We do Believe!



Got Faith?

Living the Creed.

Pascha is the feast of feasts! It is the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus. The butterfly has long been a symbol of the resurrection because it enters into a cocoon, and then reemerges as a beautiful butterfly. Make a butterfly with a coffee filter and a clothes pin. Use water based markers to draw a design, and then let spray or sprinkle water on the filter. Watch what happens to your design! Use the clothespin as the body and chenille wires as the antennae.

1. What is the Church?

2. Where did the Jews believe God was present among them?

3. Where was the first permanent home for the Ark of the covenant? How many of these were there?

4. When were the first Christian Churches built?

5. What is the Greek word that John uses for "dwelt"? Give a good English translation for this word.

6. What does the phrase "One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church" mean?

7. What is the first sacrament of the Church that we experience?

8. What happens to us at Baptism?

9. Who is present in all of the sacraments of the Church?

10. Why do we look for the resurrection of the dead?

11. What did Jesus promise about the world to come?

12. What does amen mean?



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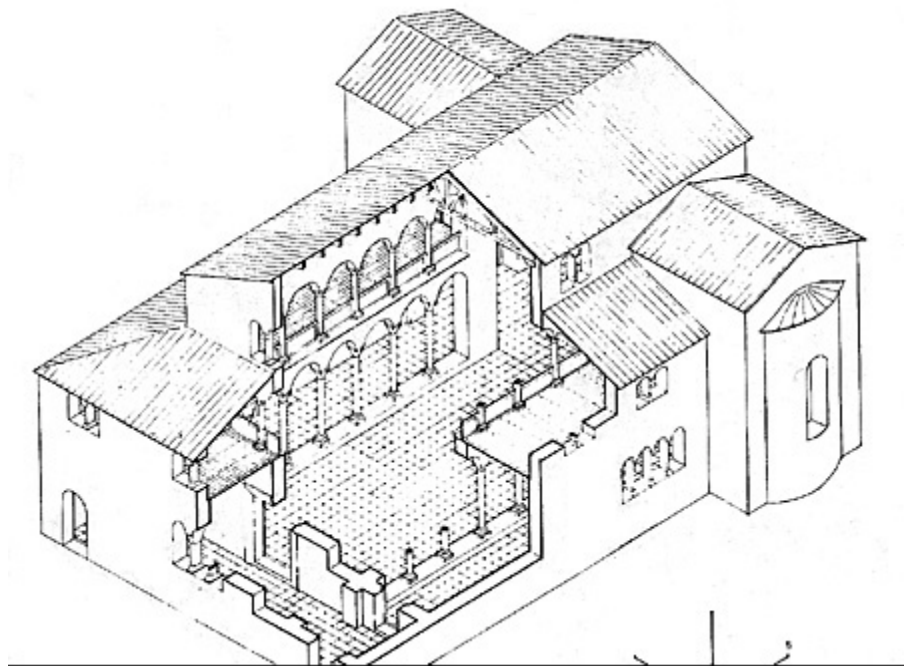
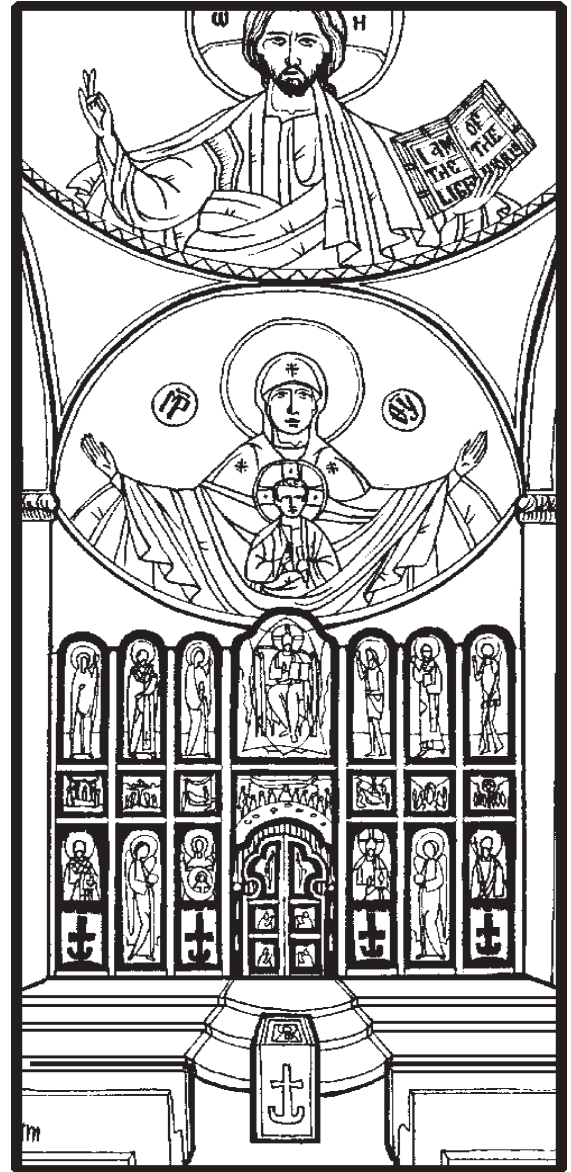
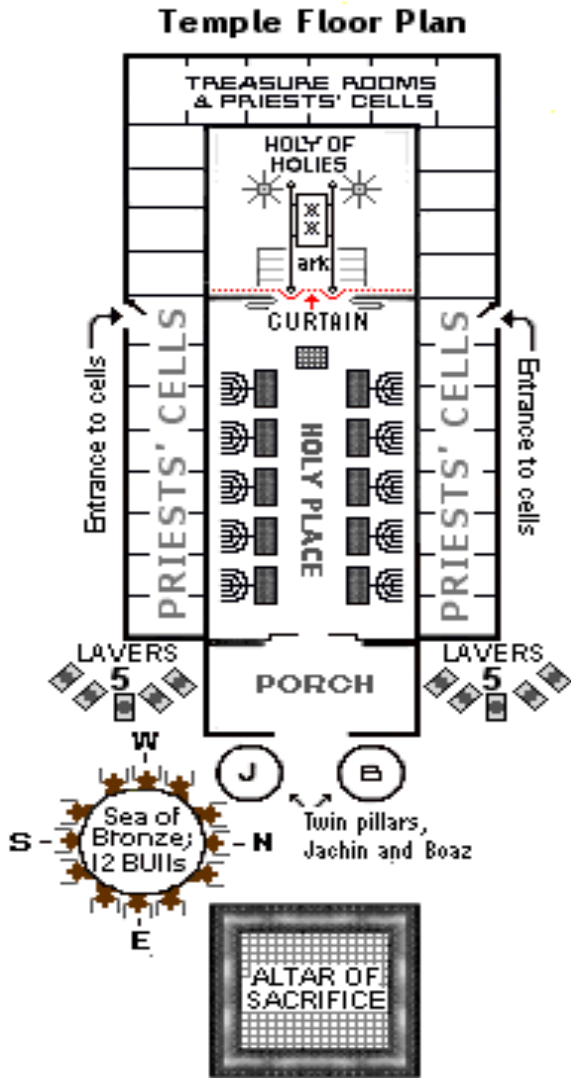
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Architecture study.

From the Tabernacle to the Church. Can you name five similarities between our Church today and the Tabernacle and Temple?



“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches” (Revelation 2:7)

