



THE *Nicene* CREED

I BELIEVE ...

A FOUR-PART REFLECTION ON THE NICENE CREED,
CELEBRATING 1700 YEARS IN 2025



THE *Nicene* CREED

**I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,**
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

**I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,**
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial* with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men* and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
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.

**I 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 adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

* For notes on 'consubstantial', 'men' and 'and the Son' see footnotes 1, 2 and 3 (p. 36)



PART *one*



THE NICENE CREED *in History*

I BELIEVE ...

The Nicene Creed

CELEBRATING 1700 YEARS

The Nicene Creed holds the Christian story and presents a view of the world and destiny based on this story. The Creed doesn't try to say it all, nor explain, nor prove beliefs. It answers questions such as; Where do we come from? Who are we, or who are we called to be? Where are we going? In saying the Creed, we profess Jesus Christ is central to our Christian identity, to the persons we are and who we want to become, as individuals and communities.

The Nicene Creed is a 'Profession of Faith', a statement of identity and commitment to core beliefs, shared by many Christian communities. Our word, 'creed' is from the Latin, *credo* meaning "I believe". Founded in Scripture, the Nicene Creed developed from earlier creeds through many years of Christian prayer and reflection.

In the year 313, the Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, a decree of religious tolerance, which ended official Roman persecution of Christians. Constantine eventually became a Christian himself. He was the first of several emperors to take a keen interest in theological questions and the unity of the Church. They were moving towards a time when Christianity would become the state religion of the Roman Empire (under the Emperor Theodosius in 380). As Christians settled down in safe environments, they had time to reflect more deeply on what they believed, and what it meant to live those beliefs in a changing world.

The first Ecumenical (worldwide) Council of the Church leaders was called by the Emperor Constantine and held in Nicaea in modern-day Türkiye from 20 May to late July 325 CE. Many of the bishops gathered in Nicaea bore the scars of recent persecution for what they believed. They had a profound understanding of the importance of the work they were doing; to clearly articulate these beliefs in a creed that could unite the followers of Jesus in their widespread communities.

Further councils completed the work of the Nicaean Council. The Council of Constantinople added the statement: "*We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Life-giver, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified.*" In 431, the Council of Ephesus recognised that divine and human natures are united in one person, Jesus Christ. Mary, who is the mother of this Jesus is rightly called *Theotokos*, 'God-bearer', the Mother of God.

ONE GOD, FATHER, CREATOR

I believe in one God ...

To say "I believe" is to say I am personally committed to what I believe.

How do we know that God exists?

What can we creatures know of God?

The beauty of the natural world and the goodness and love of human beings can point us towards a Creator. Deep within our hearts, there are God-given longings for goodness, love, beauty, peace, truth and more, giving hints of our true identity and God's dream for us.

Saint Augustine wrote:

"Lord ... you have made us for yourself and our hearts find no peace until they rest in you."

In a world of many gods, the ancient Hebrew Scriptures insisted there is only one God. In time, reflecting back on what Jesus said and did, his life, death and resurrection, his followers began to know that this One God is three divine persons, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, eternally loving one another and being loved, a divine Trinity always loving and creating. The created universe, in all its interrelationships, the natural world and every human community and family that is love-giving and life-giving, all have their ultimate origin and source of life, in one God, the Trinity of loving persons.



FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **In the beginning** when God created the heavens and the earth ... (*Genesis 1:1*).
- **There is one God**, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist (*1 Corinthians 8:6*).

the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

God the Father is Almighty because God is beyond all, an eternal mystery. Out of nothing, God, who is Spirit, made all that exists, whether seen by us or unseen. All creation is good because God is good. Jesus called his Father, 'Abba,' an affectionate term, perhaps equivalent to our 'Daddy' or 'Dad'. He wanted us to know God as a loving, compassionate and forgiving Parent. His own relationship with the Father was central to his identity and his mission: "*The Father and I are one*" (Jn 10:30).

God is continually involved in the universe, loving it all, and each one of us, into existence at every moment. Without God's love we would cease to exist! In this amazing world, we are able to glimpse something of the invisible God and what God can do.

FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

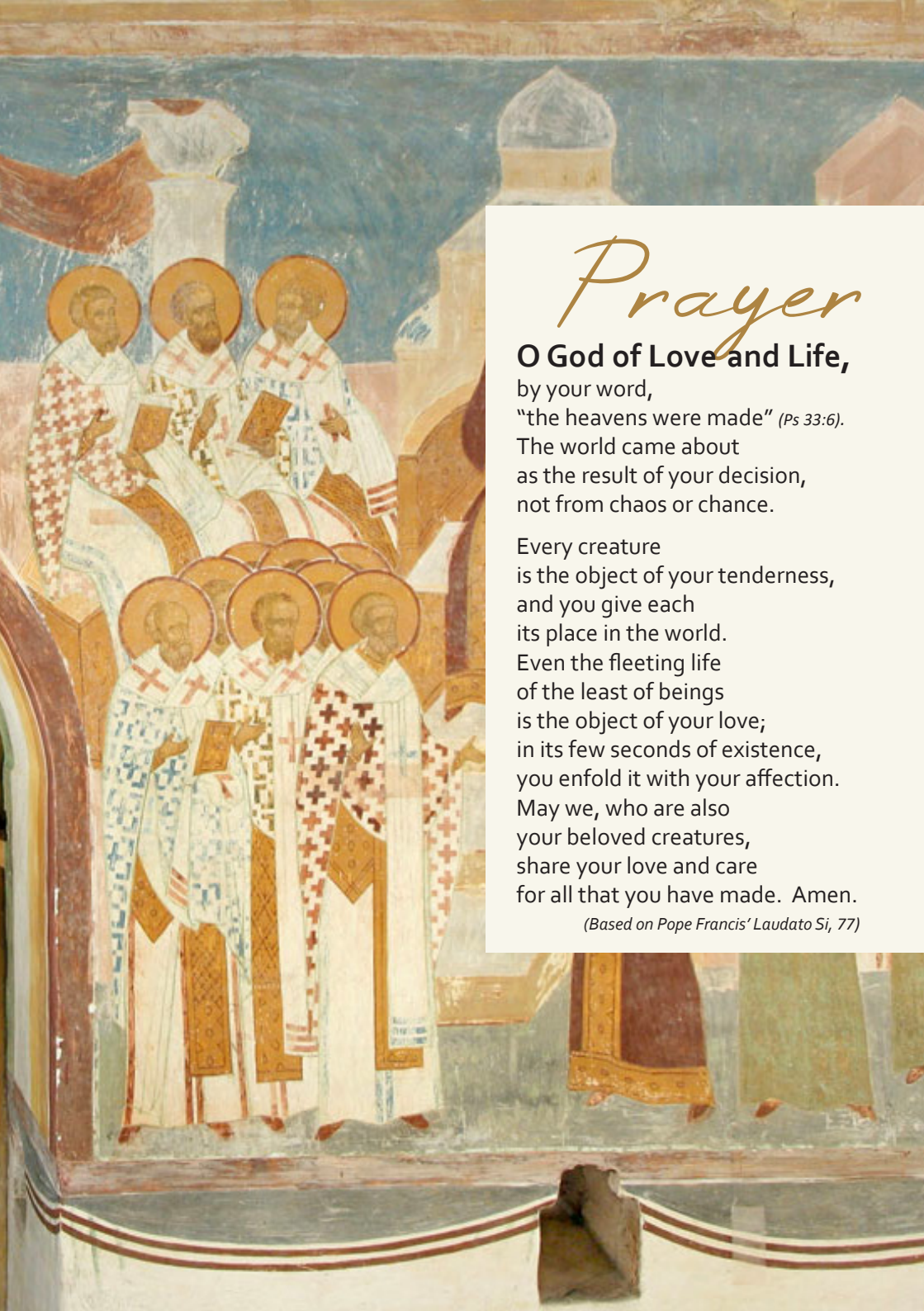
- **God saw everything that he had made**, and indeed, it was very good (*Genesis 1:31*).
- **God's making extends to ... all that is**, was, and will be; in all its being and becoming; everything that I am, you are, we are, they are, it is; in all the differences and relationships and creativity implied in all of this. ... The entire universe is the incarnation of the love and imagination of God ... The *invisible* is known through the *visible* (*Tony Kelly, 68, 71 & 80*).

FOR YOUR LIFE

Have you ever sensed a hidden presence, longed for "something more" that you could not explain, felt there must be a deeper meaning to life, even if you cannot yet understand what it might be?

After your reading and reflection, consider

- **An insight**, or a question that arises for you.
- **A prayer** from memory or in your own words.



Prayer

O God of Love and Life,

by your word,
“the heavens were made” (Ps 33:6).
The world came about
as the result of your decision,
not from chaos or chance.

Every creature
is the object of your tenderness,
and you give each
its place in the world.
Even the fleeting life
of the least of beings
is the object of your love;
in its few seconds of existence,
you enfold it with your affection.
May we, who are also
your beloved creatures,
share your love and care
for all that you have made. Amen.

(Based on Pope Francis' Laudato Si, 77)

TWO BIG QUESTIONS

... *WHY* is there evil when God's creation is good?

God does not cause evil, but human beings are created with free will. We are able to choose good but, tragically, being free, we can also choose evil.

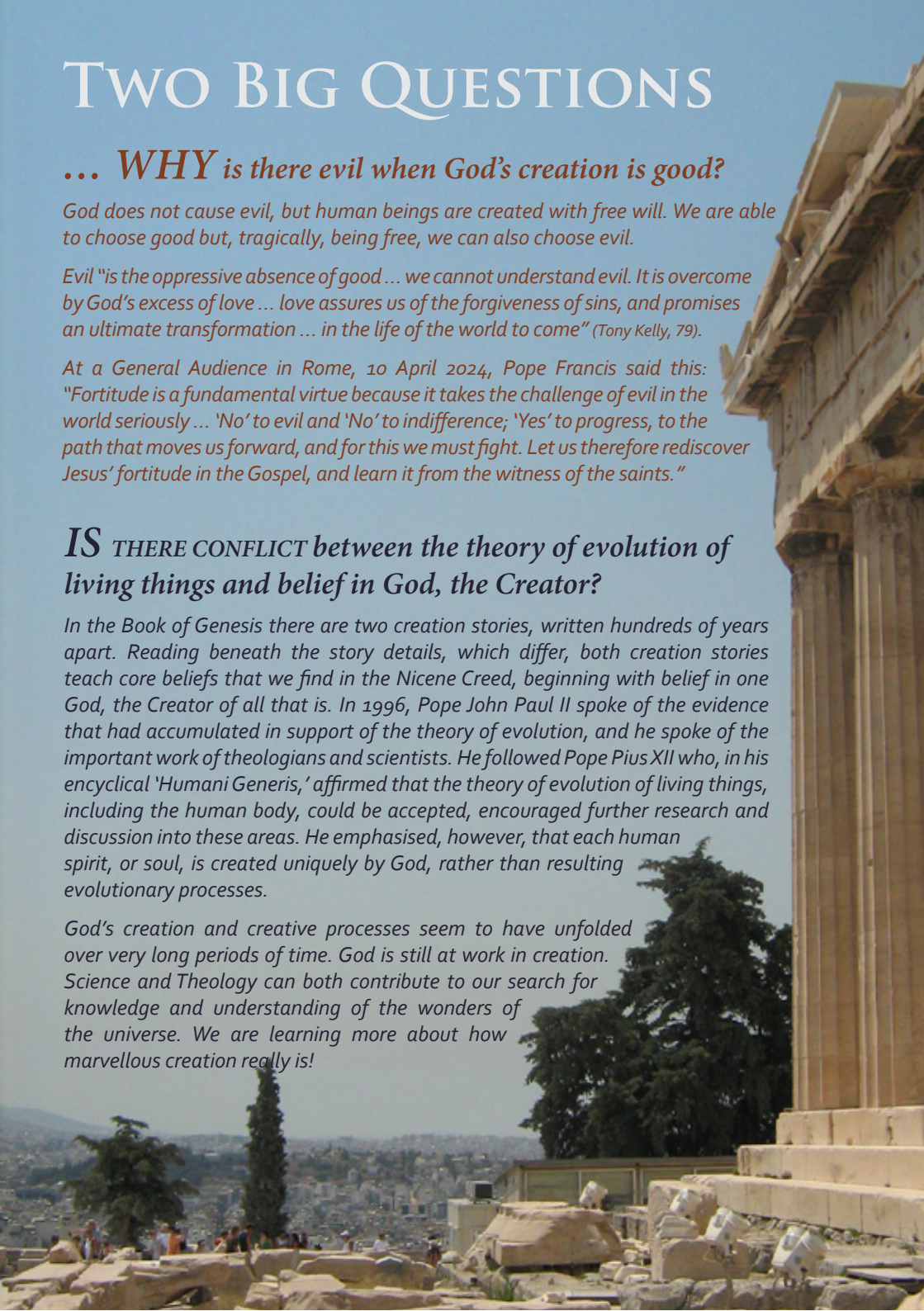
Evil "is the oppressive absence of good ... we cannot understand evil. It is overcome by God's excess of love ... love assures us of the forgiveness of sins, and promises an ultimate transformation ... in the life of the world to come" (Tony Kelly, 79).

At a General Audience in Rome, 10 April 2024, Pope Francis said this: "Fortitude is a fundamental virtue because it takes the challenge of evil in the world seriously ... 'No' to evil and 'No' to indifference; 'Yes' to progress, to the path that moves us forward, and for this we must fight. Let us therefore rediscover Jesus' fortitude in the Gospel, and learn it from the witness of the saints."

IS THERE CONFLICT between the theory of evolution of living things and belief in God, the Creator?

In the Book of Genesis there are two creation stories, written hundreds of years apart. Reading beneath the story details, which differ, both creation stories teach core beliefs that we find in the Nicene Creed, beginning with belief in one God, the Creator of all that is. In 1996, Pope John Paul II spoke of the evidence that had accumulated in support of the theory of evolution, and he spoke of the important work of theologians and scientists. He followed Pope Pius XII who, in his encyclical 'Humani Generis,' affirmed that the theory of evolution of living things, including the human body, could be accepted, encouraged further research and discussion into these areas. He emphasised, however, that each human spirit, or soul, is created uniquely by God, rather than resulting evolutionary processes.

God's creation and creative processes seem to have unfolded over very long periods of time. God is still at work in creation. Science and Theology can both contribute to our search for knowledge and understanding of the wonders of the universe. We are learning more about how marvellous creation really is!



PART *two*



THE NICENE CREED *The Son, Jesus Christ*

I BELIEVE ...

The Nicene Creed

CELEBRATING 1700 YEARS



THE SON, JESUS CHRIST

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,

Jesus Christ is the self-expression, "Word" and Son of God who is Love. He is God's beloved, with the Father and the Holy Spirit for all time and eternity. Jesus Christ is not just a symbol or a reflection or mirror of God. He himself is light and a source of light and love, because God is Love.

His name, "Jesus" is a form of the Hebrew Yeshua, or Joshua, meaning "God will save". As "Christ", he was the "anointed one", the hoped-for Messiah of the Hebrew people. The title, "Lord", *Kyrios* in Greek, indicates divinity.

By his words and his way of compassion, self-giving love, truth, peace, goodness, forgiveness and justice, Jesus Christ announced God's Reign (or 'Kingdom'). His way of life is 'light' for us, enabling us to see the meaning of our lives and to find the way to the deepest fulfilment and truest happiness possible (*Mt 5:1-12*).

FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **In the beginning** was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (*John 1:1*).
- **There is one God**, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, **and one Lord, Jesus Christ**, through whom are all things and through whom we exist (*1 Corinthians 8:6*).
- **I am the Alpha and the Omega**, the first and the last, the beginning and the end (*Revelation 22:12-13*).
- **I am the light of the world**. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life (*John 8:12*).
- **“When he gave us ... his Son**, who is one Word, he spoke everything to us, once and for all, in that one Word” (*St John of the Cross quoted in Tony Kelly, 94*).

begotten, not made, consubstantial¹ with the Father;
through him all things were made.

Jesus Christ is truly God, not created – not made. He is from God, fully human and fully divine, “consubstantial”, equal in divinity with the Father. When we see and know the Son, we know what the Father is like.

Every part of creation was in the mind and heart of God; earth, sea, sky, and creatures with every human being, all made – brought into being, through the love of Father, Son and Spirit. Everything and everyone in God’s creation is interconnected. In Christ we human beings are sons and daughters of the Father, born from the divine Trinity of loving relationships. We are related to each other and to all creation. We have a unique responsibility, therefore, to care for each other and God’s world. The way we care for each other, for other living beings and the created environment reflects our relationship with our Creator God, in Jesus Christ.

FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **All things came into being through him**, and without him not one thing came into being (*John 1:3*).
- **If you know me**, you will know my Father also (*John 14:7*).
- **Faith in the universe created by God** does not permit believers to exclude anyone or anything from the realm of God’s love (*Tony Kelly, 113*).
- **Living trinitarian faith** means living together in harmony and communion with every other creature in the common household of God (*LaCugna, 401*).

For us men²
and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,

Jesus was born about 2000 years ago, to a simple family in Palestine and grew up like others of his time and culture. He was like us but did not sin. God's love flowed through him without limit, in a way that would change the world.



In Christ Jesus, God is “for us” all. To say that he “came down” is to say that, in him, there is a meeting of heaven and earth, and there is no height or depth of human experience that he does not know. He is divine mercy “come down” to save us *from* sin and hopelessness, *for* fullness of life and love.

Jesus Christ revealed what God is like in a human person: God-With-Us. When people saw and heard him, they experienced God and God's ways in human attitudes and actions, and they began to glimpse the meaning and purpose of their lives. ‘Seeing’ him in our time, we learn how to live fully human lives, for others, in the image of God who is “for us.”

FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **For God so loved the world** that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life (*John 3:16*).
- **You are to name him Jesus**, for he will save his people from their sins (*Matthew 1:21*).
- **For the Son of Man came not to be served** but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many (*Mark 10:45*).
- **There came a voice**, “**This is my Son**, the Beloved; listen to him!” (*Mark 9:7*).
- **Trinitarian life** is to be limitlessly “for the other,” in self-giving love (*Tony Kelly, 116*).

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

The Holy Spirit who overshadowed creation at the dawn of time (*Genesis 1:2*), overshadowed Mary. God's Word, the Son, became "incarnate" – a human being of flesh and blood. God's plan was not imposed – the free cooperation of a creature was needed and Mary said, "Yes!" When she carried the Son of God, Mary carried the One whom she had already loved, worshipped and carried in her heart. God's power, love and grace are beyond our understanding; to call her the "Virgin Mary" is not a reference to biology, but to what God can do.

Born into the vulnerability of human living, Jesus' mission was to reveal the God of Love whom we cannot see. His words and way of life, suffering, death and resurrection were 'Good News'! He showed us how to live through hardship, joy, temptation, friendship, rejection, anger, compassion and sorrow – every facet of human experience except sin. Jesus made it clear that every person is deeply loved. By his words and way of self-giving love, compassion, peace, goodness, truth, forgiveness and justice, he announced God's Kingdom (or 'Reign'). This is the way of true happiness in this life and eternal life to come (*Mt 5:1-12; 24*).

FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **The Holy Spirit will come upon you**, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God ... For nothing will be impossible with God (*Luke 1:35-37*).
- **And the Word became flesh** and lived among us ... full of grace and truth (*John 1:14*).
- **Divine Love calls for a human love** to be its partner in the world's transformation (*Tony Kelly, 128*).
- **In him we see our God** made visible, and so are caught up in the love of the God we cannot see (*First Preface of Christmas*).
- **In a deep sense, his becoming man is a continuing event.** It will not be complete until the love he embodies, the cause he lives for, the Spirit he breathes, finally include all who will come to call him "brother"; until all are members of his Body, until he is clothed with the whole of creation, and that creation itself is transformed (*Tony Kelly, 131*).

FOR YOUR LIFE

After your reading and reflection, consider

- An insight, or a question that arises for you.

Imagine Jesus with you today in one of your favourite places

- Is there anything you would like to say to him, or a question you would like to ask?
- Can you imagine Jesus' response to you?

Prayer

O Where are You now Our Easter Hope?

I am here

with your neighbour,
sitting on the front steps of his burnt-out home;
the man who says he'd offer you a cuppa,
but there's no milk at hand.

I am here

where you are washing each other's feet;
vulnerable with the sinned against,
welcoming all to share your table.

I am here

where you are being raised up by each other,
raised by your care and concern;
courageous action for the used and abused,
crying out against injustice and betrayal.

I am here

with the suffering,
with those holding them in their pain;
with the enraged, outraged, disillusioned,
crying out with the abandoned.

I am here.

(Noel Davis, Adapted from 'O Where are You now Our Easter Hope?' in *The Heart Waking*, 121)

WHY do we need a Saviour?

Among earthly species, we human beings are conscious and aware thinkers, able to find meaning as we reflect on who we are and what we experience. We are created with freedom to make decisions. In our freedom, we have tendencies towards selfishness that lead away from choices that are loving and good. We can freely choose to sin, and often do. The consequences for our lives, the lives of others and our world, can be destructive and devastating. By ourselves, as limited women and men, we are helpless. We need a compassionate Saviour!





NEPRIS M VNDICTA CEM VITAM



ΔΜΟΝΑ ΜΟΤ Κ ΠΑΛΛΑΒΑΣ ΛΕΩΝ ΣΕΒΑΣΧΙΝ ΣΧΗ ΓΡΑΝΑΓΟΣ ΤΡΥΣ Ε ΠΕΤΕΡΟΣ ΔΕ ΣΗ ΤΤΕ ΚΡΑΤΕΡ

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PART *three*



THE NICENE CREED *Jesus Christ*

CRUCIFIED, DIED, RISEN, TO COME AGAIN,
HIS KINGDOM WITHOUT END

I BELIEVE ...

The Nicene Creed

CELEBRATING 1700 YEARS

CRUCIFIED,
DIED,
RISEN,
TO COME AGAIN,
HIS KINGDOM WITHOUT END

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

The Cross has come to symbolise God's infinite love and the defeat of evil. Because he loved, without compromise, to the end, Jesus was sent to a disgraceful criminal's death. In his final moments he spoke words of forgiveness.

The name of Pontius Pilate recalls the event in history. Jesus really lived and died, as we all must die, and was buried. Divine love reaches into every dark place, even death.

FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **Pilate** ... took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves" (*Matthew 27:24*).
- **He said, "It is finished"**. Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit (*John 19:30*).
- **Jesus** "is swallowed up into the silence, darkness, poverty, powerlessness, and separation that mark every death" (*Tony Kelly, 138*).

and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.

“The third day” often means something like, “in God’s good time.” The ancient Scriptures foretold the coming of a Messiah, the Christ, the anointed one, a saviour. The prophet Isaiah spoke of God’s servant who would suffer and die, taking all our sins upon himself, bringing healing and peace. In the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the Trinity, Father, Son and Spirit, is “for us,” loving without end. Because of the resurrection everything is changed. Our true destiny is eternal life in the heart of God. Whatever life may bring, God’s love is stronger than evil and death.

This was not resuscitation of a body. Jesus Christ can no longer die. The Gospels tell of the Risen Christ’s appearances to his followers. The Risen Jesus brings mercy, forgiveness and his Spirit upon them, giving them peace, the power to forgive others – and a mission.



FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **Christ died for our sins** in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures (*1 Corinthians 15:3-4*).
- **He was wounded for our transgressions**, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed (*Isaiah 53:5*).
- **“Peace be with you.** As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit (*John 20:21-22*).
- **For I am convinced** that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (*Romans 8:38-39*).

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

Like the word “ascended”, the words “seated at the right hand of the Father” offer a metaphor. The Ascension continues the Resurrection story. The Risen Jesus Christ is with the Father. Beyond earthly existence, his love fills the universe and he will be with us until the end of time (*Mt 28:20*).

He will come again. In faith and hope, we look towards the fulfilment of Christ’s presence when time ends. The Kingdom of God will be fully realised and all suffering and death will end (*Rev 21:3-4*). We are already living in the final age, however long it may be. God in Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit will never abandon us. The Spirit within will help and guide us to continue his mission of bringing God’s Kingdom on earth.

Jesus came “*that you may have life and have it to the full*” (*Jn 10:10*). He came, not to condemn, but to save us *from* sin and selfishness, *for* us to become the loving, fully alive persons we are created to be. We can accept or reject God’s love and grace, by following Jesus’ ways or choosing what is selfish and wrong. There will be difficult times, and we can always pray for God’s help. The possibilities of God’s love will always be beyond our understanding. When our time comes, we will face a just and compassionate Judge. We will be able to see the good in ourselves, as well as all that has been unloving and potentially destructive. There is no need to fear God’s judgement: “God is love” and “there is no fear in love” (*1 John 4:16-19*). We acknowledge all this when we pray for those who have died.

FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **God did not send the Son into the world to condemn** the world but in order that the world might be saved through him (*John 3:17*).
- **It is the Lord who judges** ... who will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart (*1 Corinthians 4:4-5*).
- **Do not judge**, and you will not be judged ... Forgive, and you will be forgiven ... (*Luke 6:37*).

and his kingdom will have no end.

Jesus brought healing and love to the world in ways previously unknown. God's Spirit filled him. He spoke truth to hearts, was moved to tears by suffering, and to anger by exploitation. He challenged those who put heavy burdens on others and who discarded the little ones. He welcomed and spoke for children and sinners. He fed the hungry and said that we who have plenty must share with those with little or nothing. He entrusted disciples to continue what he began. We are among these disciples, co-builders of the Kingdom, or Reign of God.

We can say 'It is here' and 'It is not yet'. The kingdom is among us, incomplete. Whenever we do what is good, just and loving, we help transform the world. In his teaching about the kingdom, Jesus used images of: yeast in dough, light in the dark, salt in food, a hidden pearl of great price (*Matthew 5:13-16*). God's Reign has no boundaries of race, gender, social status or wealth. It is about God's love, peace, joy, justice, goodness and the limitless blessings for every person and community who accept it. It is about sharing the gifts of this world, and caring, especially for the poor and the earth.



FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- ... **And of his kingdom** there will be no end (*Luke 1:33*).
- **I am the Way** and the Truth and the Life (*John 14:6*).
- **Come to me**, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest (*Matthew 11:28*).
- **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me**, because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free (*Luke 4:18*).
- **The joys and the hopes**, the griefs and the anxieties of men [and women] of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ (*Vatican Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, 1*).

FOR YOUR LIFE

The Nicene Creed uses a few words to convey essential truths of our faith. For more on Jesus' life and teachings, we must go to the Gospels. From all you may know of Jesus, what stands out most, or touches your heart?

After your reading and reflection, consider

- An insight or questions that arise for you.
- A prayer from memory or in your own words.

Prayer

O Where are You now Our Easter Hope?

I am here

with the accused and condemned,
standing with them in their truth;
silent,
before all the accusations.

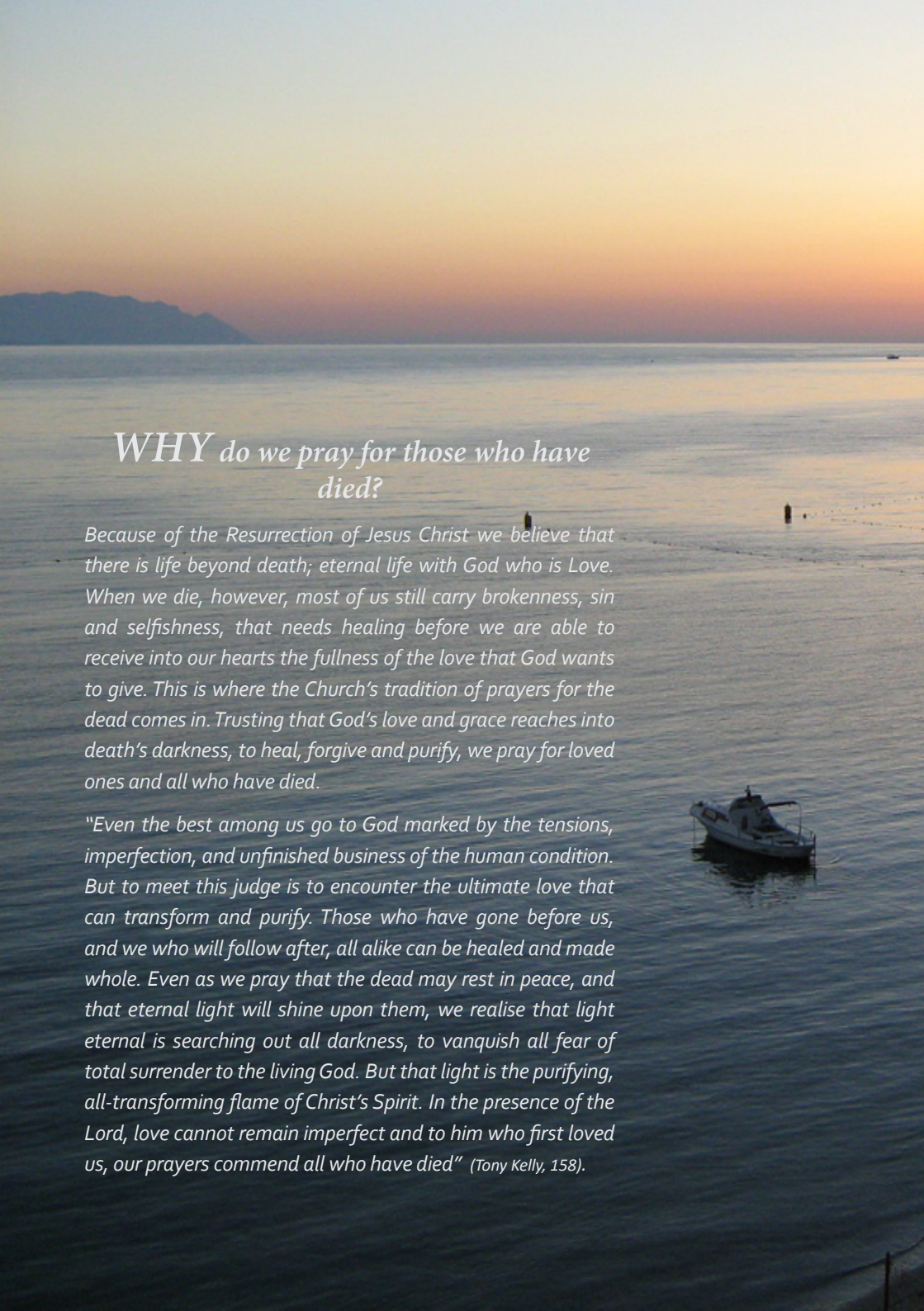
I am here

on the road, sitting with you by the wayside,
breaking and sharing stories
as you reflect upon life;
recalling those who have raised your spirits,
set your hearts ablaze.

I am here

where you have gathered together,
open, prayerful, waiting, expectant;
empowering each other
to live what you believe.

I am here.

A serene sunset over a calm body of water. The sky is a gradient of soft colors from light blue to warm orange and yellow. The water is still, reflecting the light. In the foreground, a small, dark boat is visible on the right side. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

WHY do we pray for those who have died?

Because of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ we believe that there is life beyond death; eternal life with God who is Love. When we die, however, most of us still carry brokenness, sin and selfishness, that needs healing before we are able to receive into our hearts the fullness of the love that God wants to give. This is where the Church's tradition of prayers for the dead comes in. Trusting that God's love and grace reaches into death's darkness, to heal, forgive and purify, we pray for loved ones and all who have died.

"Even the best among us go to God marked by the tensions, imperfection, and unfinished business of the human condition. But to meet this judge is to encounter the ultimate love that can transform and purify. Those who have gone before us, and we who will follow after, all alike can be healed and made whole. Even as we pray that the dead may rest in peace, and that eternal light will shine upon them, we realise that light eternal is searching out all darkness, to vanquish all fear of total surrender to the living God. But that light is the purifying, all-transforming flame of Christ's Spirit. In the presence of the Lord, love cannot remain imperfect and to him who first loved us, our prayers commend all who have died" (Tony Kelly, 158).

PART *four*



THE NICENE CREED *The Holy Spirit.* CHURCH, BAPTISM, RESURRECTION, LIFE TO COME

I BELIEVE ...

The Nicene Creed

CELEBRATING 1700 YEARS

THE HOLY SPIRIT, CHURCH, BAPTISM, RESURRECTION, LIFE TO COME

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son³,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.

The Holy Spirit is a divine person in unity with the Father and the Son, from them both, a power of love between them, "Lord and giver of life". In the ancient Scriptures, the eternal Holy Spirit was described at the creation of the world as a divine breath (*ruah* in Hebrew) or wind (*Genesis 1:2*). The filled the humanity of Jesus. At the moment of death and as Risen Lord, he breathed his Spirit upon his followers (*Jn 20:22*). He promised the Spirit would lead us in truth, and help and guide us to live like him and continue what he began (*Jn 16; Acts 2:1-4*).

The prophet Isaiah spoke of the Spirit's gifts: wisdom, goodness, strength or fortitude, courage, good counsel, awe and reverence for God, and wonder (*Isaiah 11:1-3*). Saint Paul spoke of the fruits of the Holy Spirit in someone's life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (*Galatians 5:22-23*) The Spirit is Guide, Healer and Comforter, helps us to pray, leads us in good relationships and inspires us to do good.

The Spirit who spoke through prophets in ancient times is active today; speaking through ordinary people, in the voices and actions of those who courageously stand up for truth, justice and peace, and in all who give themselves for those in need.



FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **The earth was a formless void** and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters (*Genesis 1:2*).
- **The Advocate, the Holy Spirit**, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and remind you of all that I have said to you (*John 14:26*).
- **You will receive power when the Holy Spirit** has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth (*Acts 1:8*).
- **Led by the Spirit** more deeply into the life of Christ, we see the unveiled face of the living God. God's glory is beheld in Jesus Christ (*LaCugna, 379*).



I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

Jesus formed a community of disciples to continue his work. When the Jewish feast of Pentecost came after his Resurrection, many of his disciples, with Mary his mother, were praying when the Holy Spirit filled them all. The Church, alive with the Spirit, is called to be a sacrament, a living sign of God's life and love, the life of the Trinity. Its mission is to announce the Gospel (Good News) of Christ's life, teachings, death and resurrection, and all that this means for each person, inviting people into relationship with God in Jesus Christ: a "People of God", the "Body of Christ".

The Church is 'one' from the heart of One God, three persons. Christ prayed "that they may all be one" (*John 17:21*) but we have far to go! The worldwide Church is called to be a community of believers, animated by the Spirit, with Christ at the centre, united in their diversity. For those who share the Nicene Creed, the world-wide ecumenical movement, bringing Christian churches into dialogue for greater understanding, is a necessity rather than an option.

The Church is 'holy' because Christ is holy. The Creed calls us to conversion of heart, so that, as individuals and communities, we might grow in holiness, becoming more like him. The Spirit helps us.

The Church is 'catholic' because it is called to be universal and open to all. All are invited. All are welcome. The Greek *katholikos* and *kat'holour*, means 'universal,' 'all-inclusive' or 'open to the whole'. Here, 'catholic' does not refer only to the Roman Catholic tradition, but to the universal church, with many Christian churches sharing this Creed and Christ's mission. We are not yet truly inclusive but, with God's help, it is a goal for which we strive.

The Church is 'apostolic' because its foundation is in Christ and the lives and teachings of the apostles (an *apostolos* is 'one who is sent off' with a message). We draw our faith from the writings of the apostolic age, as expressed in the New Testament and faithfully handed down through generations. We live this faith, seeking the Spirit's guidance in new times and situations.

FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **Go therefore and make disciples of all nations**, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age (*Matthew 28:19-20*).
- **I ask ... that they may all be one.** As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me" (*John 17:20-21*).
- **Living trinitarian faith means living God's life:** living from and for God, from and for others. Living trinitarian faith means living as Jesus Christ lived ... preaching the gospel; relying totally on God; offering healing and reconciliation; rejecting laws, customs, conventions that place persons beneath rules; resisting temptation; praying constantly; eating with modern-day lepers and other outcasts; embracing the enemy and the sinner; dying for the sake of the gospel if it is God's will. Living trinitarian faith means living according to the power and presence of the Holy Spirit: training the eyes of the heart on God's face ... responding to God in faith, hope and love; eventually becoming unrestrictedly united with God (*Catherine LaCugna, 400 - 401*).



I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins

Baptism begins the process of initiation into the Christian community for many Christian churches. It celebrates forgiveness of sin and a new identity in Christ and in the life of our trinitarian God of Love. For the Catholic Church (of the Roman Tradition), full initiation and belonging is completed with the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Eucharist.

Catholic Christians have a sacramental view of life and creation because, in Jesus, *'the Word was made flesh'* (Jn 1:14), a divine person born into the created world. Because of the Incarnation, creation is able to point towards God we cannot see, and help us to encounter God. In each of the Sacraments, there is "a visible sign of an invisible grace" of God. In Baptism, dying and rising to a new life in Christ is symbolised by immersion in water, or water poured, as the new Christian is baptised "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit".

Confirmation seals what was begun at Baptism: Anointing with the oil of Chrism, the laying on of hands, an ancient act of prayer for the Holy Spirit, and the words 'Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit,' are followed by the sign of peace. God's Spirit is given and received. In Eucharist, the Risen Jesus Christ feeds those gathered in his name with himself, in bread and wine: "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19).

FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **Make disciples ... baptising them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ... (Matthew 28:19).
- **Therefore, we have been buried with him by baptism into death**, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).
- **The visible is a path to the invisible** ... the invisible is incarnate in the visible. "Through the invisible made visible, we pass from visible things to the invisible." (St Augustine quoted in Tony Kelly, 81).
- **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me**, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free (Luke 4:18).



and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Because of the Resurrection, life is changed, not ended by death. Our true and final home is to be eternally with God who loved each one of us into being. When the Risen Jesus appeared to his followers, he spoke, ate, walked with them and showed the scars made by the crucifixion nails. They could see, hear and touch him. He was with them in the flesh, but different. Saint Paul spoke later of his "glorified" or "spiritual" body. We are destined to rise from death, body and spirit: "So it is with the resurrection of the dead. What is sown is perishable, what is raised is imperishable ... It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body" (*1 Corinthians 15:42-44*).

In the life of the world to come, we will meet God 'face to face'. Although belief in the **Communion of Saints** is not stated in the Nicene Creed, it is implied in 'the life of the world to come'. In every celebration of Eucharist, Catholic Christians remember we are not alone on this earthly journey. Those who have died live beyond time, forming an invisible community, 'in communion' with the living. We are able to pray to them, because of their union with God, who answers our prayers. Some saints are formally recognised by the Church as role models for faith and life. Others, including our relatives, may be unknown except to ourselves. In the Communion of Saints we recognise that Mary, the Mother of Jesus, Mother of God, has a special place. She was first in faith among Jesus' disciples. When she stood with the "beloved disciple" at the foot of the Cross, Jesus gave his mother, and this disciple with all disciples, to each other.

Amen, from the ancient Hebrew, means "So be it" or "I, or we, agree".

FROM SCRIPTURE AND WISE TEACHERS

- **I am the resurrection** and the life (*John 11:25*).
- ... **About those who have died** ... For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died (*1 Thessalonians 4:13-14*).
- **Beloved, we are God's children now**; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is (*1 John 3:2*).

- **If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you**, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies also through his Spirit that dwells in you (*Romans 8:11*).
- **What no eye has seen**, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him (*1 Corinthians 2:9*).
- **Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth ...** God himself will be with them and be their God; he will wipe every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more ... (*Revelation 21:1-4*).
- **When Jesus saw his mother** and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, “Woman, here is your son.” Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother” (*John 19:26-27*).



FOR YOUR LIFE

REFLECTING BACK – GOING FORWARD

The Church has a mission in the world, or some would say, “God’s mission has a Church”. Can you find words, or perhaps make a drawing to describe Jesus Christ’s mission in the world and the Church called to share that mission?

Consider

- **Any final insights** you may have?
- **How you might experience** hearing or reciting the Nicene Creed in the future?
- **A prayer** of thanks for the past, and a prayer of asking for the future.





Prayer

Creator God, Father,

you are the ultimate source of everything,
the loving and self-communicating
foundation of all that exists.

Jesus, Son of Mary,

you are the reflection of the Father.
Through you all things were created.
You united yourself to this earth.

Spirit of Life and Love,

you are intimately present at the
very heart of the universe,
inspiring and guiding us on new pathways.
Loving God, three Persons,
the world was created by you.
We celebrate the wonder and beauty of
the universe and praise you,
Trinity, God. Amen.

FOOTNOTES:

¹ ‘Consubstantial’ is an English translation of the Latin *consubstantialem*, which in turn is a translation of the Greek word *homoousios*, meaning “of the same being” or “of the same substance”. It is intended to clarify that Jesus is fully God and not a created being.

² The Latin text of the Creed uses the word *homines*. The liturgical texts have typically translated *homines* as ‘men’. A more accurate translation of *homines* into English would be ‘people’.

³ The original text of the Creed did not include “and the Son”, known as the ‘filioque clause’. It was added to some liturgical texts a few centuries later and adopted by the Latin (Roman or Western) Churches. Eastern Orthodox Churches do not include “and the Son” in the text of the Creed.

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