

Some Basic Points of Trinitarian Doctrine

(As developed in Relation to the Nicene Creed)

Note that the first version of the “Nicene Creed,” as it is usually called, was delineated at the First Ecumenical Council, held at Nicaea (in modern-day Turkey) in 325 A.D. The version we use today was adopted at the Second Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in 381 A.D., and is known technically as the “Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed.”

- *The primary purpose of the Creed is to affirm the full divine nature of the Son (and the Spirit).*
- *The philosophical explanations and terminology are intended to say as much as possible about a mystery that is, ultimately, beyond description. (“in order that we might not be obliged to remain silent” – Augustine)*

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- 1. In the “economy” of salvation, God has revealed God’s self as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.**
- 2. The economic Trinity corresponds to God’s inner being, that is, the “immanent Trinity.”**
 - The Son (and Spirit) are “of one substance (or “being”) with the Father” (*homoousios*).
- 3. God is to be understood as three persons in one undivided substance.**
 - That is, 3 *hypostases* and 1 *ousia* (Greek), or 3 *persona* and 1 *substantia* (Latin).
- 4. God’s Oneness exists in an eternal communion, or interpenetration, of the three in each other.**
 - *Perichoresis* (Greek), means “circulation” or “rotation.”