

Spirit Breathed, Spirit Blowing: Christian Tradition and Us

- Gift

- In what ways has the Holy Spirit inspired Christian tradition?
- How has the Spirit inspired us through Christian tradition?

- Promise

- In what ways is the Spirit inspiring Christian tradition?
- How is the Spirit inspiring us through tradition?

Tradition: excavating etymology

Paul and “handing on/over”

I Cor 11:23 NRSV

“For I received from the Lord what I also handed [*paredoka; tradidi*] on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed [*paredidoto; tradebatur*] took a loaf of bread” . . .

I Cor 15:3—5 NRSV

“For I handed [*paredoka; tradidi*] on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that 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, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.”

Doctrine develops.

Elizabeth Johnson

Consider Jesus: Waves of Renewal in Christology, 1993; p. 1

The Creed(s) of Nicaea

- The Creed of Nicaea (325)
 - “and we believe in the Holy Spirit.”
 - Anathemas: “But those who say he was not, or he was not before his generation, or he came to be out of nothing, or who assert that he, the Son of God, is a different *hypostasis* or *ousia*, or that he is a creature, or changeable, or mutable, the Catholic and Apostolic church anathematizes them.”
 - Anathema: A denunciation; A ban or curse pronounced by ecclesial authorities; often excommunication but also physical separation ala exile.

- 381: The Constantinopolitan or Creed of 150 Fathers
 - Popularly known as the Nicene Creed
 - Goes beyond 325's Creed by clarifying the deity of the Holy Spirit
 - But not use non-biblical terms of *homoousios* or *ousios*
 - Rather: who proceeds from the Father [and the Son/ *filio + que*]
 - *From the son: an ecumenical controversy*
 - “who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified”
 - Proceeds with descriptions of the Spirit's activities

A Key Contention: the being/person of Christ Jesus

- Was Jesus Christ of the very same essence as God?
- What language is appropriate or even best suited for describing the relationship between God and Jesus Christ
 - The rule of monotheism: Christians affirm that there is only one God
 - The rule of maximalism: whatever can be said that does not violate monotheism
- So many challenges at this stage in developing Christian language and thought.
 - Docetism: Jesus Christ only seemed human
 - Arius and Arianism: “there was a time when the Son was not”
 - Table Talk: Look for textual examples.

Nicene Creed

- Theological Reflections
- Table Talk
- One Question
- One Insight

Nicaea 2025: Important Occasions for the Church and its Churches in 2025

- Commemorating 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18—25 in Northern Hemisphere
 - WCC and Faith and Order changed to this week, from Confession of Saint Peter to the Conversion of Saint Paul, in 1941.
 - 2025 Theme: Do you believe this?
 - Martha's confession; Thomas's confession; Psalm 131, and I Peter 1:8-9
 - Week of prayers and readings
 - Ecumenical service
- Easter occurs for Eastern Orthodox and Western Christians on April 20, 2025
 - Council of Nicaea established a way to set Holy Week according to lunar calendar; Western Church(es) follow Gregorian calendar; Pope Gregory's corrections in 1582.

Commemorating Nicaea

- “Co + memorate” : to re-member together
 - What does it mean to live the apostolic faith today?
 - How can churches summon one another to visible unity in Christ?
- Signals both affirmation and critique
 - What to be treasured? (voting on doctrine)
 - What to be denounced? (collusions with Empire)

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- Promise
 - In what ways is the Spirit inspiring Christian tradition through the Nicene Creed?
 - How is the Spirit inspiring us through the Nicene Creed?