

THE NICENE CREED – a skeletal version of brother Mike Burke’s exploration 2010/11

	<i>Notes on this part of the Creed</i>	<i>How this belief shows</i>
<i>I believe in one God</i>	Who is the real “God” of your life? money? possessions? power? sex? achievement? “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be”.	love, patience, peace, joy, gentleness, goodness, endurance, truthfulness, modesty, self-control, purity, mildness(Gal 5:22-6)
<i>the Father almighty</i>	“Father” – Jesus’ word, intimacy & trust, not gender (cf Gen 1:27:“God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.”) “Almighty” – bigger than we can imagine, embracing different faith- communities as well as all whom society marginalizes – a God of inclusion...	Not reducing God to my thinking – which includes: mydiscriminating, myjudgements, and not forging God’s signature on my opinion.
<i>maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible</i>	“all things” – the wonder of creation “invisible” –e.g. generosity, love, graciousness, enthusiasm, energy, music, Sacraments & sacraments. Notice 2 key words of the Creed: “all”&“one” (both repeated) – “all” are clearly connected, and all are “one”.	Acknowledging God in “visible and invisible”. Treating earth and its resources with the respect I desire for myself. Connecting with others’ troubles and triumphs.
<i>And in one Lord Jesus* Christ</i>	“Christ” is not a surname – for us, “the One”, “the One and Only”. “Jesus” – see below for more...	Discipleship shows in Christ-like living, not in Jeee-sus hype.
<i>the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages</i>	“Only” = unique but not exclusive: we are all sons and daughters of God:“To all who did accept him, he gave power to become children of God” (Jn 1:12) How was Jesus unique? Christ before Christmas, never not there:“before all ages” - “In the beginning was the Word... he was with God in the beginning.” (Jn 1:1-2)	Rootedness. Deep sureness.
<i>God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father</i>	Of the same nature, cf the former “one in being with the Father”. “Light” – choice of metaphor – cf energy, life, warmth, clarity. “consubstantial” – a very Catholic word – another is ‘and’...	Jesus taken as our window into God: What you see is what you get.
<i>through him all things were made</i>	“all things” – implications: us, our bodies & their functions, our minds & thinking & imagining, our inventions and our art... What about the bad things?ultimately there’s only the Word of God in myriad forms, including distortions(cf Jesus on the cross): the bad as the shadow of the good that God created.	A sense of the dignity – the worth – of all, including self.

<p><i>For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven</i></p>	<p>“us men” – though the Nicene Creed is a classic, yet we persist in our insensitive obstinacy about gender inclusiveness. “salvation” – the news tells us every day that we’re in a mess. “down” – a primal metaphor, not to be taken literally. “heaven” as God’s state of being, contrasted to earth.</p>	<p>In response to being saved, vibrant gratitude and appreciation.</p>
<p><i>and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man</i></p>	<p>“Mary” – significantly, the only other person mentioned in the Creed – united by blood ... “<i>This is my blood</i>” ... Mary’s Assumption reminds us of this oneness... “was incarnate of the Virgin Mary” – sometimes we get so caught up in the mystery of how his mother could be a virgin, that we overlook the bigger mystery: that God could have a mother – in other words, be truly human. “became man” (human) – not a human costume, but united to body – the mysterious oneness of human body and soul. Implications of incarnation – e.g. Jesus felt pain, he felt attraction, his body did everything that ours do...</p>	<p>Honouring of the human body. Honouring of Mary.</p>
<p><i>For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate</i></p>	<p>“crucified” – criminal, undignified, painful, barbaric – a reject of society – the Word distorted & offered for God’s acceptance of human failure... “<i>This is my body</i>” – it was broken bread – at Mass we offer our broken bits. “Pontius Pilate” = the systems and structures of the day.</p>	<p>Accepting that it is not an easy or suffering-free path, because standing for justice and truth often draws a violent reaction.</p>
<p><i>he suffered death and was buried</i></p>	<p>“suffered” & “death” & “buried” – rubbed in – not play-acting, but real... All Jesus could hold on to was trust that God’s love was everlasting (cf Psalms) – mere memories of a person can’t be loved, only someone still living.</p>	<p>Accepting death as part of life, and trusting that God’s love is forever.</p>
<p><i>and rose again on the third day</i></p>	<p>“rose” – it was God who did the raising. “again” – yes and no, not the same – something was the same, but something was distinct too. “third day” – maybe to leave a whole day for it to sink in?</p>	<p>Celebration of resurrection every Sunday. Living our daily life in the light of resurrection.</p>
<p><i>in accordance with the Scriptures</i></p>	<p>‘Same old story’ – God bringing life out of death, meaning out of suffering, vitality out of annihilation, good out of evil – God as a constant character in the human</p>	<p>Looking to Scripture for the blueprint for life. Confidently seeking where God is in my/our</p>

	story.	story.
<i>He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father</i>	“right hand of Father” – when you talk to Jesus, you’ve reached head office. “ascended” – Ascension as moving on; not just Jesus, but us –the learning of the resurrection experiences	Re-cognising Jesus in the ordinary, as well as extraordinary.
<i>He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end</i>	“judge” – by the criteria of Jesus’ life and teachings, by the values of Jesus. “kingdom” – his way, a transformation “no end” – completing the time frame: ...from all eternity, now, without end...	Use these same ways of Jesus to guide how I live: how I see & judge and act.
<i>And 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</i>	“proceeds” – again, of the same nature, one in being. “the giver of life” – all God’s gifts – cf the classic gifts of the Spirit: <i>wisdom, understanding, counsel, courage, knowledge, piety, reverence for God.</i>	Sincere dependence on God’s Spirit.
<i>who has spoken through the prophets</i>	“spoken through” - so God speaks through people. “the prophets” – notpopular... who are today’s prophets? “has” – still today.	Alertness for the voice of God – and awareness that I will be God’s voice for someone sometime.
<i>And one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church</i>	“Church” = Body of Christ, held together by God’s Spirit. “one” but also divided. “holy” but also sinful & corrupt. “catholic” – all-embracing, also narrow “apostolic” – faithful, also losing the plot	Loyalty to Church - which includes critique & challenge.
<i>I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins</i>	“one Baptism” – total – cf one is never “a bit pregnant”; you’re in or else out. “forgiveness” – God’s forgiveness tied to our forgiveness of others (“ <i>as we forgive</i> ”).	Truly accepting God’s forgiveness - and exercising forgiveness.
<i>I look forward to the resurrection of the dead & the life of the world to come</i>	look forward” importance of this – a deeper version of that. “resurrection” – continuing in the experience of God’s never-ending love.	We live with underlying and transforming hope. We trust in God’s promises, letting go of things in which people usually put their security, doing things that many do not see as practical or rewarding.
<i>Amen</i>	My signature.	
<i>*Jesus</i>	The Nicene Creed prunes all the false developments, hits all the heresies of its day, but leaves out whatever was never in doubt. But all the things the Creed ‘leaves out’ are covered here –e.g. God’s love for us, the call of justice, the call to love...	Authentic Christ-likeness, not domesticated and diluted discipleship (“ <i>By their fruits you will know them</i> ”).

	Which “Jesus”? – the devotional tamed one, or the wild original? Lion or kitty?	
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