

2Peter chap. 1

Council of Nicea

1 Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ: 2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, 3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: 4 Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. 5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. 10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: 11 For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. 13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance; 14 Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me. 15 Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance. 16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. 17 For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. 18 And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount. 19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: 20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

Peter is not only the rock on which Christ said he would build his church but he was also given the keys to the kingdom. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven Matt. 16:18,19. The expression 'power of the keys' was employed by Christ to confer on St. Peter the supreme authority over his Church. Included in this authority is the power of order, the power of jurisdiction, the power to define in questions of faith and morals and the power to confer or to withhold forgiveness. St. Augustine the great Doctor of the Church declares that the authority to bind and loose was not a purely personal gift to St. Peter, but was conferred upon him as representing the Church. The whole Church, he urges, exercises the power of forgiving sins. Thus signifying that the power to absolve sin through the shed blood of Christ (1John 1:7) was to be imparted through St. Peter to members of the Church's hierarchy throughout the world.

And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. We already discussed the spiritual virtues of faith, hope, charity and patience. And St. Augustine had the famous quote on the natural virtues: that temperance is love keeping itself entire and incorrupt for God; fortitude is love bearing everything readily for the sake of God; justice is love serving God only, and therefore ruling well all else, as subject to man; prudence is love making a right distinction between what helps it towards God and what might hinder it. The virtue of prudence also described as wisdom, enables us to make correct moral judgments. The virtue of justice or fairness respects the rights of others and our dealings with them. The virtue of fortitude also termed as courage is the ability to confront fear, uncertainty and intimidation. And the virtue of temperance is the practice of self-control, discretion and moderation. Whereas fortitude protects us from running away from pain, temperance preserves us from running toward sinful pleasures.

Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth. Jesus gave a strict command that we should never judge our brother because we cannot see into the heart. But at the same time there has to be minimum requirements for the faithful in order to preserve Church order. In my studies of the early church councils I have discovered three tests of faith which are the Holy Trinity, Holy Sunday and Holy Mary. These minimum requirements for the faithful are also important because they are received more by sacred tradition than by sacred scripture. Most Protestant Christians will affirm the Trinity and honor the Lord's day but they will never show

any reverence to the Blessed Mother. I was raised Protestant and I am convinced that all the heretical things I encountered in my younger years were the fruit of the heretical Reformation that was no reformation at all but the great falling away from truth foretold of in the scriptures. The best thing that could happen to any Protestant is to cultivate and develop a relationship with the Blessed Mother who is the highest and most exalted of all of God's creation.

The year was 325 and the First Ecumenical Council of Nicea was convened by the Emperor Constantine to combat the heresy of Arius in defining the true Divinity of the Son of God. Also for the fixing of the date for keeping Easter and imposing various penances and granting indulgence. The sessions were held in the principal church, and in the central hall of the Imperial palace. There were some 318 bishops present including St. Alexander of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, Macarius of Jerusalem, Eusebius of Nicomedia, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Nicholas of Myra. Arius, a priest from Alexandria, Egypt denied that the Son is of one essence, nature, or substance with God; He is not consubstantial with the Father, and therefore not like Him, or equal in dignity, or co-eternal, or within the real sphere of Deity. Catholics had always maintained that Christ was truly the Son and truly God. Catholic teachers held the Monarchia, that there was only one God; and the Trinity, that this Absolute One existed in three distinct subsistences; and the Circumincession, that Father, Word, and Spirit could not be separated, in fact or in thought, from one another. Arius believed that the Word, through which all things were made, was made, and failed to be made new by the Word, through which all things are made new. He was eventually banished and his books were cast into the fire.

Original Nicene Creed - "We believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, light of light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of the same substance with the Father, through whom all things were made both in heaven and on earth; who for us men and our salvation descended, was incarnate, and was made man, suffered and rose again the third day, ascended into heaven and cometh to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost. Those who say: There was a time when He was not, and He was not before He was begotten; and that He was made out of nothing; or who maintain that He is of another hypostasis or another substance, or that the Son of God is created, or mutable, or subject to change, the Catholic Church anathematizes." About the Father and the Son, the creed used the term *homoousios* (of one substance) to define the relationship between the Father and the Son. Eventually *homoousios* was recognized as the hallmark of Orthodoxy, and was further developed into the formula of "three persons, one being" or the Holy Trinity.

Nicene Creed as produced from the First Ecumenical Council of Constantinople (381) - "We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, and born of the Father before all ages. (God of God) light of light, true God of true God. Begotten not made, consubstantial to 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 Ghost and of the Virgin Mary and was made man; was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, suffered and was buried; and the third day rose again according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of the Father, and shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, of whose Kingdom there shall be no end. And in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father (and the Son), who together with the Father and the Son is to be adored and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets. And one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We confess one baptism for the remission of sins. And we look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen."