



The Fourth Century Formation of the Doctrine of the Trinity

Saturday 14th June 2025
10am – 4pm

Pusey House
St Giles', Oxford



"Begotten *not made, of one being with the Father*"... is a crucial but perplexing phrase in the Nicene Creed. What does it mean, why was it so important (and controversial) and how did we end up with the doctrine of the Trinity?

The answers are to be found in the heated 4th century debate which arose following the condemnation of the preaching of a popular Egyptian priest named Arius.

This Study Day will commence by providing an overview of what Arius taught and why, before examining the initial response of the Church (at the council of Nicaea in 325 AD) and the text of the *original* Nicene creed.

However, within a few years, the "consensus" reached at Nicaea was rejected by a number of different groups within the Church, and over more than 50 years, the search for alternative formulations continued. Numerous councils were held during this time, often resulting in one or more alternative creeds which were received with varying degrees of success. An overview of a number of these additional councils, and their alternative formulations, will be provided, in order to bring out the different sides of the debate.

The end of this period of intense debate and controversy was marked by the classical expression of Trinitarian faith in the creed produced at the council of Constantinople (in 381 AD). The course will therefore end with a comparison of this creed with the one produced at Nicaea.

We'll use English translations of key documents (such as Arius' own letters) as an aid to understanding the sometimes alien language and concepts used during the debate. Active participation will be encouraged!

Who is the day aimed at? Anyone who's read this far and is still interested! A complete *lack* of previous experience or study is assumed, although clergy, lay readers or others with some knowledge will still find much of interest.

There is no formal charge for the event, but card donations will be encouraged on the day to support the work of Pusey House on a "Pay What You Want" basis. To book, see [OrdinaryTheology.com](https://www.ordinarytheology.com)