

God's Church – One and Catholic

WE return this morning to the Nicene Creed, to a five week series that will allow us to complete looking at the teaching of this ancient Christian confession.

Do you remember how it goes?

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Having examined what it says of Father, Son and Spirit we come to the final paragraph

And for the next three weeks WE are going to particularly focus on the first line - We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

Do those words excite you? They should for

With those words Christians confess themselves to be caught up in a great and noble love story, and that the revelation of God they have just confessed, the revelation of the Father, Son and Spirit, is the revelation of the saving

God, the God we have come to know and confess because He has acted to save sinners, to call them out of a world of sin, of disorder and death and into His people, the people He has prepared to live in His presence for ever through the death of His Son.

And while that is a mouthful and you might think it is just preacher's hyperbole to talk of the confession as a confession of being loved, this is the way Scripture speaks of the church - as loved

Remember Ephesians 5, a passage we often hear at weddings, a passage to which I usually refer to remind myself and all husbands that what the Scripture tells us is to love our wives. But it commands this because we follow the Lord who has first loved His bride.

Ephesians 5: ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. ²⁷He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless.

That we can confess our faith in the church is because Christ has loved the church, and loved her effectively. It is His giving of Himself that qualifies her to be His bride.

Think a bit more about that, but

For clarity – what is the church Paul is speaking of here, the church the creed is confessing – for we can use the word church in a number of ways

Building

Denomination – presbyterian church, roman catholic church, uniting church

Local congregation

And it would be hard to confess any of them as always one, holy, catholic and apostolic with a straight face

And the Scriptures can also use the word church to refer [denote] to a number of different but related things

The commonest use is for the local congregation or congregations, the gathering of believers and the believers who gather in a certain place

Romans 16: ⁵Greet also the church that meets in their home

1 Cor. 1: ²To the church of God at Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus, called as saints, with all those in every place who call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord—both their Lord and ours.

1 Thess. 1: To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

[2 Cor. 1:1, 1 Cor. 4:17, Gal. 1:2, Phil 4:15, Col. 4:15-16, Rev. 22:16]

And the NT letters were written because they were often not one, holy, catholic, or apostolic

Just think of the Corinthians

Divided, experiencing Schism, a rent in what should be whole

1 Cor. 1: ¹⁰Now I urge you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree in what you say, that there be no divisions among you, and that you be united with the same understanding and the same conviction.

1 Cor. 11: ¹⁸For to begin with, I hear that when you come together as a church there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it.

A congregation tolerating Sexual immorality

1 Cor. 5: It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and the kind of sexual immorality that is not even tolerated among the Gentiles—a man is sleeping with his father's wife.

Where some didn't seem to care for others

1 Cor. 8:¹² Now when you sin like this against brothers and sisters and wound their weak conscience, you are sinning against Christ [1 Cor. 11:17-22]

A congregation flirting with false apostles

2 Cor. 11:³ But I fear that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his cunning, your minds may be seduced from a sincere and pure devotion to Christ. ⁴ For if a person comes and preaches another Jesus, whom we did not preach, or you receive a different spirit, which you had not received, or a different gospel, which you had not accepted, you put up with it splendidly!

The Corinthian congregation was not one, holy, catholic – and on the verge of not being apostolic. And we read Revelation 2 and 3 and see other congregations who couldn't be described by these words

But there is another the NT uses the word church, to refer to something bigger than local congregations

You get a sense of this wider use in Acts 20, for although He is talking to the Ephesian elders he is not just talking of the Ephesian church

Acts 20:²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you as overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood.

But we see this bigger sense especially in Ephesians and Colossians

There the church is described as the body of Christ, the people through whom God is demonstrating His wisdom to the spiritual powers

*Eph. 1:²² And **he subjected everything under his feet** and appointed him as head over everything for the church, ²³ which is his body, the fullness of the one who fills all things in every way. [5:29 Col. 1:18, 24]*

Ephesians 3:¹⁰ This is so that God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens.

This is more than a world wide church – all who call themselves Christian in the world at any one time, which we could speak of with churches in the plural. Paul speaks of churches plural of congregations in a certain geographical area, and generally, without geographical limit

1 Cor. 16:¹⁹ The churches of Asia send you greetings. Aquila and Priscilla send you greetings warmly in the Lord, along with the church that meets in their home.

Romans 16:¹⁶ Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ send you greetings.

[1 Cor. 11:16, Gal. 1:2]

But the church in Ephesians and Colossians, the church that is the body which has Christ as its head, is the church that consists of all God's people – across all the nations and all the ages, those Paul can speak of as

Chosen – *Ephesians 1:⁴ For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him.*

Conceived as Gathered in heaven even now 2:6 by God's grace

*Ephesians 2:*⁶ *He also raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavens in Christ Jesus,*⁷ *so that in the coming ages he might display the immeasurable riches of his grace through his kindness to us in Christ Jesus*

The one new humanity, the fruit of Christ's saving work Eph. 2:14-15

*Ephesians 2:*¹⁴ *For he is our peace, who made both groups one and tore down the dividing wall of hostility. In his flesh,*¹⁵ *he made of no effect the law consisting of commands and expressed in regulations, so that he might create in himself one new man from the two, resulting in peace.*

What our confession describes as

WCF 25:1

The catholic or universal Church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. 1

This is a church that none of us can really see in its fulness, that does not find perfect expression on earth – in any congregation or institution –

Which is why we say 'we believe'

This line in the creed is a confession of faith, not an observation, of faith in God

Understood as referring to this church we see this line of the Creed is as a confession that God has achieved His saving purpose, and that He has achieved His purpose through His Son who came down from heaven and became man for our salvation and His Spirit, the giver of life

God has had a saving purpose, a determination to have a people of His own, from the beginning

Think about Ephesians 5. Paul did not think up the picture of a bride for the church, for God's saved people

It had a history.

As marriage was also a covenant, and God had entered into a covenant relationship with the nation Israel at Sinai, marriage was a naturally available picture for the Lord's relationship with His people

Sadly, as the history of God's dealings with His people was often marked by frustration and disappointment because of Israel's disobedience, it was often a picture used to highlight Israel's unfaithfulness

The prophet Hosea was told to marry a promiscuous woman, so his marriage would be a parable of the LORD's relationship with Israel

*Hosea 1:*² *When the LORD first spoke to Hosea, he said this to him:*

*Go and marry a woman of promiscuity,
and have children of promiscuity,
for the land is committing blatant acts of promiscuity
by abandoning the LORD.*

*Hosea 2:*² *Rebuke your mother; rebuke her.
For she is not my wife and I am not her husband.
Let her remove the promiscuous look from her face
and her adultery from between her breasts. [Hosea2:2-13]*

Jeremiah and Ezekiel both use the image to highlight the people of God's, Judah's unfaithfulness to the LORD

*Jeremiah 3: If a man divorces his wife
and she leaves him to marry another,
can he ever return to her?
Wouldn't such a land become totally defiled?
But you!
You have prostituted yourself with many partners—
can you return to me?
This is the LORD's declaration.*

Ezekiel 16:⁸ "Then I passed by you and saw you, and you were indeed at the age for love. So I spread the edge of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. I pledged myself to you, entered into a covenant with you—this is the declaration of the Lord GOD—and you became mine.⁹ I washed you with water, rinsed off your blood, and anointed you with oil.

– but Ezekiel 16 is an indictment of Israel's unfaithfulness, of her many adulteries

But because the LORD was a God of steadfast love, of generous and faithful love that went beyond what could be expected or demanded, marriage, God's people as God's bride, also became a picture of promise

*Isaiah 54:⁵ Indeed, your husband is your Maker—
his name is the LORD of Armies—
and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer;
he is called the God of the whole earth.
⁶ For the LORD has called you,
like a wife deserted and wounded in spirit,
a wife of one's youth when she is rejected,"
says your God.*

*Hosea 2:¹⁹ I will take you to be my wife forever.
I will take you to be my wife in righteousness,
justice, love, and compassion.
²⁰ I will take you to be my wife in faithfulness,
and you will know the LORD.*

Even Ezekiel 16:59-63

But God's determination to have a people for Himself was older than Sinai where God entered into that covenant with the people of Israel. Sinai itself was a fulfilment of the promise God had made to Abraham – that his descendants would be His people and He their God, a promise repeated often

Gen. 17:⁷ I will confirm my covenant that is between me and you and your future offspring throughout their generations. It is a permanent covenant to be your God and the God of your offspring after you.

Ex. 19:5-6 [1 Peter 2:9-10]

Lev. 26:¹¹ I will place my residence among you, and I will not reject you. ¹² I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people.

Deut. 29:12-13

And despite Israel's failure to obey God continued in his determination to have a people of His own, who would be truly His people, loving Him and keeping His commands, a people amongst whom He could dwell

Jer. 31:³³ "Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days"—the LORD's declaration. "I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

Ezk. 37:²⁷ My dwelling place will be with them; I will be their God, and they will be my people.

And Paul says in Eph. 5, when he quotes Genesis 2:24, that this was God's purpose from the beginning Eph. 5:31-32, that from the beginning marriage was a picture first of all of the union of Christ and His people, that from the beginning He intended to have a people fit to live in His presence – without spot or wrinkle, but holy and blameless

*Ephesians 5:²⁹ For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church,³⁰ since we are members of his body.³¹ **For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.**³² This mystery is profound, but I am talking about Christ and the church.*

And when you remember that the book of Revelation ends with the marriage of the Lamb, with God's people pictured as the holy city coming down for heaven like a bride adorned for her husband, you realise that the story of the world, of human history, has been throughout, from beginning to end, Genesis to Revelation, the story of God's love for His people

In making this confession of the Church we are confessing that the purpose human sin appeared to make impossible the living God has realised in His Son through His death and rising and exaltation, and through His pouring out His Spirit on His people

That He has Redeemed those who were in slavery to sin and death

He has cleansed those who were defiled

He has given a new heart to love God to those whose hearts were dead to God

He has Gathered to Himself, gathered into one – those who were scattered

That HE will have His people dwelling in His presence, who delight in Him and in whom HE delights

Realised the purpose God has had because He is love, and has never stopped being the God of love

For this church has come into being because He loved, freely, graciously, mercifully

Ephesians 2:⁴ But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us,⁵ made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!

1 John 4:⁹ God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his one and only Son into the world so that we might live through him.¹⁰ Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Ephesians 5:²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her

It is a line about the church, but in confessing this we are confessing that the

The God we have confessed in the paragraphs before – is the faithful God of steadfast love, the gracious God, and more – that we, believers in Jesus, are the recipients of His determined, generous, costly, love

But why do we confess this church, the object of God's seeking, gracious love, to be one, holy, catholic and apostolic

These terms are applied to the church because this church is the creation of God in realization of His purpose, and because of the way He has achieved His purpose

– through the preaching and teaching of the apostles the Lord Jesus sent out.

Look at One and Catholic today – terms that tell us this is the church you must belong to if you are to be saved, come to live in God’s presence in the new heaven and earth, and this is the church people from every kind of background can belong to, that you, whatever your race, wealth, education, culture, can belong to if you will confess Jesus Lord.

One – for the One God has only one church brought into being by the one and only Saviour, the Lord Jesus, whom the only God has sent into the world.

It is the Lord Jesus who builds His church – Matt. 16:16-18

And it can only be entered by faith in Him, confessing Him as Peter does as the Christ, as Lord

Christ has only one body, one bride

As Paul says in Ephesians 4

Ephesians 4: ⁴There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope at your calling— ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.

One body – the church [Eph. 1:23]

And its oneness is an expression of all the other oneness’s

One Spirit – there is only one power of life that animates the whole body and every part of it, the Spirit of God

It is receiving the Spirit from Christ that makes us members of that body

1 Cor. 12: ¹²For just as the body is one and has many parts, and all the parts of that body, though many, are one body—so also is Christ. ¹³For we were all baptized in one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink.

There is only one Lord, the Lord Jesus, whom all must confess to belong to Christ’s people. The body which is the church has only one head

One faith, which all Christians must believe, encapsulated in the gospel summary

One baptism – only one way to be admitted into the church, repentance and faith in Jesus, which is expressed in receiving the promises of Christ in baptism. There is only one point of entry into the church - all believers start at the same place, repentance and faith in Christ

One God who has only one people, those who belong to Jesus. God does not save His people in any other way than through His Son

John 14: ⁶Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Acts 4: ¹²There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to people by which we must be saved.”

As Jesus is the only Saviour, the only Lord, the One in whom God’s purposes for Creation find fulfilment, his church, his body, made up of all who believe the gospel in every place and time, sustained by the One Spirit, is One.

To claim there is more than one body, one Church, is to say either God has more Saviours than Jesus or to claim there are other ways of being Jesus’, of being joined to Jesus, than by believing the gospel and receiving the One Spirit. Neither is possible

The church is One

And because God, Father, Son and Spirit is the One Creator, the God of all, the church is Catholic

I know catholic causes confusion and consternation because the church of Rome has appropriated the term to itself, implying only those in fellowship with the bishop of Rome are in the one catholic church. That was always a fairly audacious grab for power and significance, which the equally old Greek churches never accepted and Protestants explicitly reject.

But we still use the term catholic in the creed, for catholic is a transliteration of the Greek term *katholikos*, which means universal, general.

In the creed it means that the one holy church embraces the whole world, is made up of and open to people from everywhere throughout the world, people of every nation and tribe and tongue.

It is saying that the Lord Jesus in His death and rising is not just the Saviour of the Jews, but of the world

John 4: 42 And they told the woman, "We no longer believe because of what you said, since we have heard for ourselves and know that this really is the Savior of the world."

As we confess in the creed, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus is the Creator of the whole world, the maker of heaven and earth

His purposes embrace the whole world

In love He has sent His Son into the world to save the world [John 3:16-17]

He has only One saviour who is the Saviour of the whole world 1 Tim 2:5-6

1 Timothy 2: 5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave himself as a ransom for all, a testimony at the proper time.

And because of this His one church, His one people, is universal, made up of people throughout the world, people from every race and tongue

This is what the hosts of heaven sing in praise of

Rev. 5: 9 And they sang a new song:

*You are worthy to take the scroll
and to open its seals,
because you were slaughtered,
and you purchased people
for God by your blood
from every tribe and language
and people and nation.*

*¹⁰ You made them a kingdom
and priests to our God,
and they will reign on the earth.*

We believe in one, catholic church

Because God has only one Saviour this is the church you have to belong to – for it is only as we are each joined to Jesus by faith that we can be God's people, enjoy peace with Him forever

Because He is the Saviour of the world this is the church you can belong to

But how does this confession relate to our participation in and experience of our local churches, of the visible church?

The church made up of all believers over all time, and our local churches made up on believers in a certain area and a certain time are related. There is overlap in membership, and both are expressions of God's same saving purpose.

And because the Church and the churches are the expression of the same saving purpose, and membership of both is by believing in the same Lord Jesus, we should see that you cannot be a member of the church confessed in the creed, of which you must be a member to be saved, and what is true of the Church of the creed should also be true of our congregations.

This line of the Creed speaks of both the privilege and responsibility of those who confess it together in local churches, in congregations

It is a privilege to belong to local churches. God always intended to have a people – not just isolated individuals, and the people He gathers into His one church are people He gathers into local congregations through believing the gospel.

I hope you know that.

The sign of belonging to the one church is belonging to a local church.

So – do you come thanking God that He has joined you to His people, the people He is saving, thanking God that you can gather around the gospel word that saves you, that you can anticipate the host of heaven by singing the praise of your saving God, that you can receive His loving provision for your fruitful and persevering following in the gifts He gives us in each other by His Spirit. Local church, gathering with the Lord's people week by week, is a privilege, not a burden – so don't let it become one.

Cease to think it is a privilege we are losing sight of gospel realities, walking by sight – seeing only time lost, or difficult people, or our weariness, not faith; informed by the desires of the flesh, not the Spirit we share with our brothers and sisters

This line of the creed speaks of our privilege as believers to be in local congregations, but also of our Responsibility to express God's saving purpose in our life together

As you heard in Ephesians, being One creates a responsibility to maintain our unity

One – Ephesians 4

Ephesians 4: Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, ²with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, ³making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

We are to make *every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

Making every effort says that what holds us together is not ethnicity, class, culture - music

What holds us together is the gospel – we work at unity because He has made us one through our common sharing in the death of our Lord Jesus as the source of our relationship with God as His people

1 Cor. 10: ¹⁶The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a sharing in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a sharing in the body of Christ? ¹⁷Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, since all of us share the one bread.

And as the source of the new life of the Spirit Christ gives to all His people

And as the gospel is the source of our unity as it holds out Christ to us so it is through the gospel we have to oppose all those things that would destroy our unity

The teaching of the gospel, and the life the gospel calls for and produces in us

We see this in the way Paul responds to the divisions in Corinth

They were dividing themselves by their pursuit of Prestige, status seeking. Paul undermines their preoccupation with self importance by reminding them of the gospel of the cross, that makes the distinctions we use to establish our superiority – empty and worthless 1 Cor 1:18-25

They were dividing between the strong and the weak, and Paul opposes it by teaching them to value other believers as the gospel teaches us to see them – those for whom Christ died 1 Cor. 8:11, and showing how we must follow the example of Christ in seeking the good of others

1 Cor. 8: ¹¹ So the weak person, the brother or sister for whom Christ died, is ruined by your knowledge.

Division over Gifts he opposes by the love we learn from Jesus in the gospel

We maintain unity by the teaching of the gospel of the cross, and encouraging in each other the life the gospel calls for and produces in us

We see that in Ephesians itself,

Ephesians 4: Therefore I, the prisoner in the Lord, urge you to walk worthy of the calling you have received, ² with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,

Humility, gentleness, patience, the forbearance of love

This what we learn from Christ, the mind of Christ

And Paul goes on in Chapter 4 to address behaviours that threaten their unity, and ours

For example - The way we use our tongues – in gossip, or expressed impatience, or angry and harsh words – can destroy our unity

Paul says

Eph. 4: ²⁹ No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear.

Dishonesty and untrustworthiness

Paul says *Eph 4: ²⁵ Therefore, putting away lying, **speaking the truth, each one to his neighbor**, because we are members of one another. ... ²⁸ Let the thief no longer steal. Instead, he is to do honest work with his own hands, so that he has something to share with anyone in need.*

Each of us has a choice – to practice the attitudes and behaviours that foster unity, or to indulge the selfishness that destroys it

When you confess this line of the creed – should ask am I thinking and acting in a way that preserves the unity of the Spirit

Do I think before I open my mouth about whether what I say is true and will build up others

Do I grumble about serving? Or am I looking to the interests of others, as my Lord looked to mine?

Do I allow myself to get irritated by another's behaviour, when it is something I should bear with in love?

The Church is One, and so we have to be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

And the church is catholic, so we have to be determined to make sure our congregation is open to all our Lord calls to Himself, that we accept them on the basis of their faith in Jesus

Our determination has to be that of Paul's – 1 Cor. 10:32-11:1

1 Corinthians 10: ³²Give no offense to Jews or Greeks or the church of God, ³³just as I also try to please everyone in everything, not seeking my own benefit, but the benefit of many, so that they may be saved. 11 Imitate me, as I also imitate Christ.

Our wisdom has to be embracing the priorities of Romans 14 – recognising what does and does not matter

That what matters is

Romans 14: ¹⁷for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.

And we can be free, have difference, in matters the gospel does not prescribe – like what people eat, the days they observe, their clothing preferences

[Are you letting your mind be shaped by the gospel?]

What are you doing to show the inclusiveness of the gospel?

To whom have you opened your home to share a meal?

Are you welcoming sisters and brothers from other backgrounds as full sisters and brothers, or do you kind of treat them like guests, and think they need to become like you to fully belong?

Do you support those going to share the gospel with others far from us?

Great joy to be in a congregation that has people from not every race and tongue, but many

And we should steward it as a gift that helps us focus on what is important – the gospel we believe, and teaching to do what Jesus, not our culture, has commanded

But we can always do better, and we need to guard against acceptance fatigue – and just stay in our own little group without welcoming any new people in.

And we need to remain conscious of how Hard it can be for those from some educational and social backgrounds, or who have language difficulty, to settle into our congregation and make extra effort

The Church is one and catholic, and we need to make every effort to express that in our local congregation, every effort to preserve our unity and welcome all the Lord brings to us.

We will come back to this line in the Creed next week, to look at holy, and the week after what is foundation of all - apostolic

But let me go back to the beginning.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

When you say this line you are declaring to the world - Our saving God, Father, Son and Spirit – you have done it!

You have saved a people for yourself

And you have Done it – because you have loved, you are the God of steadfast, overflowing, never failing love, of generous kindness

More – you are Confessing, as part of confessing faith in the Father, the Son, the Spirit – I am included in God's saving plan

I, gathered by His gospel into His people, the people I make this confession with, I am Loved

Ephesians 5: ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. ²⁷He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless.

Loved with the love that sent the Son into the world, loved by the Son in His giving His life for His bride

Loved with the love that nothing can frustrate achieving its purpose, and from which therefore nothing can separate us.

TO confess faith in our God is joy