

Resources for Exploring Theology Session 4

Below are the Recommended and Optional resources for Session 4

Recommended Resources

Two things to watch:



Firstly, here are two videos with Rowan Williams and Paula Gooder. Firstly, here they're discussing the church.



In this second video Rowan Williams and Paula Gooder discuss the role of tradition.

Something to listen to:

During Session 4, we touch on the importance of the Nicene Creed. This raises the issue of creeds in general in the church. Listen to this [GodPod podcast](https://sptc.htb.org/GodPod164), where our indefatigable hosts – Jane Williams, Mike Lloyd and Graham Tomlin discuss why we have creeds: <https://sptc.htb.org/GodPod164>.

Something to read:

Here is an article by Jane Williams on the importance of the Nicene Creed: <https://www.seenandunseen.com/nicene-creed-1700-year-old-game-changer>.

And here is the extract I mentioned about Lectio Divina from *Pierced by Love* by Hans Boersma, 2023 Lexham Press

“The four traditional steps of lectio (reading), meditatio (meditation), oratio (prayer), and contemplatio (contemplation) form the frame of the practice. Repetitious reading, thoughtful and

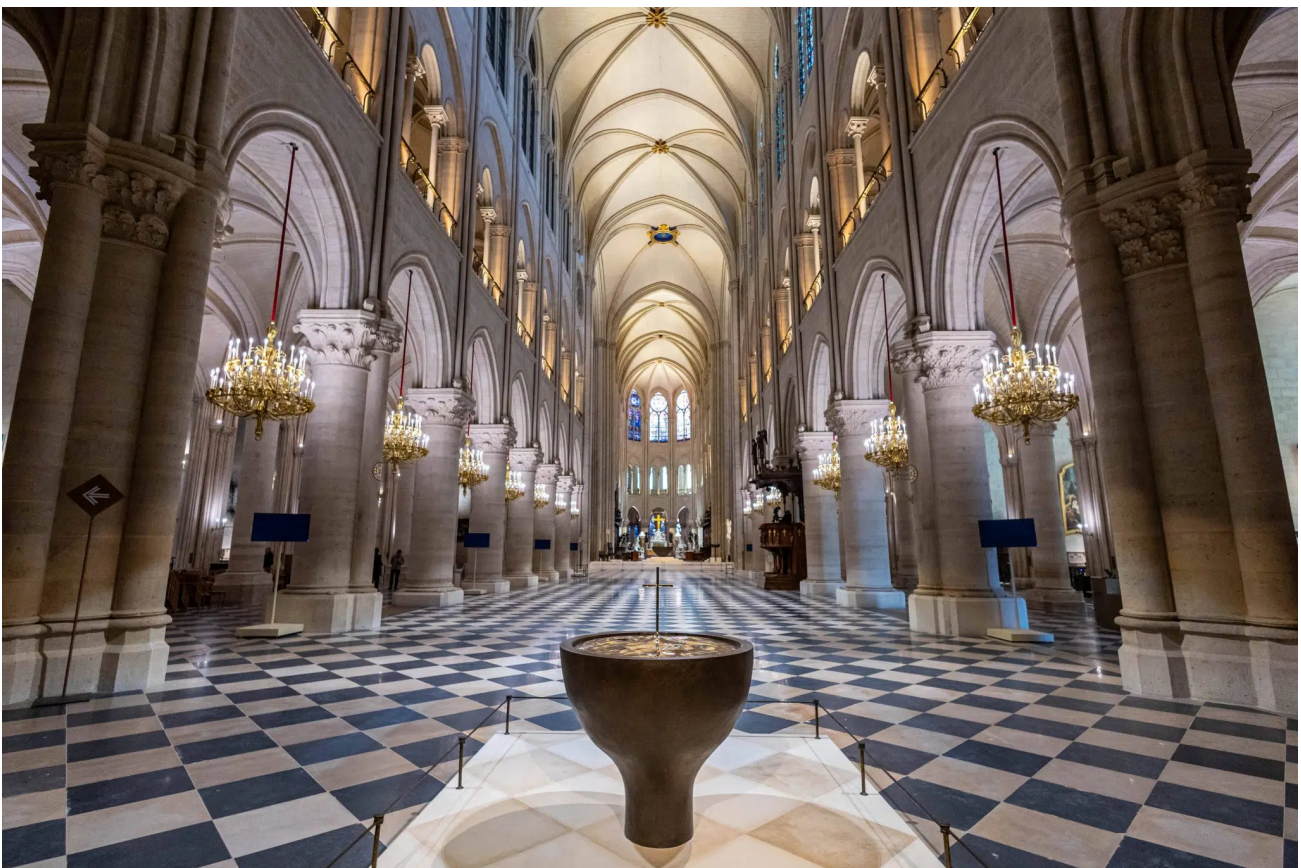
extended reflection on individual words or phrases, prayerful reflection on our own lives in the light of our meditation, and finally silent resting in the love of God are the four basic elements [...] here are a few simple guidelines to keep in mind: Find a quiet place and begin with a short period of silence to properly focus your attention.

- *Read the passage repeatedly—perhaps about four times, interspersed with periods of silence.*
- *Meditate on a word or phrase that strikes you as significant. Ask yourself how it functions within its immediate context and within the Scriptures as a whole. Look for the revelation of Christ within this word or phrase. And ask what all of this has to do with your own situation and circumstances.*
- *As you pray, God will confront your life with the fruit of meditation. This may cause the pain of repentance. Or it may flood your heart with gratitude. In prayer, we bring our lives before God in response to the reading of the text.*
- *Take time throughout the process to pause and rest in silence before God. Keep Origen's advice in mind not to be hasty. It is when words and silence alternate that meaning can occur."*

Something to look at:

Notre-Dame de Paris

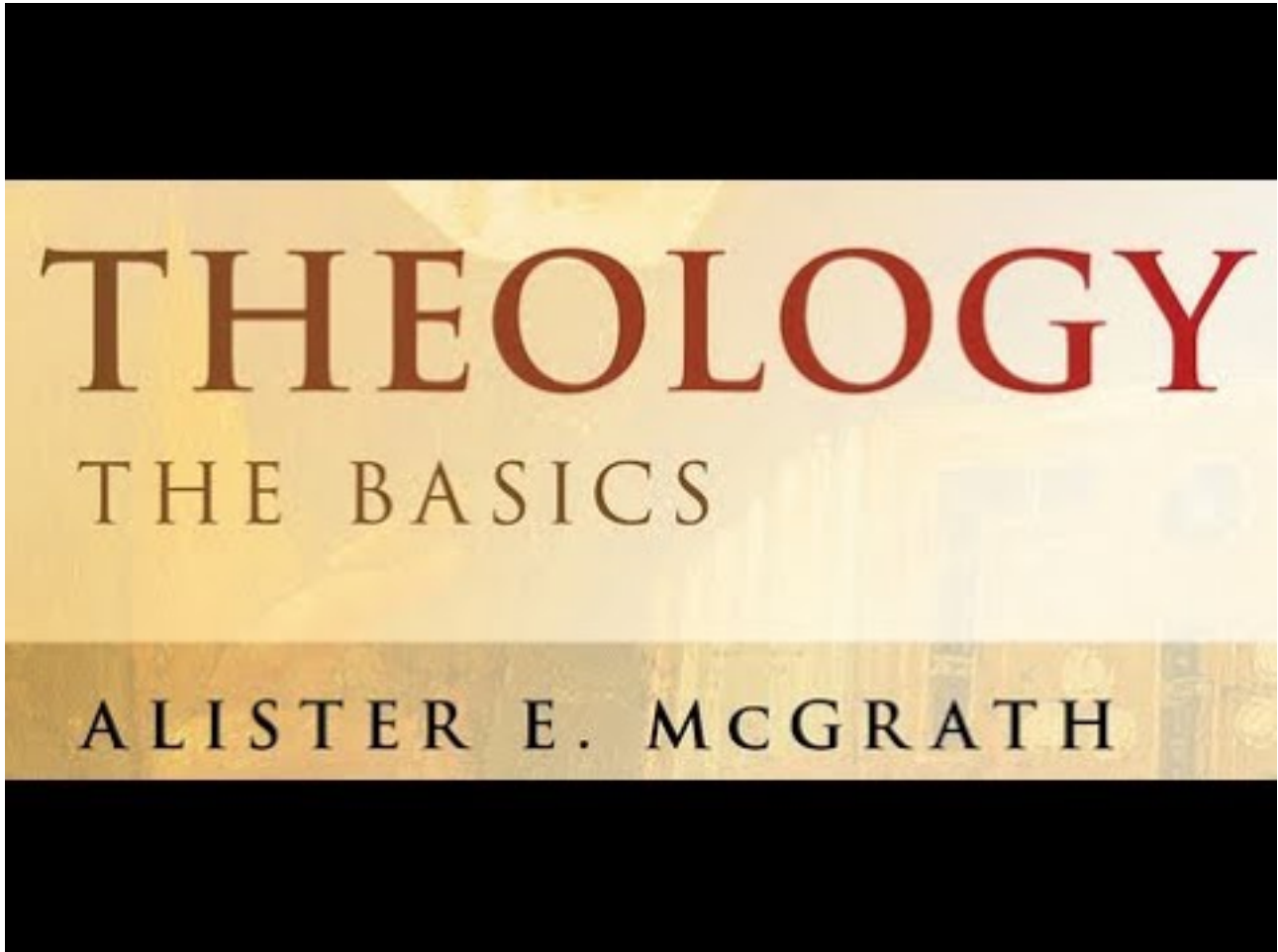
Here is an image of the baptistery of Notre-Dame de Paris cathedral, taken in 2024. After the fire which engulfed the building in 2019, some €850 million was spent restoring the building. Photo by CHRISTOPHE PETIT TESSON //SIPA/241129165.



Optional Resources

Something more to watch:

In the following [video](#), Alister McGrath talks about the Christian theology of the church 'ecclesiology':



And something more to read:

The following is the definition of *tradition* from the St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology:

<https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/ChristianTheology#section2.1.2>

Having covered similar territory as in our discussions, it draws out the distinction between sources and norms, before raising some key questions that we started to consider in the videos.

2.1.3 Tradition

Tradition describes the process of handing on from one generation to the next, and comprises the deposit of norms, texts, practices, and sensibilities that is passed on within a church or other group over significant lengths of time.

Tradition functions as a source when rules, stories, and practices that have arisen and been handed down within a group form part of the substance of theological work. The form of the

biblical canon and the credal affirmations of the ecumenical councils function as sources for most Christian traditions; papal pronouncements, conciliar documents, and confessions (such as those of Augsburg or Westminster) function as identity-defining sources for particular denominations.

By contrast, tradition functions as a norm when theological sources are interpreted, assessed, and elaborated according to the precedents, priorities, and practices of a particular tradition.

Central challenges concerning the principle of tradition include: who determines tradition? How does one distinguish between the development of tradition and aberration from it? How does one distinguish its core from its ephemera? Is its authority limited to a group, or claimed as universal?

And finally, but only if you want to do a really deep dive, here's the entry from the same St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology on the theology of the Council of Nicaea

<https://www.saet.ac.uk/Christianity/TheTheologyoftheCouncilofNicaea>.