

## Christian Tradition Council of Nicaea

### Important names, terms, events

Battle of Milvian Bridge

Edict of Toleration

Constantine

Helena

Constantinople

homoousios

homoiousios

Arius

Athanasius

Council of Nicaea 325 CE – one date you must know

### Studying

Next time we will have our own Council of Nicaea. Some of you will argue for the Arian position while others will argue for the position of Alexander of Alexandria and the ultimate Nicene position. I will pick some of you to act as the persuadable bishops, who will decide who wins. We will debate Trinitarian theology: what is the nature of the relationship between God the Father and Jesus Christ the Son?

### Consider:

What is Arius's Trinitarian theology? Why does he think it is logical? What "heresies" is he trying to combat with his formulation? What does he think is wrong with the orthodox proposal?

What is the orthodox Trinitarian theology? Why do its proponents think it is logical? What "heresies" is it trying to combat? What are its objections?

### Think about two strategies:

1. Articulating your position clearly (and as the logical, obvious choice)
2. Criticizing (even smearing!) the opposition (e.g., saying their doctrine looks like another heresy like modalism/Sabellianism, monarchianism, docetism, adoptionism, gnosticism) or looks polytheist

You might want to prepare by making columns for "Arian" and "orthodox" and then list their doctrines in their respective columns. You might want to make note of "Arian criticisms of their opponents" and "orthodox criticism of Arius/Arians."

Focus on the texts by Arius and Alexander of Alexandria, as well as the Nicene creed in text 33. Do read Athanasius, but don't use him in preparing for the debate.