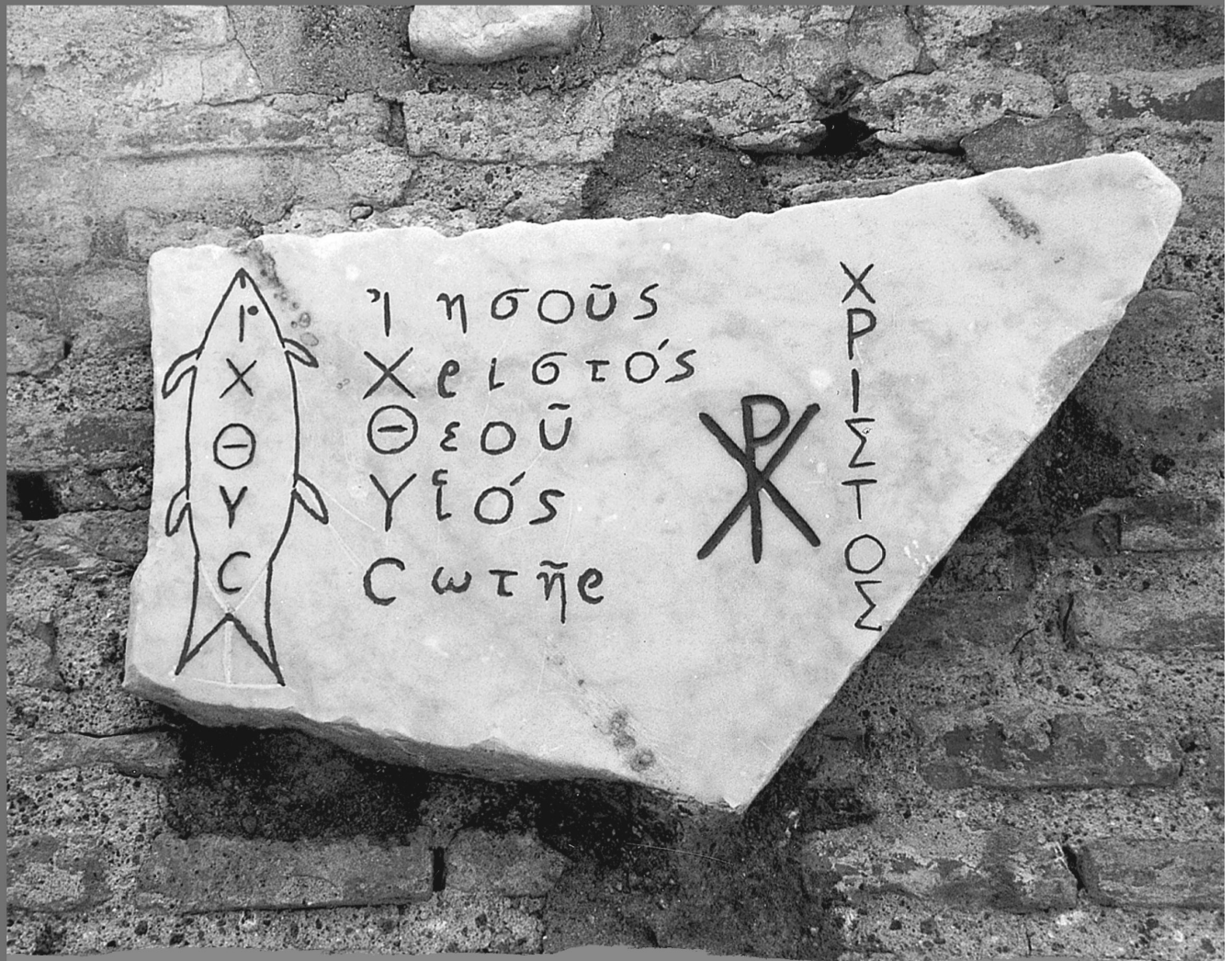


THE POST-APOSTOLIC AGE
(CIRCA AD 100-400)



EXERCISE 1



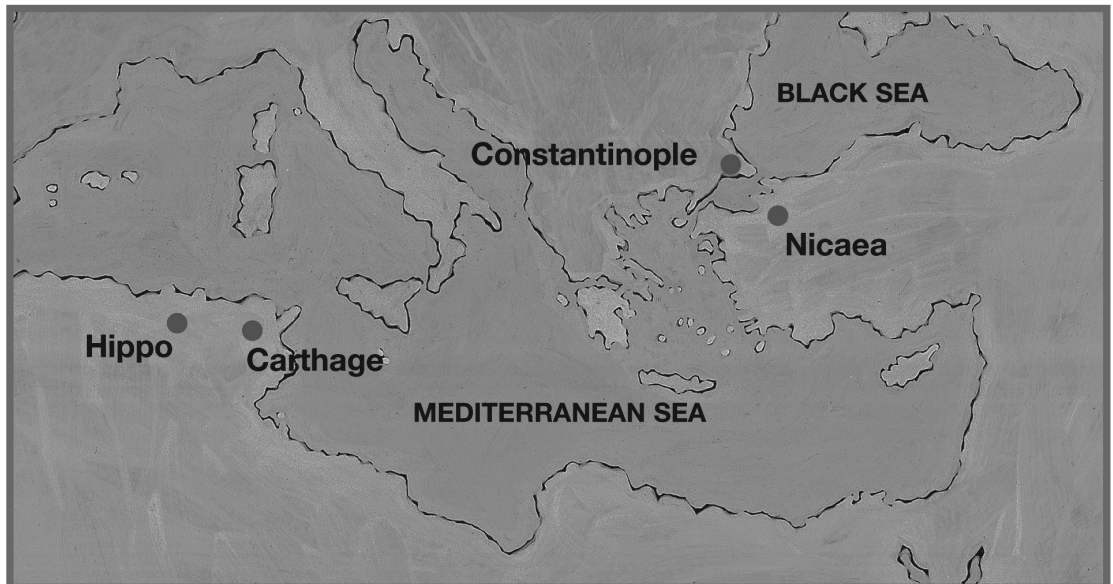
Read and discuss texts 1 and 2 together!

Text 1:

In 325 a creed was established at the Council of Nicaea, which was expanded at the Council of Constantinople in 381. It contains fundamental statements about Christian doctrine.

Read the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople together?

(see Catechism-QA 35)



Text 2:

The New Testament is a collection of writings that largely date from the first century after Christ, and whose writers were inspired by the Holy Spirit. The gospel of Christ, as it was proclaimed by Jesus Christ and the Apostles, has been recorded in these writings in reliable fashion.

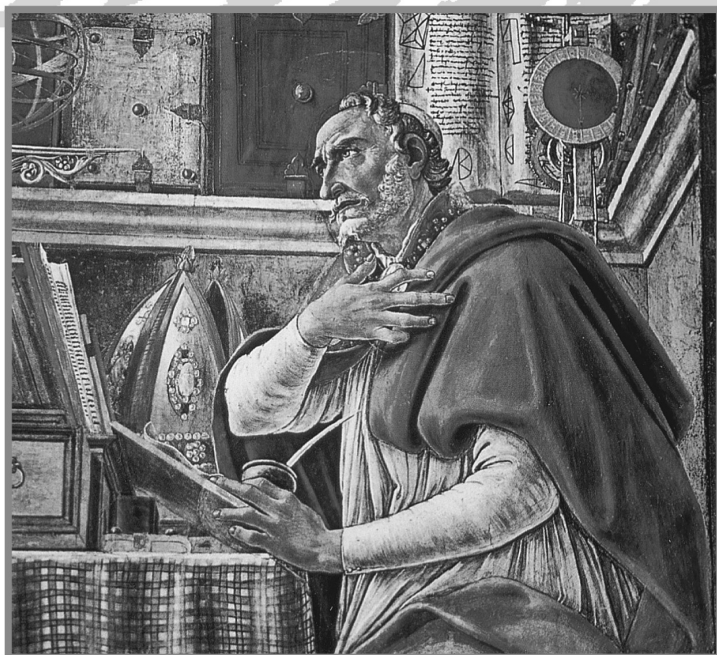
Which writings the New Testament should include was decided among others at the synods* in the north African cities of Hippo (393) and Carthage (397 and 419).

*Synod = an assembly of the clergy of a particular church that has the authority to formulate binding decisions.

Name at least five writings (books) of the New Testament!

(see Catechism-QA 22).

◀ **Theme picture:** The sign of the fish (an acrostic: Greek *ichthys*, "fish", happens to have the first letters of the Greek words for Jesus Christ, God's son, Saviour), may have been used to identify fellow Christians in the days of persecution.



The Church Father Augustine lived from 354 to 430. From 395 on he was bishop of Hippo. His writings “Confessions” and “City of God” made him famous. He also thought about the significance of the sacraments. His deliberations are still important today (Catechism-QA 474–478). The term “sacrament” is not used in the Bible.

Which sacraments were instituted by Jesus Christ?
(see Catechism-QA 479)

Painting by Botticelli: It is said to depict Augustine.

EXERCISE 2



Read the following text!

A Christian in a Gentile environment

The Gentiles believed in many gods. They created images of these gods and worshipped them. The Christians happened upon these idols everywhere.

By the roadside and in shops there were idols which the people worshipped in passing.

In government offices there were altars, beside which were wine and incense. It was customary to offer some of this on the altar when passing by.

At family parties, offerings were brought to the gods before and after meals.

Sometimes the idols were carried through the streets in ceremonial processions and honoured by those who passed by.

Christians did not worship these idols because this would have been incompatible with their faith. They provoked mistrust and disapproval because they behaved differently than the people around them. They even had to reckon with court action.

Write down the First Commandment (Catechism-QA 300):

Write down verse 4 and the first part of 5 from Exodus 20.

EXERCISE 3



Read the text¹ with the parts given out and answer the questions!

A Christian before the court

- Roman consul: You can gain the emperor's forbearance by coming to your senses again and worshipping him.
- Christian: I have never done wrong or cursed, but even expressed my thanks when I was treated badly. With this I honour our emperor enough.
- Roman consul: We are also religious, and our religion is quite simple: we swear by the emperor and pray for him; worshipping him also belongs to this.
- Christian: I serve the one and only God. I do not recognize any ruler of this world as divine other than Him.
- Roman consul: Abandon your conviction!
- Christian: I cannot because I am a Christian!
- Roman consul: Do you want some time to think about it? I shall give you 30 days to think about the matter.
- Christian: I am a Christian.
- Roman consul: All right. Since you admitted that you would continue to live according to Christian tradition and not worship the emperor, you shall be executed by the sword.

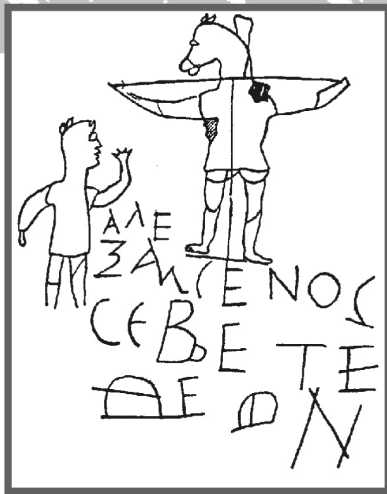
What was the court's verdict?

Why?

How could the Christian have escaped this verdict?

¹Based on the transcript of a hearing in Carthage, around 180.

EXERCISE 4



Christians are mocked again and again. On Palatine (the hill on which the emperor's palaces were built) in Rome, someone carved the drawing (at left) into stone. It dates from the third century and depicts a person with the head of a donkey hanging on a cross and being approached by another person in a worshipful manner. Underneath it is written "Alexamenos worships his God."

How would you feel, if you suddenly found drawings on your street ridiculing your faith?

EXERCISE 5



Record here what it says in Matthew 10: 32.
