



THE FIRST COUNCIL OF NICAEA

An Academic Symposium of
the Ecumenical Patriarchate

24-26 April 2025

Sponsored by





The one sacred building of the council, as if stretched across the world by God, contained people from afar. There were more than three hundred bishops, while the elders, deacons and others were almost incalculable. Some of these ministers of God were distinguished for their wisdom, others for their ascetic life or patient endurance of persecution, and still others for all three. Some were respected for their age, others were renowned for their youth and vigor, while still others were only recently appointed to responsible positions. The emperor provided them all with sufficient provisions.

The declaration of faith I proposed was read before our most pious emperor and seemed to meet with universal approval. This is the declaration of faith passed on to me by the bishops who preceded me, used alike in instruction and in baptism. It is the truth I have gleaned from the sacred scriptures, as well as what I have believed and taught as an elder and bishop:

"We believe in one God, Father, Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; the only begotten of the Father, that is the essence of the Father; God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God; begotten but not created; of one essence with the Father; through whom all things in heaven and on earth were made; who for us and our salvation descended, became flesh and was made human, suffered, arose on the third day, ascended to the heavens, and will come again to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit . . ."

No one opposed this creed. In fact, our most pious Emperor was the first to admit that it was perfectly correct and reflected his own belief. He called on all present to agree and sign the creed.

Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260–c. 340)

In Socrates of Constantinople, *History of the Church*, Book I, Chapter VIII.

Speakers & Papers

- **Archbishop Rowan Williams, Magdalene College, Cambridge University**
Nicaea and the Theological Meanings of "Monarchy": Some Continuing Questions
- **Prof. Uta Heil, University of Vienna**
"I have begotten You from the womb before the Morningstar":
Psalm 109.3 in the Trinitarian Controversy
- **Prof. Samuel Fernández, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile**
The Nicene "Ὁμοούσιος τῷ πατρὶ" and God's Eternal Fatherhood
- **Prof. Paul Blowers, Emmanuel Christian Seminary**
Inflections of Nicene Theology and Innovative Retrievals in Maximus the Confessor
- **Prof. David Hunter, Boston College**
Divorce, Remarriage, and Rebaptism: The Ecumenical Significance of Canon 8 of Nicaea
- **Prof. Frances Young, University of Birmingham**
Homoousios and the Saving Mystery of the Cross
- **Prof. Alberto Melloni, University of Bologna**
Same Faith and Same Eucharist: From the fruit of Nicaea to ecumenical hope
- **Prof. Lewis Ayres, Angelicum University and University of Durham**
Nicaea's Christological Surplus
- **Prof. Christoph Marksches, Humboldt University of Berlin**
German Protestant Misunderstandings of the First Council and its Creed:
200 Years History of Research and what one can learn of it for the Future
- **Prof. Demetrios Bathrellos, Holy Cross School of Theology**
Primacy and Conciliarity in the Light of Nicaea
- **Prof. John Behr, University of Aberdeen**
'God Stood in the Congregation of Gods': Speaking of God Before and After Nicaea

AGENDA

April 24, 2025

8.00 am: Breakfast

9.30 am: Welcome by Fr. John Chryssavgis

Opening Remarks by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

10.00 am–12 noon:

- Rt. Rev. Dr. Rowan Williams
- Prof. Uta Heil, University of Vienna
- Prof. Samuel Fernández, Pontifical University of Chile

Discussion

12 noon: Group Photos

12.30 pm: Formal Luncheon at the Maraslion School

Hosted by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew

2.30–4.00 pm: Session II

- Prof. Paul Blowers, Emmanuel Christian Seminary
- Prof. David Hunter, Boston College

Discussion

4.30pm: Vespers at the Phanar

Tour of the Patriarchal Church

6.30–8.00pm: Session III

- Prof. Frances Young, University of Birmingham
- Prof. Alberto Melloni, University of Bologna

Discussion

Evening free

AGENDA

April 25, 2025

7.00 am: Breakfast

8.30 am: Departure for tour of Hagia Sophia and Chora Monastery

2.00 pm: Lunch at Troya Hotel Balat

4.30 pm: Vespers at the Phanar

6.00–7.30 pm: Session IV

- Prof. Lewis Ayres, University of Durham
- Prof. Christoph Marksches, Humboldt University of Berlin

Discussion

Evening free

April 26, 2025

7.00 am: Breakfast

9.00 am: Departure for guided tour of Nicaea

Session V at Nicaea: Welcome by His Eminence Metropolitan Joachim of Bursa

- Prof. Demetrios Bathrellos, Holy Cross School of Theology
- Prof. John Behr, University of Aberdeen

Discussion

3.00 pm: Lunch at Nicaea

6.00 pm: Return to Istanbul



**MESSAGE
OF THE HOLY AND GREAT COUNCIL
OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH**

To God, "the Father of mercies and all comfort," we address a hymn of thanksgiving and praise for having enabled us to gather during the week of Pentecost (18–26 June 2016) on Crete, where the Apostle Paul and his disciple Titus preached the Gospel in the early years of the life of the Church. We give thanks to the Triune God who was well pleased that in one accord we should bring to conclusion the work of the Holy and Great Council that was convoked by His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch. Bartholomew by the common will of their Beatitudes the Primate of the local Orthodox Autocephalous Churches.

Faithfully following the example of the Apostles and our god-bearing Fathers we have once again studied the Gospel of freedom "for which Christ has set us free" (Gal. 5.1). The foundation of our theological discussions was the certainty that the Church does not live for herself. She transmits the witness of the Gospel of grace and truth and offers to the whole world the gifts of God: love, peace, justice, reconciliation, the power of the Cross and of the Resurrection and the expectation of eternal life.

The key priority of the Council was to proclaim the unity of the Orthodox Church. Founded on the Eucharist and the Apostolic Succession of her Bishops, the existing unity needs to be strengthened and to bear new fruits. The One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church is a divine-human communion, a foretaste and experience of the eschaton within the Holy Eucharist. As a continuous Pentecost, she is a prophetic voice that cannot be silenced, the presence of and witness to the Kingdom of the God of love. The Orthodox Church, faithful to the unanimous Apostolic Tradition and her sacramental experience, is the authentic continuation of the one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church as confessed in the Creed and confirmed by the teaching of the Church Fathers. Our Church lives out the mystery of the Divine Economy in her sacramental life, with the Holy Eucharist at its center.

The Orthodox Church expresses her unity and catholicity "in Council." Conciliarity pervades her organization, the way decisions are taken and determines her path. The Orthodox Autocephalous Churches do not constitute a federation of Churches, but the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Each local Church as she offers the holy Eucharist is the local presence and manifestation of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. . . .



The Patriarchal Church of St. George

The patriarchal church is located at Phanar, meaning “lantern” or “lighthouse” and referring to the old lighthouse quarter along the Golden Horn in the Fatih district of Istanbul from the Byzantine and Ottoman periods. In 1454, the Great School of the Nation was established in the area by prominent Phanariotes. The name “Phanar” is today regarded as coterminous with the Ecumenical Patriarchate since the patriarchal church, offices, and residence are located there.

The patriarchal church of St. George formerly served as the site of a small chapel for an Orthodox convent. When Patriarch Matthew II (1598–1601) converted it to the home of the Ecumenical Patriarchate toward the end of his tenure, the nuns there transferred to another community, and the Phanar served as a monastic brotherhood under the spiritual guidance of the Ecumenical Patriarch. Indeed, it is sometimes referred to as “The Great Monastery.” Since that time, the Phanar also serves as the central administrative offices of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. It is also referred to as “the Great Church of Christ.”



Venue: Marasleios Urban School

The Marasleios Urban School of Constantinople was formerly an elementary school in the Phanar neighborhood beside the Patriarchate. Following the forced decline of the Greek community in Turkey, the school closed, and the building was abandoned. Through the efforts of Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the school was restored and reopened in the summer of 2024 to host formal lectures and social events organized by the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Organizing Committee

- Fr. John Chryssavgis
- Prof. Evangelia Amoiridou
- Fr. Hieronymos Sotirelis
- Ms. Elena Kontogli