



VOLOS SUMMER INSTITUTE 2026

VOLOS, GREECE
JULY 5 - 16, 2026



INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
VOLOS ACADEMY FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

VOLOS SUMMER INSTITUTE
2026

“Thessalia” Conference Center
Melissatika, Volos, Greece
July 5 - 16, 2026

Volos Summer Institute is co-organized by
the Volos Academy for Theological Studies and
the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA),

sponsored by
the Holy Metropolis of Demetrias,
the Holy Metropolis of Peristeri,
the Orthodox Foundation for Christian Education
the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University (NY,
USA),
and the Huffington Ecumenical Institute, Loyola Marymount Uni-
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Cover: *Miniature of Christ Pantokrator*
Church of the Dormition of the Virgin, Xourichti, Pelion, Greece,
2025

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Program Description

The Volos Summer Institute, an educational program co-organized by the Volos Academy for Theological Studies and the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA), developed out of the Volos Academy Summer School for Orthodox Clergy and Lay Theologians from Ukraine, which took place from 2019 to 2024. Volos Summer Institute expands the earlier perspectives, including trainees from all over the world, yet giving emphasis to Ukrainian scholars, who still face the brutality of the uninterrupted Russian invasion. The major goals of the program are to familiarize participants with new socio-cultural challenges, such as secularisation, globalization, religious pluralism, and the concept of an open society; to provide access to valuable resources, including physical and digital libraries, along with the latest materials on various topics related to the study of religion; to educate students about the organization and practices of the local churches and parishes in today's increasingly secular environment; to explore leadership characteristics and strategies for offering pastoral and psychological support to communities in times of crisis; to engage with contemporary developments in Christian theology, encompassing both Catholic and Protestant perspectives, as well as Orthodox theology from the late 20th century to the early 21st century; to engage the central aspects of the Orthodox tradition, including doctrine, art and architecture, liturgy, anthropology and asceticism; and to encourage networking and sharing of experiences. The program of study is offered by the leading Orthodox and non-Orthodox scholars and includes topics such as Orthodox theological tradition, Ecumenical dialogue, faith and contemporary challenges, and practical aspects of church ministry. Being held in Volos, the Summer Institute offers to the participants an excellent opportunity to come to direct contact with the life and function of one of the most vibrant and modern dioceses in Greece, the Metropolis of Demetrias, which has been at the crossroads of dialogue between cultures and religious traditions for many decades, and the rich cultural landscape of Greece, with its centuries-long history.

Timetable

SUNDAY, JULY 5, 2026

20:00-21:30 Welcoming Reception

MONDAY, JULY 6, 2026

09:00-11:00 **Prof. Gayle Woloschak** (Professor of Radiation Oncology Northwestern University, IL, USA; St Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary, Ecumenical Patriarchate):

*The Genome and the Icon:
Orthodox Christianity Engages the Life Sciences I*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Prof. Gayle Woloschak** (Professor of Radiation Oncology Northwestern University, IL, USA; St Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary, Ecumenical Patriarchate):

*The Genome and the Icon:
Orthodox Christianity Engages the Life Sciences II*

13:30-14:15 Lunch Break, free time

14:15-16:15 **Dr Nikolaos Asproulis** (Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Greece):

*For the (Eternal) Life of the Whole World:
The Cosmic Dimension of Theosis in the Orthodox Tradition*

TUESDAY, JULY 7, 2026

09:00-11:00 **Rev. Prof. Nicholas Denysenko** (Professor of Religious Studies, Valparaiso University, IN, USA):

*Schmemmann's School of Liturgical Renewal
and its Relevance to the Orthodox Church Today*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Rev. Prof. Nicholas Denysenko** (Professor of Religious Studies, Valparaiso University, IN, USA):

Liturgical Renewal in the Parish

13:30 Lunch break, free time

WEDNESDAY, JULY 8, 2026

09:00-11:00 **Rev. Prof. Cyril Hovorun** (Professor in Ecclesiology, International Relations and Ecumenism, Sankt Ignatios College, Stockholm, Sweden):

Orthodox Political Theologies

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Rev. Prof. Cyril Hovorun** (Professor in Ecclesiology, International Relations and Ecumenism, Sankt Ignatios College, Stockholm, Sweden):

Colonial Theories and Ukraine

13:30-14:15 Lunch Break, free time

14:15-16:15 **Dr Lidiya Lozova** (Honorary Senior Lecturer, Exeter University, UK) **Rev. Dr Volodymyr Vakin** (Rector, Volyn Orthodox Theological Academy, Ukraine), **Rev. Dr Andriy Dudchenko** (Associate Professor, Kyiv Orthodox Theological Academy, Ukraine)

"Royal Priesthood":

What does it mean for our Church communities today?

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 2026

09:00-11:00 **Prof. Paul Gavrilyuk** (President of IOTA; Aquinas Chair in Theology and Philosophy, St Thomas University, MN, USA)

Deification Studies in an Ecumenical Perspective

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Prof. Paul Gavrilyuk** (President of IOTA; Aquinas Chair in Theology and Philosophy, St Thomas University, MN, USA)

The Varieties and Vicissitudes of Neopatristic Theology

13:30 Lunch Break, free time

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2026

- 09:00-11:00 **Prof. Aristotle Papanikolaou** (Archbishop Demetrios Chair in Orthodox Theology and Culture, Fordham University, NY, USA):
*Secular, Secularization and Secularism.
An Orthodox perspective I*
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30-13:30 **Prof. Aristotle Papanikolaou** (Archbishop Demetrios Chair in Orthodox Theology and Culture, Fordham University, NY, USA):
*Secular, Secularization and Secularism.
An Orthodox perspective II*
- 13:30 Lunch Break, free time
- 18:00-19:00 Vespers at the Church of the Annunciation (Evangelistria)

SATURDAY, JULY 11, 2026

- 09:00-11:00 **Rev. Prof. Brandon Gallaher** (Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Exeter, UK):
Orthodox Christianity and Inter-Religious Encounter
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30-13:30 **Rev. Prof. Brandon Gallaher** (Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, University of Exeter, UK):
*Inter-religious Violence and Peacemaking:
Theory and History in Light of Orthodox Christianity*
- 13:30 Lunch Break, free time

SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2026

- 07:00-20:00 All day excursion to Aghia and Aghiokampos

MONDAY, JULY 13, 2026

- 09:00-11:00 **Dr Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi** (National Center for Public Administration and Local Government & International Hellenic University, Greece):
Women, the Church and the Ecumenical movement
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30-13:30 **Dr Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi** (National Center for Public Administration and Local Government & International Hellenic University, Greece):
*Feminist Theology and Feminist Hermeneutics.
Challenge or opportunity for Orthodox Theology?*
- 13:30-14:30 Lunch Break, free time
- 14:30-16:30 **Rev. Dr Amfilochios Miltos** (Member of the Joint Commission for the Dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches; Research Associate, Volos Academy, Greece)
*The Problem of Papal Primacy
in the Dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches*

TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2026

- 09:00-11:00 **Prof. Pablo Argárate** (Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Graz, Austria):
Major figures and trends in Catholic Theology
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30-13:30 **Prof. Pablo Argárate** (Faculty of Catholic Theology, University of Graz, Austria):
The Bishop of Rome. A New Document
- 13:30 Lunch Break, free time

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WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 2026

- 09:00-11:00 **Rev. Meletis Meletiadis** (Pastor, Evangelical Church of Volos, Greece):
*Reconciliation of a Protestant/Evangelical
with the Orthodox*
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30-13:30 **Dr Pantelis Kalaitzidis** (Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Greece)
*Byzantine Political Theology
and the (In)fidelity to the Spirit of Nicaea*
- 13:30 Lunch Break, free time

THURSDAY, JULY 16, 2026

- 09:00-11:00 **Dr Nikos Kouremenos** (Research Associate, Volos Academy, Greece):
*Beyond Chalcedon?
The Orthodox–Oriental Orthodox Dialogue*
- 11:00-11:30 Coffee break
- 11:30-13:30 **Dr Nikos Kouremenos** (Research Associate, Volos Academy, Greece):
*From the Dialogue of Love to the Dialogue of Truth:
Popes and Ecumenical Patriarchs from the 1960's to the Present*

>> All sessions will take place at Thessalia Conference Center

Participants and Abstracts

Prof. Gayle Woloschak

Professor of Radiation Oncology
Northwestern University, IL, USA;

St Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Seminary,
Ecumenical Patriarchate



Dr. Gayle E. Woloschak has a PhD in Biomedical Sciences and a DMin in Eastern Christian studies. She is currently Professor of Radiation Oncology and Associate Dean of The Graduate School at Northwestern University as well as Professor of Science and Religion at Lutheran School of Theology Chicago. She has worked in the area of science-religion dialogue for over 20 years and is active in numerous organizations including current President of the Center for Advanced Studies in Religion and Science and Associate Director of the Zygon Center for Religion and Science.

The Genome and the Icon: Orthodox Christianity Engages the Life Sciences

This series of lectures will engage a variety of topics that relate to science and theology from an Orthodox perspective particularly focusing on an upcoming book which the author is preparing for publication. Topics include the science-theology dialogue and why it is important; evolution and creation as crux points where science and theology meet; the engagement of genome sciences and what the relatedness of all creatures means to theology; the importance of ecological engagement in this work; human uniqueness and the human person; what it means to be human in a world of genetic engineering and AI; discussion on these topics throughout. Conclusions that will come from this work are as follows:

1. Science and theology are both forms of attention to what God has made.
2. The patristic tradition is a living resource, not an antiquarian artifact.
3. Evolution is the medium through which God has made what God has made.
4. Human distinctiveness lies in personhood, language and theosis—not in any gene.
5. The body is sacramental; the genome is part of how God writes.
6. AI is a tool, not a person—and that distinction will matter more, not less.
7. Ecological responsibility is theological responsibility.

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Dr. Nikolaos Asproulis

Deputy Director of Volos Academy;

Lecturer,
Hellenic Open University, Greece



Dr. Nikolaos Asproulis is Deputy Director of Volos Academy for Theological Studies and lecturer in systematic theology at the Hellenic Open University (Patras, Greece). He has authored many articles on the history and theology of the Orthodox Church, theological methodology and hermeneutics, political theology, eco-theology and theological education. He is executive manager of the Volos Academy's eco-theological project "Green parish initiative and parallel activities". His recent publications include *The Orthodox Church addresses Climate Crisis* (co-edited with Theodota Nantsou, Volos Academy Publications-WWF Greece, 2021); *Priests of Creation: John Zizioulas on Discerning an Ecological Ethos* (co-edited with John Chrysavgis, T&T Clark, 2021); *Christian Responses to Spiritual Incursions into 21st-Century Church and Society* (co-edited with S. Devenish, Cambridge Publishing Scholars, 2020), *The Mystery of the Christ and the Mystery of the Church: Georges Florovsky and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (2023)

For the (Eternal) Life of the Whole World: The Cosmic Dimension of *Theosis* in the Orthodox Tradition

The doctrine of *theosis*, or deification, is a distinctive feature of Eastern Orthodoxy. In recent centuries, it has also become a pursuit across various Christian traditions. Although theosis was historically associated with humanity, modern theology has not adequately explored its cosmic dimension, which concerns both human and non-human beings as well as the cosmos as a whole. This article draws on elements of the Orthodox tradition, including the Logos-logoi theory of St. Maximus the Confessor and the Essence-Energies distinction of St. Gregory Palamas. It also engages with insights from contemporary Orthodox thinkers relevant to the discussion. The aim is to outline the theological foundations for a more inclusive and holistic understanding of *theosis*, particularly in light of the current climate crisis and issues of animal welfare.

Rev. Prof. Nicholas Denysenko

Professor of Religious Studies,
Valparaiso University, Indiana, USA



Rev. Dr. Nicholas Denysenko is Emil and Elfriede Jochum University Professor and Chair and Professor of Religious Studies at Valparaiso University in Indiana, USA. The author of numerous books and articles on Orthodox liturgy and the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, Denysenko is also a priest of the Orthodox Church in America.

Schmemmann's School of Liturgical Renewal and Its Relevance to the Orthodox Church Today

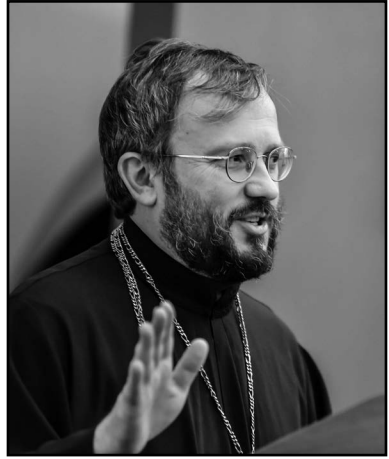
This lecture introduces and analyzes Fr. Alexander Schmemmann's liturgical enterprise. The lecture explores the theological foundations of Schmemmann's concept of renewal, including his appeal for a return to the mind of the fathers, his critique of Western scholastic theology and Byzantinism, and his retrieval of the unfinished business of the 1917-1918 Moscow Council. The lecture attends to Schmemmann's legacy in the fertile ground of the Orthodox Church in North America.

Liturgical Renewal in the Parish

The second lecture analyzes the objectives of liturgical renewal and discusses difficult issues, such as the problem of interpreting sacred symbols, the temptation of liturgical causality, and the tendency to make an idol out of the liturgy (liturgiolatry). The lecture presents an agenda for implementing liturgical renewal in Orthodox parishes and provides an example of a "new liturgy" for the sake of discussion.

Rev. Prof. Cyril Hovorun

Professor in Ecclesiology,
International Relations and Ecumenism
Sankt Ignatios College, Stockholm, Sweden



Archimandrite Cyril Hovorun is a Professor in Ecclesiology, International Relations and Ecumenism at Sankt Ignatios College, Stockholm School of Theology. A graduate of the Theological Academy in Kyiv and National University in Athens, he accomplished his doctoral studies at Durham University under the supervision of Fr Andrew Louth. He was a chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, first deputy chairman of the Educational Committee of the Russian Orthodox Church, and later research fellow at Yale and Columbia Universities, visiting professor at the University of Münster in Germany, international fellow at Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life at the University of Alberta in Canada, director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles and Assistant Professor at the same university.

Orthodox Political Theologies

The lecture will outline the evolution of political theologies in the Eastern Christian milieu. It will begin with the definitions of and distinctions between political and public theologies. It will continue with the dialectics of the relationship between the church, the state, and the public square. It will focus on the modifications of symphonia under the conditions of secularization and disestablishmentness. It will explore the earliest instances of the culture wars in the Eastern Christianity, by differentiating between two major trends in the modern Orthodox political theology: conservative and liberal ones. The former dominated in the interwar period, while the latter received prominence after WWII. The lecture will examine the most recent theories of civilisational exceptionalism and their political implications. It will identify two camps in the Orthodox political theology: the one that accepts and appreciates modern liberal democracy and the other one that criticises it.

Colonial Theories and Ukraine

Ukraine's experience with colonialism and neocolonialism mirrors global patterns in which empires exert political, economic, cultural, and religious control over territories. Under the Russian Empire and later the Soviet Union, Ukraine faced forms of internal colonisation that sought to suppress autonomy not only through political governance and economic extraction but also through the regulation of religious life. Post-World War II decolonisation movements and postcolonial theories provide a framework for understanding Ukraine's ongoing efforts to protect its independence, including contests over cultural memory, identity formation, and the role of religion in public life, which Russia keeps trying to destroy.

Dr. Lidiya Lozova

Honorary Senior Lecturer,
Exeter University, UK



Rev. Dr. Volodymyr Vakin

Rector,
Volyn Orthodox Theological Academy, Ukraine



Rev. Dr. Andriy Dudchenko

Associate Professor,
Kyiv Orthodox Theological Academy, Ukraine



“Royal Priesthood”: What does it mean for our Church communities today?

The phrase “Royal Priesthood” appears near the heart of the New Testament’s vision of the Church, yet in much of Orthodox practice, it has remained functionally displaced by clerical categories that leave the laity as passive recipients rather than active participants in the life of the Body of Christ. This workshop brings together three theologians from Ukraine to ask what it would mean to take this biblical concept seriously again.

Rev. Dr. Andriy Dudchenko will explore the liturgical dimension of the royal priesthood: the faithful are not the “uninitiated” standing at a remove from sacred action, but essential co-celebrants whose participation is constitutive of the Eucharistic assembly. He will argue that recovering this understanding is not merely an academic exercise but a corrective to concrete liturgical and ecclesial distortions, and that the tradition itself provides the resources to do so.

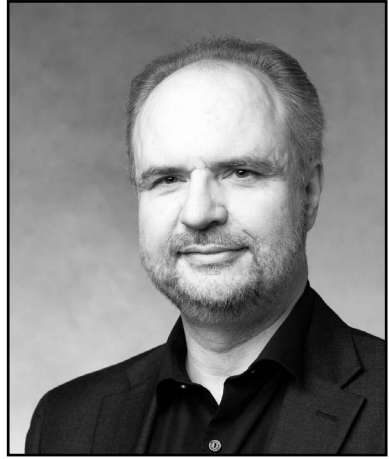
Dr. Lidiya Lozova will examine the theological-anthropological frameworks that shape how lay people understand their own place and agency within the Church. Drawing on fieldwork and personal experience across parishes in Ukraine and wider Europe, she will offer comparative portraits of lay self-understanding and communal functioning, illuminating how different ecclesial cultures either cultivate or suppress the vocational identity of the baptized.

Rev. Dr. Volodymyr Vakin will bring the conversation into the crucible of wartime Ukraine, where the question of lay ministry is no longer merely theoretical. He will speak from direct experience about how communities have discovered and exercised their priestly vocation under conditions of crisis, including the training of military and medical chaplains.

Prof. Paul Gavriliuk

President of IOTA;

Aquinas Chair in Theology and Philosophy
Theology Department,
St. Thomas University, MN, USA



Paul L. Gavrilyuk holds the Aquinas Chair in Theology and Philosophy at the Theology Department of the University of St. Thomas, St. Paul, Minnesota, USA. Born in Kiev, Ukraine, he studied physics at Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology in Russia (1988-1993). He was one of the first scholars from the former Soviet Union to come to the United States to pursue graduate work in theology. In 2001, he received his doctorate in patristics from the Graduate Program in Religious Studies at Southern Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. An Orthodox theologian and historian, Dr. Gavrilyuk specializes in Greek patristics and modern Orthodox theology. His areas of interest also include philosophy of religion, liturgical studies, and ecumenical studies. Translated into ten languages, his publications include the following books: *The Suffering of the Impassible God: The Dialectics of Patristic Thought* (Oxford, 2004), *Histoire du catéchuménat dans l'église ancienne* [A History of the Catechumenate in the Early Church] (Paris: Le Cerf, 2007); *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity*, co-edited with Sarah Coakley (Cambridge, 2012), and *Georges Florovsky and the Russian Religious Renaissance* (Oxford, 2013). His numerous scholarly articles have appeared in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, *Vigiliae Christianae*, *Modern Theology*, *First Things*, *Studia Liturgica*, as well as Eastern European academic journals. He is also a regular contributor to encyclopedias, handbooks, dictionaries, and multi-author symposia.

Deification Studies in an Ecumenical Perspective

The course will consider the methodological, historical, and theological issues related to the concept of deification. The Oxford Handbook of Deification, co-edited by Paul Gavrilyuk, will be the starting point for our discussion. The questions to be pursued are as follows: what precisely is meant by deification? Is deification an exclusively Eastern Christian idea? Has deification always been a feature of Eastern Orthodox tradition? How is deification related to other understandings of salvation?

The Varieties and Vicissitudes of Neopatristic Theology

The course will consider the contributions of Georges Florovsky, Vladimir Lossky, and Alexander Schmemmann to the rise and development of the neopatristic direction in the twentieth-century Orthodox theology. What is neopatristics? What are some of its methodological and historical assumptions? Are those still valid? What implications did the neopatristic turn have for the Orthodox theology of the 21st century? This and other critical questions will be pursued in this course.

Prof. Aristotle Papanikolaou

Archbishop Demetrios Chair in Orthodox Theology and Culture, Fordham University

Co-founding Director of the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University



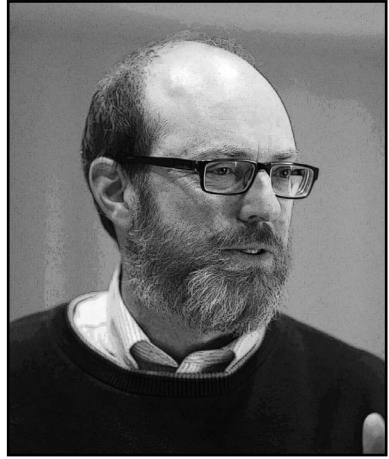
Aristotle Papanikolaou is a Professor of Theology and the Archbishop Demetrios Chair in Orthodox Theology and Culture. He is Co-founding Director of the Orthodox Christian Studies Center at Fordham University, and McDonald Distinguished Senior Fellow at the Emory University Center for the Study of Law and Religion. In 2012, he received the Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching in the Humanities, and in 2024, he was named the University of Chicago Divinity School Alum of the Year. Among his many publications, he is the author of *The Mystical as Political: Democracy and Non-Radical Orthodoxy* and co-editor, together with Elizabeth Prodromou, of *Thinking through Faith: New Perspectives from Orthodox Christian Scholars*. He was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, and he enjoys Russian literature, Byzantine and Greek music.

Secular, Secularization and Secularism. An Orthodox Perspective

This class will explore the meaning of the words “secular”, “secularization”, and “secularism”. Students will be introduced to the three parts of the classical theory of secularization. There will be a discussion of whether we are living in a secular or post-secular world, with particular attention to the European and American contexts. Finally, the class will attempt, from an Orthodox perspective, to answer the question of whether there can be such a thing as Christian secularism, or whether the phrase is a contradiction in terms.

Rev. Prof. Brandon Gallaher

Associate Professor
of Systematic Theology
University of Exeter, UK



Brandon Gallaher is Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at the University of Exeter (Devon, UK). His publications include *Freedom and Necessity in Modern Trinitarian Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), [with Paul Ladouceur] *The Patristic Witness of Georges Florovsky: Essential Theological Writings* (London: T & T Clark, 2019) and [with John Chryssavgis] *The Living Christ: The Theological Legacy of Georges Florovsky* (London: T & T Clark, 2021). His recent research has focussed on Orthodoxy and modernity, comparative theology, political theology and the ecclesiology of Sergii Bulgakov. Gallaher served as a Theological Subject Expert in the Ecumenical Patriarchate Press Office at the Holy and Great Council of Crete (2016) and was a member of the 'Special Commission' of theologians who help draft the Ecumenical Patriarchate's *For the Life of the World: Towards a Social Ethos of the Orthodox Church* (2020) (with responsibility for the section on ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue). He was one of the drafters and two co-coordinators (along with Dr Pantelis Kalaitzidis) of the March 2022, 'A Declaration on the Russian World (*Russkii mir*) Teaching'. He serves as a priest of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Orthodox Christianity and Inter-Religious Encounter

This two-part lecture will first give a brief introductory overview of the history, theory and practice of interreligious encounter as well as some of the differing Christian theologies of religion (including the relatively new discipline of 'comparative theology') and the different practices of interreligious dialogue with a strong emphasis on its place in the public sphere. It will then give an historical overview of past Orthodox encounters with other religions, especially in a missiological context, look at some of the major theoreticians in the history of Orthodox engagement with other religions and set out a contemporary Orthodox theology of religions.

Inter-religious Violence and Peacemaking: Theory and History in Light of Orthodox Christianity

This two-part lecture, drawing on a variety of disciplines, will examine the history of interreligious conflicts and encounters, and the contemporary turn towards practices of interreligious dialogue and peacemaking. It will examine from an Orthodox lens contemporary and historic clashes between religious traditions where there has been bloodshed, often fuelled in modern times by nationalism, the persecution of religious minorities, as well as contemporary culture war issues where religious traditions have been deeply divided.

Dr Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi

National Center for Public Administration
and Local Government, Greece

International Hellenic University, Greece



Dr. Eleni Kasselouri-Hatzivassiliadi is a Research and Studies Officer of the Greek National Center for Public Administration & Local Government and, since 2022, a visitor lecturer at the International Hellenic University, teaching public administration and gender pedagogy. She was a visitor lecturer at the Neapolis Pafos University and the Hellenic Open University (2009-2021), a research associate of Volos Academy for Theological Studies (2003-2011), a gender expert at the Departments of Psychology and Pedagogics of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (2004-2007) and at the National Research Center on Gender Equality (2001-2004). She was Vice-President of the European Society of Women in Theological Research (1999-2001), a member of CEMES and a member of the steering groups of WCC programs “Women’s Voices and Visions on Being Church” (2002-2006) and “Women in Church and Society” (2007-2021), of two advisory groups of WCC on gender issues and human sexuality (2018-2021) and co-opted WCC staff in both the Porto Alegre (2006) and Busan (2013) General Assemblies. She has published books and articles in Greek, English, Arabic, French, German etc.

Women, the Church and the Ecumenical movement

The discussion concerning the role of women in the Church constitutes one of the most significant issues within contemporary ecumenical dialogue. Within the framework of ecumenical dialogue, many Protestant Churches have proceeded to the full ordination of women at all levels of ecclesiastical ministry, maintaining that gender equality derives from the biblical teaching on the common dignity of all people in Christ (Gal. 3:28). In contrast, the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches remain hesitant regarding the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopacy, arguing that the Church's tradition, together with the example of Christ and the Apostles, constitutes a binding theological framework. Despite these differences, ecumenical dialogue has made a substantial contribution to identifying common points of reference. Particular emphasis has been placed on the theology of the *imago Dei*, according to which men and women participate equally in human nature and share the same calling to holiness. At the same time, extensive scholarly reflection has developed concerning the historical presence of women in the early Christian communities, as well as the possibility of restoring institutions such as the female diaconate within the Orthodox Church.

Feminist Theology and Feminist Hermeneutics. Challenge or opportunity for Orthodox Theology?

Feminist theology emerged in the second half of the twentieth century as a critical response to the patriarchal structures embedded within religious traditions, theological discourse, and biblical interpretation. Drawing upon insights from feminist theory, it seeks to challenge the marginalization of women in religious communities and to reconstruct theological concepts in ways that promote equality, justice, tolerance and inclusivity. Rather than rejecting religious traditions outright, feminist theologians often engage critically with sacred texts and doctrines, arguing that many oppressive interpretations reflect historical and cultural biases rather than the essential message of faith. The significance of feminist theology lies in its transformative potential. By critically re-examining religious texts, symbols, and traditions, it opens new possibilities for understanding faith and religious authority. Feminist hermeneutics thus serves not only as a method of interpretation but also as a tool for social and ecclesial reform, contributing to ongoing debates about justice, equality, and human dignity within contemporary religious communities.

Rev. Dr Amfilochios Miltos

Member of the Joint Commission for the
Dialogue between the Orthodox and Ro-
man Catholic Churches

Research Associate, Volos Academy



Rev. Dr Amfilochios Miltos (Secretary and parish priest of the Metropolis of Demetrias, Volos, Greece), holds a PhD in History (Paris-Sorbonne University) and a PhD in Theology (Catholic Institute of Paris). He is a research associate of Volos Academy for Theological Studies, he is also Member of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. Among his recent publications: “Collegiality or Episcopal Synodality? Challenging Universalistic Ecclesiology”, *Louvain Studies* 46 (2023); “Regards sur le diaconat en perspective orthodoxe”, in Luc Forestier, Gabriel Planchez, Olivier Rota (eds), *Diaconat. Un ministère en chantier*, Paris: Parole et Silence, 2025.

The Problem of Papal Primacy in the Dialogue between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches

This workshop will examine selected excerpts from the most recent documents of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church, namely the Ravenna, Chieti, and Alexandria documents, as well as *The Bishop of Rome* and the report *A Synodal Church in Mission*. Through the study of these texts, participants will explore the question of papal primacy, one of the principal issues dividing the two Churches, and assess the theological developments and prospects for future agreement.

Prof. Pablo Argárate

Faculty of Catholic Theology
University of Graz, Austria



Pablo Argárate is currently the Dean of the Faculty of Catholic theology at the University of Graz, Austria. He holds a PhD in Philosophy (*Aeikinetos Stasis: The dynamic of being towards unity in the reflection of Maximos the Confessor*), and a PhD in theology (*Der Heilige Geist bei Symeon dem Neuen Theologen*), Tübingen. Studies of Oriental Christian Cultures and Languages (Ethiopian, Coptic, Syriac, Armenian) also at the University of Tübingen. After being professor at the universities of Paderborn, Tübingen (Germany) and Toronto (Canada), he is since 2011 professor and head of the Institute of Patristics, Orthodox and Ecumenical Theology at the University of Graz (Austria). He has already published 11 books, 50 chapters in scholarly books, more than 40 articles and has presented papers in more than 210 international conferences.

Major figures and trends in Catholic Theology

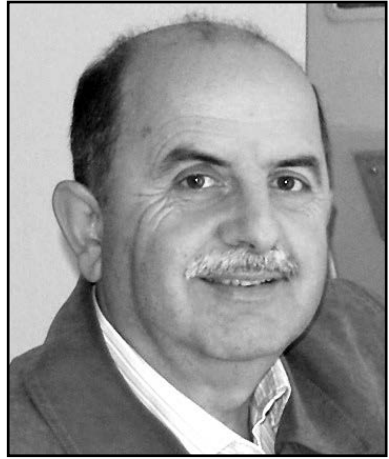
In this lecture, major figures and trends within the Catholic Church between the 19th and 21st centuries are presented. The historical context of the Catholic Church in this period is marked by profound social, political, and cultural upheavals that challenged traditional beliefs and practices. A central theme in Catholic theology has been the evolving relationship between faith, reason, and modernity. Major figures in this long period are amid others, John H. Newman, Karl Rahner, Hans Urs von Balthasar and Gustavo Gutierrez. Among the popes, John Paul II and Francis are to be particularly pointed out. Main topics discussed are modern Catholic Social teachings, Liberation Theology and the Ecumenical Dialogue. Other Developments to be mentioned are the focus on the family and relationships, youth engagement, and environmental stewardship.

The Bishop of Rome. A New Document

The document *The Bishop of Rome: Primacy and Synodality in the Ecumenical Dialogues and in the Responses to the Encyclical Ut Unum Sint* (Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, 2024), represents a significant stage in the contemporary Catholic–Orthodox dialogue. Rather than proposing new doctrinal definitions, it offers a careful synthesis of more than three decades of ecumenical discussions concerning the ministry of the Bishop of Rome. The study examines how primacy and synodality have been understood in international theological dialogues and in the responses to St. John Paul II's invitation in *Ut Unum Sint* to seek a form of papal ministry acceptable to all Christians. Of particular interest for Orthodox theologians is the document's effort to distinguish between the theological essence of primacy and its historical forms of exercise. It highlights areas of convergence, identifies remaining difficulties, and suggests avenues for further reflection. As such, it provides an important resource for assessing the possibilities and limits of a renewed understanding of primacy within the communion of the Churches in the twenty-first century.

Rev. Meletis Meletiadis

Pastor, Evangelical Church of Volos
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Rev. Meletis V. Meletiadis was born in Thessaloniki and grew up in New Mylotopos, Yiannitsa, in the prefecture of Pella. After finishing high school, he moved to Canada and later to the United States to complete his studies, first at Eastern Nazarene College (BA) and then at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary where he earned a Master of Arts in Theology. In December of 1994, after an invitation from the Greek Evangelical Church of Volos, he assumed the pastorate of that church where he continues to serve to this day. He served the Synod of the Evangelical Church of Greece as its Moderator from 2002 until the fall of 2018 when he resigned to focus his attention on the activities of the church of Volos. During his time as moderator, he, along with his colleagues, sought to create a law in line with religious rights, that the Greek state would pass in October of 2014. This effort would open the way so that, for the first time by the initiative of the Greek State, there would be official recognition of other church entities as Religious Bodies. Rev. Meletis Meletiadis also serves as President of the Board of Directors of the Greek Bible Society, the only ecumenical body in Greece. He is married to Angela Kantos and they have four adult children.

Reconciliation of a Protestant/Evangelical with the Orthodox

Unfortunately, in the past the relationship between the faithful of the Orthodox majority and those of the Protestant minority was not what one would expect from people who called themselves 'Christian'. Ignorance, misunderstanding, suspicion, generalization, stereotyping, false accusations, defamation, the use of the state and its law enforcement powers and abuse of those powers, threats, injustice, prejudice, discrimination, second class citizenry, prohibition from certain public positions of employment, exclusion from 'Orthodox' cemeteries and forced burials in improper places, were few of the ways Protestants were treated in Orthodox Greece.

For their part, Protestants reacted to their mistreatment by harboring resentment and hatred against the Orthodox. Even worse than their feelings was their belief, occasioned by their mistreatment, that the Orthodox were not Christian. This un-Christian behavior and reaction that characterized both communities, rendered their claims and testimony void of its Christian content as both displayed a model that looked more like that of Cain, after killing his brother, than of Christ Who loved, prayed and forgave His crucifiers. Both Orthodox and Protestant could not answer God's second question to sinful humanity, the one addressed to Cain, "Where is your brother?". By their respective behavior, both communities portrayed a Christless testimony and a Christianity void of Christ!

As Christians we need to come to terms with our un-Christian history and behavior. It's high time we recognize our mistakes and the wounds we've caused to the testimony of the Christian faith. It's time to acknowledge the pain we have caused to our brothers and sisters who belong to a different ecclesiastical 'fold' but are part of Jesus's flock (John 10.16) and ask for their forgiveness. It is time to realize that our brother and sister from a different confession is not our enemy, but rather, members of the Lord's family! And, lastly, it's about time we actualize Jesus' prayer of being united even though we have our theological differences. (John 17).

Dr Pantelis Kalaitzidis

Director,
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Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis studied Theology in Thessaloniki, and Philosophy in Paris, Sorbonne. He has published extensively in many languages in the areas of the eschatological dimension of Christianity, the dialogue between Orthodoxy and modernity, religious nationalism and fundamentalism, political theology, contemporary Orthodox and Western theology, issues of renewal and reformation in Eastern Orthodoxy, Ecumenical and Inter-religious dialogue, Religious education, and more. He is serving as the editor of the theological series “Doxa & Praxis: Exploring Orthodox Theology” (WCC Publications), while he is a member of the Board of various theological journals (Political Theology, Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies, Review of Ecumenical Studies, The Wheel). He taught Systematic Theology at the Hellenic Open University, and St Sergius Institute of Orthodox Theology in Paris. He has also been a Research Fellow at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (Boston), Princeton Theological Seminary and Princeton University (New Jersey), DePaul University (Chicago), Faculty of Theology of KU Leuven (Belgium), and the Faculty of Protestant Theology of Münster University (Germany). He is a member of the Executive Committee of the European Academy of Religion (EuARe), and co-Chair (with Prof. Papanikolaou) of the Political Theology group of the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA). For the last 26 years Dr. Kalaitzidis has been the Director of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies. His English publications include among others *Orthodoxy and Political Theology* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2012), *Orthodoxy and Modernity: Introducing a Constructive Encounter* (Brill/Schoningh, 2025), and (as co-editor) *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism: Resources for Theological Education* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014).

Byzantine Political Theology and the (In)fidelity to the Spirit of Nicaea

Starting from the Credo of Nicaea, the lecture questions whether Byzantine political theology was faithful to the spirit of Nicaea and its Trinitarian theology, including also the idea that the emperor was the image or the representative of Christ on earth. Highlighting the monarchical approach of Eusebius of Caesarea and its implementation of the kingdom of God as some form of Empire, it argues that in the perspective of Byzantine political theology Christ was understood much more as a king and less as a prophet or a priest. These very ideas found a sympathetic echo in the political theology of Carl Schmidt in the 20th century, and they were strongly opposed first by Erik Peterson and later by Jürgen Moltmann, who saw in such monarchical approaches a danger for the Nicaean Credo. According to Peterson, the Christian belief in the Trinitarian God leads to the denial of every sort of political domination and ultimately cancels all illusions about monarchical “political theologies”. Peterson, while opposing “any such thing as a Christian political theology,” was the first to highlight the political function and political implications of the doctrine of the Trinity. It must be mentioned that the Eusebian perspective faced constant resistance in the Eastern part of the empire, where Church Fathers and monastics, without denying the sacralization of imperial power and its Christological basis, opposed the imperial demands for the Church’s subjugation to secular authority and, more importantly, the imperial attempts to intervene in theological and doctrinal issues, and that, alongside the cooperation of the Church and State in Byzantium, a continuous dialectical tension seems to pervade the relationship between spiritual and secular authority, as exemplified by the patriarch and the emperor, or the Church and the empire. Finally it becomes clear that while Byzantium and the medieval empires failed to establish a way to society of common understanding, Trinitarian theology offers an eschatological perspective towards the kingdom of God.

Dr. Nikos Kouremenos

Research Associate, Volos Academy



Nikos Kouremenos holds a PhD in Oriental Ecclesiastical Sciences from the Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies (PIO) in Rome. His research interests focus on the historical course of Christianity in the Mediterranean world and the engaging of the contemporary Orthodox theology with the ecumenical movement as well. In 2020, he co-edited a volume with the title *Nationalism and Ecumenical Orthodoxy* published by CEMES publications. His PhD has been published in 2019 in the *Patrologia Orientalis* series. He has been a lecturer in the University of Athens and in the University of Thessaly, as well as visitin professor in the Catholic University of Eichstätt (Germany). He teaches early Church History in the Theological Institute “St Euphemia of Chalkedon” of the Orthodox Holy Metropolis of Italy and he is a Research Associate at the Volos Academy of Theological Studies.

Beyond Chalcedon? The Orthodox–Oriental Orthodox Dialogue

This lecture introduces students to one of the most promising, yet still unfinished, ecumenical dialogues of the 20th and 21st centuries. Beginning with the Council of Chalcedon and the historical formation of the Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian ecclesial families, the lecture will examine how modern theological conversations have attempted to move beyond inherited polemics and rediscover a shared Cyrillian Christological grammar. Particular attention will be given to the unofficial consultations, the official dialogue of the 1980s and 1990s, and especially the Agreed Statements of 1989 and 1990, which affirmed a common rejection of both Nestorianism and Eutychianism and recognized the legitimacy of different theological terminologies for expressing the same mystery of the Incarnation. The lecture will also discuss the unresolved issues that continue to delay full communion: the reception of the later Ecumenical Councils, the lifting of anathemas, the veneration of saints, liturgical and sacramental practice, and the problem of ecclesial reception at local and synodal levels. Rather than presenting the dialogue as a simple success story or as a failed project, the session will invite students to see it as a test case for Orthodox ecumenism: how can fidelity to tradition coexist with historical self-criticism, theological precision, and pastoral courage?

From the Dialogue of Love to the Dialogue of Truth: Popes and Ecumenical Patriarchs from the 1960's to the Present

This lecture traces the modern history of encounters between the Bishops of Rome and the Ecumenical Patriarchs of Constantinople from the early 1960s to the present. It begins with the new atmosphere created by Pope John XXIII, Patriarch Athenagoras, and the Second Vatican Council, before focusing on the historic meeting between Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras in Jerusalem in January 1964, the first such encounter after centuries of estrangement. The lecture will then follow the symbolic and ecclesiological significance of the mutual visits of 1967, the lifting from memory of the anathemas of 1054, and the gradual passage from gestures of fraternity to structured theological dialogue. The second part of the lecture will examine the meetings of Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis, and Pope Leo XIV with Ecumenical Patriarchs Demetrios and Bartholomew. Special attention will be given to the emergence of the official Catholic–Orthodox theological dialogue, the key documents on Eucharist, primacy, synodality, and communion.

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