

Tradition and Traditions

Conference Program [*DRAFT*]

17–20 January 2027
Poti and Kobuleti, Georgia

International Orthodox Theological Association

I O T A

INTERNATIONAL ORTHODOX THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Tradition and Traditions

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About the Conference

Founded in 2017, the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA) is the largest and the most representative academic society of the worldwide communion of the Orthodox Churches. IOTA organizes mega-conferences, sponsors scholarly symposia, oversees IOTA Publications, organizes IOTA Talks and YouTube videos, and runs the Future Leaders Program. At this conference, we will launch our new IOTA Dialogues Program, which will feature six informal bilateral academic dialogues between the scholars and leaders of the Orthodox Churches and other Christian traditions.

Hosted by New Georgian University, this is IOTA's third mega-conference. The two previous conferences took place in Iasi, Romania ('Orthodox Unity and Conciliarity', 2019) and Volos, Greece ('Mission and the Orthodox Church', 2023) respectively. The general theme of this mega-conference is 'Tradition and Traditions'. The conference will shed light on the concept of tradition from different perspectives and will discuss other topics of importance for worldwide Orthodoxy.

Session Format and Visual Aids

In order to provide enough time for discussion, each paper in the regular sessions is limited to fifteen minutes or 1,800 words of the main text followed by a five-minute q&a. Each paper in the short communication session is seven minutes with two minutes reserved for q&a.

If you would like to show a PowerPoint presentation, bring it on a thumb drive to your session and inform the volunteers 20 mins before the start of your session.

Free Wi-Fi at the Headquarters Hotel

TBD

Conference Updates

For program changes before 25 December 2026, contact program@iota-web.org:

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Conference Sponsors

Major Supporters

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New Georgian University, Poti, Republic of Georgia
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Orthodox Theological Society in America
Orthodox Vision Foundation
St. Philaret Society

About IOTA

Mission

IOTA is a community of scholars and professionals dedicated to the worldwide exchange of knowledge within the context of the Orthodox tradition.

IOTA's goals are:

1) Organize international conferences and facilitate group research projects;
2) Partner with people and institutions around the world in order to contribute to their mission of teaching and transmitting the faith;
3) Engage contemporary culture in light of the Orthodox tradition;
4) Contribute to the growth and renewal of the Orthodox Church; and
5) Support pan-Orthodox unity and conciliarity.

Board of Directors

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Saturday, 16 January: Arrivals

Arrivals	
	Schedule your bus coach transfer from Batumi and Kutaisi airports by filling out this online form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfg-WPvqMG6A5UKMsGffYa5yP8FW4IzhPS-oITL80P7lYS43g/viewform?usp=dialog The bus transfer is only available on this date and not on earlier or later dates. This free transfer is made possible due to the generous support of New Georgian University.

Maximus Symposium: 10:15–18:00	
10:15–18:00 **Georgia Palace Hotel** **Aieti Room**	OPTIONAL: Registered conference attendees are welcome to attend the 8th International Colloquium on St Maximus the Confessor. See the Appendix at the back of this program for details.

Sunday, 17 January: Opening Day

Morning Refreshments and Doxology Service | 11:00–14:30	
	Details TBD
11:00–11:50	Brunch (or, earlier breakfast on your own)
12:00 departure	Bus transfer from the Headquarters Hotel (Georgia Palace Kobuleti) to the Poti Cathedral
13:00–13:45	Doxology at the Poti Cathedral offered by **Metropolitan Grigoli of Poti**
13:45–14:00	Group photo in front of the Poti Cathedral
14:00–14:30	Bust transfer to Opening Ceremony venue

Opening Ceremony | 14:30–17:00	
Venue address: **49 Polikarpe Zeragia Street, Poti, 4400**	
14:30–17:00	Welcome Address: **Metropolitan Grigoli of Poti** Presidential Address: **Dr. Paul L. Gavrilyuk**, IOTA President Keynote Address: Rev. Prof. **John Behr**

	A name tag or evidence of conference registration is required.
16:30–17:00	Bus transfer to Opening Banquet
17:00–19:00	Opening Banquet *A name tag or evidence of conference registration is required.*
19:00–19:50	Bus transfer to hotels

Monday, 18 January: Day 1

Breakfast

Monday, 18 January	Breakfast on your own

9:00–11:00

Science and Theology Group / Orthodox Theological Institutions Group
1.1 Orthodox Theology, Ecology and Environmental Challenges: Teaching the Connections
Session Chair: **Rev. Dr. Christopher Knight** (United Kingdom)

Monday, 18 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** Orthodox "theology of creation" is widely admired across the Christian world; yet it seems to have little if any impact on environmental behaviour and attitudes in most Orthodox parishes and church institutions. It is hard to see this changing unless parish clergy start seeing the relationship between God and creation as an integral part of Christian faith and recognizing environmental behavior as a way to witness to that vision. This raises questions about theological formation: how can these connections be taught to future generations of clergy? And what sort of challenges from environmental thinking will they need to learn to engage with?
	Dr. Andrew Sharp (USA): How Strategic Curricular Changes at Theological Institutions Can Encourage a Paradigm Shift among the Faithful to Live Out the Orthodox Theology of Creation **Fr. Anthony Perkins** (USA): Establishing an Environmental Seminary Curriculum **Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak** (Poland): The Ecology of Encounter: How Prayer, Place and Relationship Shape Our Care for Creation **Dr. Christina Nellist** (United Kingdom): An Evaluation of Orthodox Ecotheology & Animal Theology in Orthodox Academic and Seminary Institutions **Dr. Thomas Arentzen** (Sweden): Orthodox Christianity for Auks **Mrs. Elizabeth Theokritoff** (United Kingdom): Transmitting Orthodox Tradition versus "Ecotheology"

IOTA Dialogues
1.2 Orthodox–Evangelical Dialogue
Session Chair: **Dr Ralph Lee** (United Kingdom)

Monday, 18 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** This panel explores Orthodox–Evangelical encounter as a lived practice of theological dialogue through friendship. Shaped by the outlook of the Lausanne-Orthodox Initiative, it understands dialogue as a journey of listening, trust-building, repentance, learning, and shared witness to Christ. Each presentation will be offered by paired speakers, one from an Orthodox background and one from a

	Protestant background, reflecting together on how cross-tradition encounter has shaped their understanding of worship, friendship, pastoral care, discipleship, and Christian unity. The panel therefore seeks not only to describe dialogue, but to model it through relational, paired theological reflection.
	Dr. Grant White (Finland) and **Dr. Rosalee Velloso Ewell** (United Kingdom): Liturgy as a Place of Cross-Tradition Encounter and Theological Learning **Dr. Riad Ghobrial** (Greece) and **Rev. Canon Mark Oxbrow** (United Kingdom): Trust and Friendship Formed through Orthodox–Evangelical Encounter **Very Rev. Matthew Francis** (Canada) and **Prof. David Wang** (USA): Pastoral Care as a Site of Orthodox–Evangelical Learning and Dialogue

Liturgical Studies Group **1.3 Current Research in Liturgical Studies** Session Chair: **Dr. Alexander Lingas** (United Kingdom)	
Monday, 18 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** This session is devoted to a range of topics representing recent historical research in the field of Eastern Christian liturgical studies. The first three papers address questions of theological meaning and liturgical placement of hymns at crucial junctures in the formation of the hybrid Byzantine rite from earlier regional traditions. The next two papers examine the reception of late antique and medieval liturgical forms as living tradition within the Orthodox ecclesial practice.
	Mr. Henry Brink (USA): The Triumphant Hymn of the Byzantine Anaphorae **Dr. Tamazi Devidze** (Georgia): Sin. 5 and Sin. 75 as Witnesses of a Liturgical Transition: The Pre-Lenten Cycle in Georgian Manuscripts **Ms. Susan Francino** (USA): "How shall we hymn the martyrs?": Signs of a Literary-Theological Tradition in Early Martyrological Hymns **Fr. Joby Kurien Thomas** (USA): Chrismation in the Orthodox Tradition: Reassessing the Relationship Between Apostolic Tradition and Liturgical Traditions in the Rites of Christian Initiation

Philosophical Theology Group **1.4 Embodied Traditions: Beauty, Personhood, and Redemption in Orthodox Philosophical Theology** Session Chair: **Dr. Smilen Markov** (Bulgaria)	
Monday, 18 January 9:00–11:00	**NOTE: This session continues in the 11:30–13:30 session.** **Session Description:** TBD

	Prof. Mihail Neamtu (Romania): Beyond Epistemology: Revelation as Attraction by Divine Beauty **Ms. Dragana Rakic** (Germany): Self-Care in Origen: The Transformation of Human Nature from the Image to the Likeness of God **Prof. Nathan Placencia** (USA): Against Origenist Reduction: The Redemption of Embodied Difference in the World to Come **Emanuel Ježek**: Between Traditions: Orthodox Creativity in Venetian Crete

Church History Group

1.5 National Ecclesiastical Tradition as an Invention: Universalism, Ethnophyletism, and Nationalism within the Local Ecclesiastical Traditions in Southern and Eastern Europe from the Middle Ages till Modern Times

Session Chair: **Prof. Dimitrios Moschos** (Greece)

Monday, 18 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** Local churches that have been actively involved in creating local ecclesiastical traditions since the Middle Ages have ambivalently interpreted St Paul's assertion that "there is neither Jew nor Greek" (Galatians 3:28). Aspirations for autocephaly, the establishment of national pantheons of saints, and the creation of national ecclesiastical narratives have been particularly evident in Southern and Eastern Europe. Here, national church traditions were secularized, and nationalism was sacralized during the 19th century. The strong influence of national churches on the politics of memory and the creation of national political theology remains evident in many societies across Southern and Eastern Europe and continues to play a crucial role in the region's military conflicts. Various examples of the (mis)use of national traditions in political, ecclesiastical, and social discourses are expected in this panel.
	Prof. Vasilios N. Makrides (Germany): Nationalization as Confessionalization: The Transition from an Ecumenical Orthodoxy to the National and Confessionalized Orthodox Churches **Prof. Stefan Rohdewald** (Germany): Sacralizing Nations in Transimperial Competition **Prof. Wim Coudenys** (Belgium): The 1926 Quénet-Controversy as a Litmus Test for the Identification of "Russian" with "Orthodox" in the Russian Emigration **Courtney Wanes** (USA): The Memory of Byzantium in Russia's Colonial Encounter **Dragica Tadić Papanikolau** (Greece): The Translations of the Relics of Saint Lazar and Their Varied Functions **Dr. Nikos Kouremenos** (Greece): Between Oikoumene and Nation: The Nationalization of Ecclesiastical Memory in Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria, c. 1850–1914

Orthodoxy and Literature Group **1.6 Beauty and Imagination** Session Chair: **Prof. Lori Peterson Branch** (USA)	
Monday, 18 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** Perhaps the best-known words of Orthodox novelist Fyodor Dostoevsky are "*Beauty will save the world*." This session explores the dynamic interplay of beauty (as both universal reality and subjective experience) and imagination (as a uniquely human faculty) in our search for God and our own souls.
	Rev. Matthew Webber (USA): Where Angels Fear to Tread: Why Holy Fools and *Parrhesia* Will Save Us **Ms. Apostolia Kyriaki Karagianni** (Greece): "Without us, what would death be?" Existence and Death in the Literature and Poetry of Giorgos Themelis and Nikos Gabriel Pentzikis: A Dialogue with Orthodox Theology **Rev. Dr. Chrysostom Koutloumousianos** (Greece): Beauty and Betrayal in Romanos the Melodist's Hymn on Judas **Dr. Ioana Patuleanu** (USA): "By remembering, I participate in God's creation": Revisiting the Romanian Political Prison in Florin Constantin Pavlovici's Memoir, *Tortura, pe Înțelesul Tuturor* (*The Basics of Torture*) **Ms. Lily Talmers** (USA): Creativity, Aesthetics, and Christification of the World: The Philokalic Aesethic of Orthodoxy Through the Life and Works of Mother Maria Skobtsova

Patristics Group **1.7 The Theological Legacy of Emperor Justinian (527–565)** Session Chair: **Prof. Vladimir Cvetković** (Serbia)	
Monday, 18 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** On the occasion of the 1500th anniversary of Emperor Justinian's accession to the Byzantine throne, this session features papers that reexamine the theological vision and legacy of one of Byzantium's most formative rulers. Justinian's reign stands at the crossroads of theology and imperial governance, where the unity of empire was conceived as inseparable from the unity of faith and the ideal of *symphonia* between Church and state.
	Rev. Prof. Sergio Ernesto Mainoldi (Italy): The Corpus Dionysiacum as Part of Justinian's Theological Legacy **Mr. Dominic Cassella** (USA): Justinian I and the Incarnational Logic of Anointing **Rev. Dr. Thomas Drobena** (USA): The Benefit of Justinian's Anti-Nestorianism and the Theopaschite Formula **Dr. Georgios Siskos** (Greece): The Chalcedonian Legacy of Justinian's Era according to the *Three Refutations against the Iconoclasts* of Theodore the Studite

Slavic Orthodoxy Group **1.8 Book Review: Scott Kenworthy, *The People's Patriarch: Tikhon Bellavin and the Orthodox Church in North America and Revolutionary Russia* (Oxford University Press, 2025)** Session Chair: **Prof. Vera Shevzov** (USA)	
Monday, 18 January 9:00–11:00	**Br. Adalberto Mainardi** (Italy) **Alexander Mramornov** (Russia) **Prof. Irina Paert** (Estonia) **Prof. Vera Shevzov** (USA) **Prof. Serhii Shumylo** (Lithuania) **Prof. Scott Kenworthy** (USA)

Morning Break | 11:00–11:30

Monday, 18 January 11:00–11:30	Break

11:30–13:30

Ecclesiology Group **2.1 Tradition Beyond Fundamentalism: Eucharistic Ecclesiology and the Crisis of Orthodox Identity** Session Chair: **Dr. Michael Hjälm** (Sweden)	
Monday, 18 January 11:30–13:30	**Session Description:** Appeals to "Tradition" are central to Orthodox identity, yet they can harden into a fundamentalism that confuses faithfulness with immobility. This session asks whether Eucharistic ecclesiology, with its vision of the Church constituted in local Eucharistic communion, can help Orthodoxy move beyond this impasse. The papers approach the question theologically, structurally and historically. At stake is a single question: can Tradition become a source of renewal for the Church, rather than a defence against change?
	Br. Adalberto Mainardi (Italy): Local Church, Synodal Church: Autocephaly in Ecumenical Perspective **Dr. Yury Safoklov** (Germany): "Domestication" of the Church? Tradition, the Kyriarchy-Diaspora Dichotomy and the Challenge of Universality **Mr. Giorgi Kavtaradze** (Georgia): The Church as a Metaphysical Subject of History (Paradigms of Vitality and Renewal)

	Dr. Juris Jefuni (Latvia): The Latvian Orthodox Church in the Family of Orthodox Churches (1920s–1930s): The Ecclesiological Concept of Archbishop Jānis Pommers and His Circle **Dr. Berge Traboulsi** (Lebanon): Living Tradition and Rigid Traditions in Eastern Orthodoxy: The Dynamics of Change and the Path to Reform **Mr. Tornike Dzindzibazde** (Austria): Non-reception as a Mechanism for Ecclesiological Identity Formation: Orthodox Reflection on the First Vatican Council

IOTA Dialogues **2.2 Ten Years of Orthodox–Pentecostal Dialogue in the US: An Appraisal** Session Chair: **Dr. Nathan Hoppe** (USA)	
Monday, 18 January 11:30–13:30	**Session Description:** The Orthodox–Pentecostal dialogue has been active in the US for over eight years. This session will give an overview the of work of the past, highlighting the book that will be coming out based on our first years. We will also look to the future and discuss the anticipated work of this dialogue in the US and worldwide.
	Dr. Lisa Stephenson (USA): Pentecostal Reflections on the Dialogue **Dr. Kerry San Chirico** (USA): History and Methodology of the Dialogue **Dr. Gayle E. Woloschak** (USA): The Importance of the Academic Nature of the Dialogue **Dr. Ciprian Gheorghe-Luca** (Romania): Responses to the Work of the Dialogue with a Romanian Context

Modern Hellenic Orthodoxy Group **2.3 Modern Readings of Tradition** Session Chair: **Dr. Nikolaos Asproulis** (Greece)	
Monday, 18 January 11:30–13:30	**Session Description:** The group focuses on contemporary readings of ecclesiastical tradition. It begins with influential figures, such as Christos Giannaras and John Zizioulas, as well as movements like the neopatristic synthesis and the post-war 1960s Greek theology. The group engages in critical discussions on various issues related to tradition, including the nature of the priesthood, dogmatic development, and the distinction between essence and energy, among others. These discussions are significant for understanding the present and future of contemporary Greek theology, especially in light of the ever-changing cultural and social landscape.
	Prof. Dr. Sveto Ribolov (Bulgaria): The Discussion on the Uncreated Divine Energies in Greece during the 20th Century and Its Reflection in the Other Balkan Countries **Rev. Dr. Basil Gavrilovic** (USA): Doctrinal Development and the Living Word in Modern Orthodox Theology

	Asst. Prof. Ioannis Kaminis (Bulgaria): Between Experience and Dogma: The Theological Vision of Christos Yannaras **Ms. Nino Sadzaglishvili** (Greece/Georgia): Challenges in Interpreting Post-War Greek Theological Approaches in the Georgian Context **Dr. Panche Kjosev** (North Macedonia): Historical Priesthood or Eschatological Priesthood **Dr. Inga Leonova** (USA): In the Shadow of Hagia Sophia

Philosophical Theology Group **2.4 Embodied Traditions: Beauty, Personhood, and Redemption in Orthodox Philosophical Theology** Session Chair: **Dr. Smilen Markov** (Bulgaria)	
Monday, 18 January 11:30–13:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 9:00–11:00 session.** **Session Description:** TBD
	Dr. Lali Zakaradze (Georgia): Philosophical Theology in Georgian and Latin Medieval Centuries: Ioane Petritsi and Berthold of Moosburg **Dr. Mikheil Gogatishvili** (Georgia): Hegel's Triadic Dialectics and the Orthodox Tradition **Abuna Pistavros Elmacari** (Egypt): Beyond Dualism: Toward a Biblical and Orthodox Ontology of the Person as Multifaceted Unity

Women and the Orthodox Church Group **2.5 Tradition and Traditions** Session Chair: **Dr. Elena Narinskaya** (United Kingdom)	
Monday, 18 January 11:30–13:30	**Session Description:** This session includes papers on many aspects of women and the Orthodox Church from all disciplines that address the theme of the conference: "Tradition and Traditions."
	Dr. Carrie Frederick Frost (USA): What Is the "Right" Rite? Recent Decisions and Conversations on Ordination Rites for Deaconesses **Ms. Marcella Brink** (USA): Myrrh Bearers or Altar Servers?: Re-reading a 6th-Century Ivory Pyxis **Dr. Ruth Coates** (United Kingdom): Mother Maria (Gysi, 1912–1977) and the Orthodox Ascetic Way: Back to Plato

	Mrs. Nino Gambashidze (Georgia): Slave and Captive Women in Medieval Georgia: Christian Ethics, Marriage, and Social Hierarchy **Dr. Teva L. Regule** (USA): The Liturgical Role of the Female Deacon: Past and Future?

Church History Group
2.6 Political and Social Questions in the History of Eastern Christianity from the Middle Ages to the 19th Century
Session Chair: **Dr. Nataliia Sinkevych** (Germany)

Monday, 18 January 11:30–13:30	**Session Description:** The history of the Eastern Orthodox Church is typically viewed as a historical continuum characterized by a medieval political and social worldview, where everything reflects the hierarchically structured kingdom of heaven on earth. This worldview is supposed to be irrelevant to any evolution in political and social structures during the Middle Ages and into modernity until the 19th century. It seems that there is no room for questions of political freedom, relations between State and market, human rights and pluralism, as well as social justice, representation, equality under law, or other classical democratic features (which were still existent in the early Church) in the concept of a Christian "politeia" (organized society) as it was formed in the known examples of the Christian Romanitas or the Tsarist or other empires in the East. This panel aims to challenge this stereotype and invite papers exploring such issues from the end of late antiquity until recent times (19th c.), when the Orthodox Christians were still thought to live under an imaginary God-given emperor, but in reality, were daily coping with the modern world.
	Prof. Dimitris Stamatopoulos (Greece): Are There Really Political Theologies? Some Critical Observations on the Rise of a Concept **Prof. Dimitrios Moschos** (Greece): Theology, Social Conceptions of Democracy, and the Imperial Orthodoxy in the Late Byzantium **Asst. Prof. Irini Kasapi** (Greece): Religious Tolerance and Toleration in 14th-Century Moscovy **Dr. Nataliia Sinkevych** (Germany): The Orthodox Church in Ukraine and Moldavia: Shaping of the Politics of Memory and Legitimation in the 1990–2020s **Silvian-Emanuel Man** (Romania): Romanian Political, Historical and Ecclesiastical Narratives on the Secularization of Monastical Estates and the Redefinition of Church–State Relations in the Light of Recent Canonizations

Philosophy of Religion Group
2.7 Book Review: David Bradshaw, *The God of Eastern Orthodoxy* (Cambridge University Press, 2026)
Session Chair: **Prof. Bruce Foltz** (USA)

Monday, 18 January 11:30–13:30	**Session Description:** *The God of Eastern Orthodoxy* by David Bradshaw is a short book in the Cambridge Elements series. Its goal is to present a distinctively Orthodox approach to central issues in the philosophy of religion. After an introductory chapter on the experience of God in Orthodoxy, the book deals successively with God as the Good, the essence-energies distinction, the Trinity, the Incarnation, time and eternity, divine foreknowledge and human freedom, divine-human interaction, and the problem of evil. This panel discussion will present the book and assess its contribution to contemporary Orthodox discourse.
	Rev. Prof. Isidoros Katsos (Greece) **Prof. Vladimir Cvetković** (Serbia) **Prof. Edith M. Humphrey** (USA) **Prof. David Bradshaw** (USA)

Pastoral Theology and Care Group
2.8 The Position of Psychology in Pastoral Care and Spiritual Guidance
Session Chairs: **Rev. Vasileios Thermos** (Greece) / **Rev. Harry Pappas** (USA)

Monday, 18 January 11:30–13:30	**Session Description:** Traditional pastoral care and spiritual guidance have ceaselessly relied on both theology and the spiritual experience of the saints. While this inheritance is still undoubtedly valid and the source of any pastoral inspiration, the monumental developments of modernity and postmodernity pose serious challenges. A new secular anthropology is expressed primarily through the various schools of psychology and its applications in psychotherapy. Psychology was received by the Orthodox Church with a delay, and soon became controversial: fundamentalist exclusive approaches vs. fruitful syntheses. Theoretical issues that bring into dialogue the two anthropologies, as well as pastoral applications that consider the new modern and postmodern human subject, are discussed in this session.
	Rev. Dr. Michael Bakker (Netherlands): Applied Patristics: Maximos's Mystagogical Psychology in Pastoral Care **Rev. Dr. Chrysostom Gr. Tympas** (Greece): The Psychodynamic and Archetypal Dimension of *The Life in Christ*: Pastoral Considerations **Rev. Prof. Harry Pappas** (USA): The Prophetic Witness of Scripture to Caregiving **Rev. Dr. Stephen Muse** (USA): The Aim and Value of Pastoral Psychological Assessment of Candidates for Clergy and Episcopal Ordination **Ms. Sophiko Gogochashvili** (Georgia): Psychotherapy and Pastoral Care: Exploring Perceptions, Boundaries, and Opportunities for Collaboration in the Georgian Orthodox Context **Rev. Prof. Vasileios Thermos** (Greece): Reflections on the Place of Psychology in the Divine Economy

Lunch Break | 13:30–15:00	
Monday, 18 January 13:30–15:00	Lunch on your own

15:00–16:30

Patristics Group
3.1 Tradition and Traditions
Session Chair: **Fr Milan Đorđević** (North Macedonia)

Monday, 18 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** This session is conceived as an open call within the broad historical, theological, philosophical, and philological framework of patristic studies. It welcomes contributions that reflect the diversity of contemporary scholarship—from modern approaches to the Church Fathers and editorial projects of patristic texts to studies exploring the intersections of patristic spirituality, doctrine, and politics within the Orthodox understanding of the patristic era. The session aims to highlight the richness of doctrinal expressions during the patristic period and to illuminate the multiple historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts in which the Church Fathers and their interlocutors articulated and developed their theological thought.
	Dr. Sophia Theodoratos (Australia): Fashioning "one human race," with Irenaeus: Unity of Voice, Rule, and Vision **Deacon Matthew Keil** (USA): Tradition and the Transformation of Ephrem: Greek Reception and Pseudepigraphy in the Encomium on Saint Ephrem Attributed to Saint Gregory of Nyssa **Mr. Vuk Trnavac** (Serbia): How the Understanding of Virtue as the Health of the Soul in Saint Basil the Great Has a Platonic Source **Prof. Karolina Kochańczyk-Bonińska** (Poland): The Arguments from Tradition and Traditions in Basil the Great

IOTA Dialogues
3.2 Orthodox–Baptist Dialogue (Debate Session)
Session Chair: **Revd. Prof. Paul S. Fiddes** (United Kingdom)

Monday, 18 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** Participants will present up to 10 minutes each of initial thinking on the subject and then engage in debate on the topic "A Christian theological approach to non-Christian religions," drawing on perspectives from the Orthodox and Baptist traditions. Contributions will include historic discussion of the theme, the place of Christ in world religions, trinitarian theology and other faiths, encounter with other religions, the status of sacred scriptures, revelation, the question of salvation, and relation to the natural environment. The aim is to develop a distinctive theology of other religions in ecumenical dialogue and not just a means of cooperation with others.
	Rev. Prof. Dr. John Behr (United Kingdom) **Dr. Smilen Markov** (Bulgaria)

	Prof. Gayle E. Woloschak (USA) **Prof. Tamara Grdzelidze** (Georgia)

Byzantine Orthodoxy Group **3.3 From Greek Philosophy to Christian Mystical Theology: Synesios of Cyrene, Maximos the Confessor and Symeon the New Theologian** Session Chair: **Prof. Dimitrios Moschos** (Greece)	
Monday, 18 January 15:00–16:30	**Session Description:** Moving beyond modern dichotomies, the session explores the dynamic interplay of philosophical inquiry, theological scholarship, ascetic practice, and mystical experience in the Orthodox tradition of Byzantium and beyond.
	Dr. Theodora Papadopoulou (Greece): Synesius of Cyrene: What Attracted the Philosopher to Christian Teaching? **Mr. Leo Grabowski** (USA): Ancestral Sin as the Framework for Asceticism in the Theology of Maximus the Confessor **Dr. David Iobidze** (Georgia): The Georgian Reception of the Constantinopolitan Corpus of Works of Saint Maximus the Confessor: The Gelati Theological School and the Transmission of a Byzantine Theological and Manuscript Tradition **Dr. Eirini Afentoulidou** (Austria): Saint Symeon the New Theologian and His Reception in the Late Byzantine and Post-Byzantine World

Philosophy of Religion Group **3.4 Orthodoxy and the Philosophy of Religion, Part I** Session Chair: **Prof. David Bradshaw** (USA)	
Monday, 18 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** We present here a variety of papers on Orthodox approaches to philosophical issues. The topics discussed include symbolic ontology, the essence-energies distinction, prayer in light of Artificial Intelligence, the cosmological argument, Orthodox political philosophy, eudaimonistic ethics, and the problem of evil.
	Prof. Bruce Foltz (USA): Symbolic Ontology as the Post-Modern Premise for Religious Understanding **Prof. Kelly Jolley** (USA): Essence and Energies: The Mind at Home and Abroad **Rev. Prof. Isidoros Katsos** (Greece): Could Machine Intelligence Pray? (And If So, Would God Listen?) **Dr. Harry Moore** (Russia): Duns Scotus' Cosmological Argument: An Orthodox Appraisal

Special Session **3.5 Orthodox Theology and Religious Diversity: From Ecumenism to Interreligious Dialogue and Beyond** Session Chair: **Dr. Bishara Ebeid** (Italy)	
Monday, 18 January 15:00–16:30	**Session Description:** The purpose of this panel is to reflect on the ways in which Orthodox theology can respond to today's increasingly pluralistic religious landscape. While Eastern Christian voices have often been underrepresented in ecumenical and interreligious contexts, the panel will foreground Orthodoxy's contribution to ongoing interdenominational and comparative conversations, and will lay out the contours of an Orthodox theology of religions that respects the uniqueness of other traditions while remaining in continuity with Orthodoxy's theological heritage. The discussion will also draw on the resources of Orthodox spiritual theology to address Western society's growing fascination with the meditational practices of Eastern religions.
	Prof. Thomas Cattoi (Italy): The Philokalic Tradition and Meditational Practice in the Different Schools of Buddhism **Prof. Aleksandra Djuric Milovanovic** (Serbia): Between Tradition and Traditions: Orthodox Christian Renewal Movements and Evangelicals in Inter-Christian Perspective **Rev. Dr. Christopher Knight** (United Kingdom): Three Types of Orthodox Thinking about Religious Pluralism: Perennialist, Quasi-Perennialist, and Neo-Perennialist **Prof. Angeliki Ziaka** (Greece): Orthodox Witness and Interreligious Dialogue: Reflections on the Experience of the World Council of Churches

Political Theology Group **3.6 Political Eschatology or Eschatological Politics** Session Chair: **Dr. Aristotle Papanikolaou** (USA)	
Monday, 18 January 15:00–16:30	**Session Description:** We invite scholarly contributions exploring the complex and contested relationship between eschatology and political theology. How do visions of the coming kingdom of God, ultimate endings, divine judgment, messianic time, and redemptive futures shape political imagination, legitimize authority, encourage self-criticism and repentance for the past, motivate resistance, or defer justice? What happens when theological hope meets political praxis? How to translate in the field of politics the dialectics of history and eschatology? Can politics function without eschatological horizons? Does eschatology necessarily defer justice or can it radicalize the present? The ethics of hope: dangerous supplement or necessary orientation? What is the relation between immanence versus transcendence in political eschatology? This panel seeks to examine how eschatological frameworks—whether explicitly theological or their secularized descendants—continue to inform political consciousness, shape collective action, and structure our relationship to historical time itself.

	Mr. Silviu Chivu (Belgium): The Kingdom of God and Material Struggle: Contemporary Eastern Orthodox Political Theologies at the Crossroads of Liberation **Ms. Crystallia Latsara** (Finland): From Neo-Patristic Synthesis to Neo-Traditionalism: Eschatological Hope as a Tool for Resistance **Dr. Dmitry Biriukov** (Germany): The "Virtuous Sin" of War: A Line of Russian Political Theology in the First World War and After **Fr. Alexander Hurtsellers** (USA): Eschatology, History, and Political Responsibility

Orthodox Education Group **3.7 Orthodox Education in Pluralistic Countries** Session Chair: Bishop Anthony (Vrame) of Synada (USA)	
Monday, 18 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** Papers presented on the challenge of handing forward Orthodox Christian faith in multiple countries, especially dealing with the challenges of a religiously pluralistic context.
	Prof. Evangelos Pepes (Greece): Transmitting Holy Tradition in Public School Religious Education: Between Tradition, traditions, and Traditionalism **Prof. Yauheniya Danilovich** (Austria): Handing Forward Tradition in the Diaspora: Orthodox Youth as Recipients, Agents, and Co-Contstructors **Fr. Paul Guirgis** (Canada): When tradition Misses Tradition: Recovering Parental Formation in the Coptic Orthodox Diaspora **Prof. Risto Aikonen** (Finland): Orthodox Religious Education in Europe: Variety of Models and Goals for Transmitting the Heritage

Biblical Studies Group **3.8 New Testament, Holy Tradition, and Traditions** Session Chair: **Rev. Assoc. Prof. Bogdan G. Bucur** (USA)	
Monday, 18 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session. Speakers and attendees are asked to attend both NT sessions so as to facilitate discussion of all the NT papers.** **Session Description:** This session explores the dynamic relationship Tradition and the New Testament, whether through close readings of particular passages, thematic studies of how the notion of tradition functions across the biblical canon or within a specific testament, investigations tracing historical, theological, or literary traditions in the New Testament, or methodological reflections on Orthodox understandings of their interrelationship on Scripture and Tradition.

	Rev. Prof. Daniel Fanous (Australia): En-Spirited Temples of the Word: The Tradition of the Human as Temple in Judaic and Pauline Thought **Rev. Dn. Paul (Najeeb) Haddad** (USA): Not Handed Down, but Handed Into: Baptism and Παράδοσις in St. Paul **Rev. Dionise Gvimradze** (Georgia): "The New Human Being" (καινὸς ἄνθρωπος) as a Hermeneutical Key to the Relationship Between Holy Scripture and Holy Tradition in Pauline Theology **Prof. Edith M. Humphrey** (USA): The Apocalypse in Orthodox Tradition

Afternoon Break | 16:30–17:00

Monday, 18 January 16:30–17:00	Break

17:00–18:30

	Patristics Group **4.1 Tradition and Traditions** Session Chair: **Fr. Milan Đorđević** (North Macedonia)
Monday, 18 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** This session is conceived as an open call within the broad historical, theological, philosophical, and philological framework of patristic studies. It welcomes contributions that reflect the diversity of contemporary scholarship—from modern approaches to the Church Fathers and editorial projects of patristic texts to studies exploring the intersections of patristic spirituality, doctrine, and politics within the Orthodox understanding of the patristic era. The session aims to highlight the richness of doctrinal expressions during the patristic period and to illuminate the multiple historical, cultural, and intellectual contexts in which the Church Fathers and their interlocutors articulated and developed their theological thought.
	Dr. Martin Dudley (United Kingdom): Insulting Heretics: Invective and Refutation in the Heresiological Tradition as Demonstrated by the Cappadocian Fathers **Fr. Milan Đorđević** (North Macedonia): Psychological and Anthropological Perspectives in Nicholas Cabasilas's *The Life in Christ*: Towards Counselling **Dr. Ivan Christov** (Bulgaria): Tradition or Traditions in the Theological Debate of the Council of Ferrara-Florence

IOTA Dialogues **4.2 Orthodox–Baptist Dialogue (Debate Session)** Session Chair: **Revd. Prof. Paul S. Fiddes** (United Kingdom)	
Monday, 18 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** Participants will present up to 10 minutes each of initial thinking on the subject and then engage in debate on the topic "A Christian theological approach to non-Christian religions," drawing on perspectives from the Orthodox and Baptist traditions. Contributions will include historic discussion of the theme, the place of Christ in world religions, trinitarian theology and other faiths, encounter with other religions, the status of sacred scriptures, revelation, the question of salvation, and relation to the natural environment. The aim is to develop a distinctive theology of other religions in ecumenical dialogue and not just a means of cooperation with others.
	Rev. Prof. Dr. John Behr (United Kingdom) **Dr. Smilen Markov** (Bulgaria) **Prof. Gayle E. Woloschak** (USA) **Prof. Tamara Grdzelidze** (Georgia)

Byzantine Orthodoxy Group / Women and the Orthodox Church Group **4.3 Book Review: Mary Cunningham's Works on Mariology** Session Chair: TBD	
Monday, 18 January 17:00–18:30	**Session Description:** Mary Cunningham's (d. 2025) brilliance and intellectual depth are on display in her many volumes and articles on the topic of Mariology. This session will explore her oeuvre and her legacy, with special focus on three volumes: *The Virgin Mary in Byzantium, c. 400–1000* (Cambridge 2022), *Gateway of Life: Orthodox Thinking on the Mother of God* (SVS 2015), and *Wider than Heaven: Eighth-century Homilies on the Mother of God* (SVS 2008).
	Dr. Eirini Afentoulidou (Austria) **Dr. Thomas Arentzen** (Sweden) **Dr. Elena Narinskaya** (United Kingdom) **Dr. Elizabeth Theokritoff** (United Kingdom)

Philosophy of Religion Group **4.4 Orthodoxy and the Philosophy of Religion, Part I** Session Chair: **Prof. David Bradshaw** (USA)	
Monday, 18 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** We present here a variety of papers on Orthodox approaches to philosophical issues. The topics discussed include symbolic ontology, the essence-energies distinction, prayer in light of Artificial Intelligence, the cosmological argument, Orthodox political philosophy, eudaimonistic ethics, and the problem of evil.
	Dr. Dionysios Skliris (Greece): The Notion of Love in the Context of an Orthodox Political Philosophy **Ms. Emma Cohen-Edmonds** (United Kingdom): Eudaimonia: Compatible with Orthodox Christianity or Exclusively Pagan? **Mr. Giorgi Chanidze** (Georgia): The Existence of God and the Problem of Evil in Swinburne and Plantinga

Liturgical Studies Group **4.5 The Liturgy in History** Session Chair: **Bishop Damaskinos (Olkinuora) of Haapsalu** (Estonia)	
Monday, 18 January 17:00–18:30	**Session Description:** This session is devoted to recent historical research on the Byzantine liturgical tradition. It begins with an exploration of early Christian rites for anointing with chrism as recorded in old Georgian collections of prayers for celebrants (Euchologia), followed by an inquiry into the role of spiritual mothers in the Byzantine tradition. The next two papers address topics from the middle Byzantine period: how the *Protheoria*, a twelfth-century commentary on the Byzantine Divine Liturgy, depicts the relationship between liturgy and the *oikonomia*; and how the words and melodies of hymns were enlisted to defend the East Roman Empire.
	Bishop Vasily (Permiakov) of San Francisco and the OCA Diocese of the West (USA): Anointing with Chrism in the Eastern Christian Rites: The Witness of Old Georgian Euchologia **Dr. Nina Glibetić** (USA): Confession and the Amma: Women's Spiritual Authority in the Byzantine Tradition **Bishop Damaskinos (Olkinuora) of Haapsalu** (Estonia): Liturgy and Oikonomia in the Light of the *Protheoria* by Nicholas and Theodore of Andida **Prof. Alexander Lingas** (United Kingdom): Defending the East Roman Empire in Middle Byzantine Hymnography

Missiology Group **4.6 Incarnating the Word: Language, Liturgy, and Asceticism in Orthodox Mission** Session Chair: **Dr. Nathan Hoppe** (USA)	
Monday, 18 January 17:00–18:30	**Session Description:** This panel explores how core practices of Orthodox life, language, liturgy, and asceticism, themselves function as missionary acts of incarnation. Papers examine Sts. Cyril and Methodius's creation of Slavic script as a theology of multilingual equality; nineteenth-century Kazan missionaries who translated Orthodoxy into Turkic and Finno-Ugric vernaculars; the Eucharistic liturgy as the structural source of Christian witness through the "Liturgy after the Liturgy"; and fasting reconsidered from the standpoint of the hungry as ascetic solidarity with the suffering. Together, the papers show mission as the translation of the Logos into human tongues, worship, and bodily practice.
	Dr. Alison R. Kolosova (Estonia): Translating Tradition: Incarnation and Orthodox Mission among the Turkic and Finno-Ugric Peoples of Russia's Kazan Region in the 19th and Early 20th Centuries **Dr. Evi Voulgaraki-Pissina** (Greece): Two Alphabets — One Purpose: Special Aspects of the Missionary Enterprise of the Ecumenical Patriarchate through Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, Equals-to-the-Apostles **Rev. Dr. John Njoroge** (Kenya): Together in Mission: Thoughts, Approaches and Praxis

Orthodox Education Group **4.7 Orthodox Education in Pluralistic Countries** Session Chair: Prof. Risto Aikonen (Finland)	
Monday, 18 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** Papers presented on the challenge of handing forward Orthodox Christian faith in multiple countries, especially dealing with the challenges of a religiously pluralistic context.
	Mrs. Katrina Betzelos (Greece): Teaching Religious Studies in a Multi-Cultural and Multi-Religious Middle School Environment **Prof. Marina Kiroudi** (Germany): Tradition and Transformation in the Context of Religious Education in Orthodox Parishes in Germany **Prof. Bishop Anthony (Vrame) of Synada** (USA): Retrieving and Renewing the Education and Reception of "Converts" in the Church **Mr. Slavisa Kostic** (Serbia) / **Mr. Nikola Bakic** (Serbia): Religious Education Between Hermeneutics of Faith and Spiritual Perception: Challenges and Perspectives in Contemporary Serbia

	Biblical Studies Group **4.8 New Testament, Holy Tradition, and Traditions** Session Chair: **Rev. Assoc. Prof. Bogdan G. Bucur** (USA)
Monday, 18 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session. Speakers and attendees are asked to attend both NT sessions so as to facilitate discussion of all the NT papers.** **Session Description:** This session explores the dynamic relationship Tradition and the New Testament, whether through close readings of particular passages, thematic studies of how the notion of tradition functions across the biblical canon or within a specific testament, investigations tracing historical, theological, or literary traditions in the New Testament, or methodological reflections on Orthodox understandings of their interrelationship on Scripture and Tradition.
	continued discussion of 15:00–16:30 session papers **Mrs. Maria Cakic** (Germany): When the Messiah is "Scandalized": The Reversal of the Skandalon Logic in Matthew 16:23 **Rev. Giorgi Tserodze** (Georgia): Being and Refusal: The Elder Brother's Eschatological Crisis in Luke 15:11–32: An Orthodox Reading Through Zizioulas, Heidegger, and Levinas **Prof. Athanasios Despotis** (Germany): Following and Transforming Tradition: John and Plutarch on Love

Wine Reception | 19:00–20:30

Monday **18 January** **19:00–20:30** Georgia Palace Hotel	**Wine Reception**, sponsored by Orthodox Christian Studies Center, Fordham University, New York, USA All registered conference attendees are welcome!

Tuesday, 19 January: Day 2

Breakfast

Tuesday, 19 January	Breakfast on your own

9:00–11:00

IOTA Dialogues
5.2 Churches Engaging Authoritarianism and Christian Nationalism: Resources for Witness, Resistance and Social Peace
Session Chairs: **Dr. Antoine Arjakovsky** (France) / **Dr. John Njoroge** (Kenya)
co-sponsored by the World Communion of Reformed Churches

Tuesday, 19 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** The panel has members from Orthodox and Reformed traditions and seeks to identify faith resources that can assist churches in their engagement with authoritarianism and Christian nationalism. The contributions explore the contexts of India, Russia, Ukraine, South Africa, Indonesia, the Netherlands, and Kenya, and analyze the potential of theologies of symphonia between the church and state, freedom of conscience, the image of God, martyrdom, ascetic discernment, kenosis, and liturgical resistance. The ecumenical conversation that accompanies the work on the papers demonstrates that bringing the resources from the two traditions together offers a deeper theology of ecclesial resistance rooted not merely in protest but in the formation of alternative communities shaped by truth, courage, communion, memory, and hope.
	Metropolitan Dr Geevarghese Mor Coorilos (India) / **Rev. Dr. Rathnakara Sadananda** (India): Fear, Silence, and Prophetic Witness: Churches' Response to Authoritarianism — A Reformed–Orthodox Theological Dialogue in the Light of the Indian Emergency (1975–1977) **Dr. Nathaniel Wood** (USA): Conscience and Communion in Orthodox Political Theology: Toward a Right of Conscientious Resistance **Prof. Heleen Zorgdrager** (Netherlands): Grappling with Church, "Volk" and State: A Theological Journey Through (the Heritage of) the Dutch Colonial Empire

Science and Theology Group
5.3 The Sciences in the Light of Orthodox Tradition
Session Chair: **Mrs. Elizabeth Theokritoff** (United Kingdom)

Tuesday, 19 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** Any discussion of the sciences in the light of Orthodox theology immediately confronts us with the question: What does it mean to be faithful to the Tradition transmitted by the church Fathers, and many more recent spiritual fathers, when we can no longer accept many of their assumptions about the nature and history of the physical world, humanity included? Papers here will address this problem, explicitly or implicitly, or explore ways in which the physical and biological sciences

	can deepen our understanding of Orthodox Tradition in Christian cosmology and anthropology.
	Dr. Tiffany Butler (USA): The Problem of Time and Orthodox Realism's Passage into Eternity **Dr. Alexander V. Khramov** (Russia): Reconciling Evolution and Faith in Russian Orthodoxy: Church Tradition and New Insights **Prof. Serafim Seppälä** (Finland): Animals as *Imagines Dei*? **Pres. Dr. Eugenia Torrance** (United Kingdom): Evolution, Entropy, and Entanglement: The Pressures of Modern Science on Zizioulas' Intepretation of the Fathers **Prof. Efthymios Nicolaidis** (Greece): Lessons Learned from the SOW Project

Christianity in the Middle East Group **5.4 The Bible in Arabic Christian Literature** Session Chair: **Dr. Assaad Elias Kattan** (Germany)	
Tuesday, 19 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** This session explores the various ways in which the Bible is used in Arabic Christian literature. Topics covered will include the transmission of texts, particularly in liturgy, as well as the reception of the Bible in hagiography and apologetic literature. Particular focus is given to the impact of the Islamic context in the processes of transmission, interpretation, and rewriting.
	Prof. Dr. Elie Dannaoui (Lebanon): The Sinai Arabic Gospel Corpus: Textual Transmission and Liturgical Function in the First Millennium **Dr. Miriam Lindgren Hjälm** (Sweden): A Biblical Flannelgraph: Rewritings of the Bible in the *Life of Theodore of Edessa* **Dr. Bishara Ebeid** (Italy): The Bible in Elias of Nisibis's *Book of Demonstration*: Between *Testimonia* and *Commenta* **Dr. Habib Ibrahim** (Germany): The Bible Versions Used by Eleventh-Century Antiochian Translators of Patristic Commentaries **Dr. Adrian Pirtea** (Austria): Reading the "Byzantinized" Bible: Syriac and Arabic Lectionaries and Calendars from Antioch (11th–13th c.)

Ecumenical Dialogue Group **5.5 Christian Traditions Encountering: Progress and Challenges in Ecumenism** Session Chair: **Prof. Dimitrios Keramidas** (Italy)	
Tuesday, 19 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** The panel explores the role of "Tradition" and "traditions" as we pursue the ecumenical road, with particular focus on the role of continuity and change in the life of the Christian Churches, the question of renewal or fundamentalism within

	Christian communities and in ecumenical relationships, the encounter between East and West as a means for promoting ecumenism, and the hermeneutics of tradition.
	Dr. Sergei Nikolaev (Russia): Bulgakov, Georges Florovsky, and the Formation of Modern Orthodox Ecumenical Ecclesiology **Emanuele Bortot** (Belgium): The West at the School of the East. The Foundation of the Benedictine Monastery of Amay and the Development of a Catholic-Orthodox Dialogue **Dr. Andrew Youssef** (Canada): On Terminological Diversity and Christian Unity: Nicaea's Reception of Terminological Diversity as a Model for Mending the Aftermath of the Chalcedonian Controversy **Prof. Dimitrios Keramidas** (Italy): The Ecumenical Significance of the Theme "Tradition and Traditions" in Yves Congar and Nikos Nissiotis **Dr. Christine Chaillot** (Switzerland): Heritage and Identity in the Context of the Theological Dialogue between the Eastern Orthodox/Chalcedonian and Oriental Orthodox/Non-Chalcedonian Churches

Women in the Orthodox Church Group **5.6 Book Review: *Women in Orthodox Tradition: Feminism, Equality, and Theology* by Ashley Purpura (Notre Dame, 2025) and *Church of Our Granddaughters* by Carrie Frederick Frost (Cascade, 2023)** Session Chair: **Prof. Susan Ashbrook Harvey** (USA)	
Tuesday, 19 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** This session will review and discuss two new and important theological books on the topic of women and the Orthodox Church: *Women in Orthodox Tradition: Feminism, Equality, and Theology* by Ashley Purpura (Notre Dame, 2025) and *Church of Our Granddaughters* by Carrie Frederick Frost (Cascade, 2023).
	Mrs. Rossitza Dikova-Osthus (Germany) **Ms. Argyro Delidaki** (Norway) **Dr. Ruth Coates** (United Kingdom) **Dr. Carrie Frederick Frost** (USA) **Dr. Ashley Marie Purpura** (USA)

Church Music Group **5.8 Free Papers on Church Music** Session Chair: **Assoc. Prof. Maria Takala-Roszczenko** (Finland)	
Tuesday,	**Session Description:** This session features papers that focus on different aspects of liturgical music in Eastern Christianity, including its history, theology and practice.

19 January 9:00–11:00	**Dr. Victoria Legkikh** (Germany): Grigorij and the Macarian Legacy: Sources and Authorship in Sixteenth-Century Russian Hymnography **Dr. Vasileios Varelas** (Ireland): Music Analysis of Vocables in Byzantine Kratēmata: A Musical Rhetoric Semiotic Approach **Prof. Tamar Chkheidze** (Georgia): George the Hagiorite's Creative Approaches to Liturgical Chant: Tune Selection and the Good Friday Hypakoē **Mr. Joseph Yazbeck** (Lebanon): Byzantine Chanting in Antioch over the Past Two Centuries: From Greek to Arabic and the Emergence of an Antiochian Tradition **Dr. Alexander Khalil** (Ireland): This Is Your Brain on *Ektelesis*: A Neuroscientific Pilot Study of Creativity in Byzantine Chant

Orthodoxy, Culture, and the Public Square Group

5.7 The Phenomenon of "Cultural Orthodoxy" and the Orthodox Tradition: Entanglements, Challenges, and Problems

Session Chairs: **Prof. Effie Fokas** (Greece) / **Prof. Vasilios N. Makrides** (Germany)

Tuesday, 19 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** Amongst the many diverse ways in which Orthodox Christians adhere to and practice their religious tradition, what role is played by "cultural Orthodoxy"? And are there any differences between various Orthodox countries and milieus in that respect? The concept may entail a "cultural" connection to a religion as part of a broader identity of a group of people, a nation, or a country. Expressions of "cultural Orthodoxy" may even include atheists who self-identify as Orthodox due to a specific ethnic/national identity and citizenship. The term may also apply to Orthodox individuals attending church solely on the great feasts or ritual occasions. Meanwhile, Orthodoxy is often treated by the respective state as a matter of culture, with discourse usually emphasizing its cultural significance for the historical development of a nation. However, such approaches to Orthodoxy are strongly criticized by rigorist/fundamentalist circles, which demand a full-fledged and more genuine religiosity as a sign of true faith and may create cleavages within Orthodox communities. The group invites papers from different methodological perspectives that shed light on the phenomenon of "Cultural Orthodoxy" in its various facets and entanglements as well as on the challenges it may present for the Orthodox Church in general.
	Prof. Chris Durante (USA): Orthodox Christianity's Identity Crisis: From Phyletism to Philoxenia **Prof. Varghese Daniel** (USA): Tradition and Traditions: Reimagining Orthodox Unity Beyond Ethnicity in a Global Age **Dr. Alejandro Rodea Arteaga** (Mexico): Tradition and Traditions: Latino Converts, Liturgical Memory, and the Cultural Mediation of Orthodoxy in New York **Dr. Herman Slavens** (USA) / **Mrs. Suzanna Slavens** (USA): The Phenomenon of "Convertidoxy": Analyzing the Emerging American Cultural Orthodoxy and Its Pastoral Implications

	Mr. Alexei D. Krindatch (USA): Orthodox Tradition in Transition: What New Data Reveals about US Orthodox Christian Parishes

Morning Break | 11:00–11:30

Tuesday, 19 January 11:00–11:30	Break

Plenary Sessions | 11:30–13:00

6.1 Plenary Session: Perspectives on the First Ordination of a Deaconess in the 21st Century
Chair: **Rev. Assoc. Prof. Bogdan G. Bucur (USA)**

Tuesday, 19 January 11:30–13:00	**Session Description:** History was made in May 2024, when the first Orthodox deaconess of the twenty-first century, Archdeaconess Angelic-Phoebe Molen, was ordained in Zimbabwe within the Patriarchate of Alexandria. This plenary will: contextualize this ordination within the history of the order of deaconess and scholarship on the ordination of women (including Hopko, Ware, Behr-Sigel, Taft , Karras, Theodorou, and FitzGerald). It will also review the decades-long consideration of reviving the order of deaconess in the Orthodox Church, explore the particulars of Archdeaconess Angelic-Phoebe's ordination and her liturgical and extra-ministry, and consider its significance for other autocephalous Orthodox Churches.
	Dr. Spyridoula Athanasopoulou-Kypriou (Greece) **Dr. Valerie A. Karras** (USA) **Dr. Teva L. Regule** (USA) **Rev. Dr. Radu Bordeianu** (USA)

6.2 Plenary Session: Receiving the Joint Declaration on Deification
Session Chairs: **Rev. Prof. Andrew Hofer, OP** (Italy) / **Prof. Paul Gavrilyuk** (United Kingdom)

Tuesday, 19 January 11:30–13:00	**Session Description:** The Joint Declaration on Deification (JDD) is a grassroots effort of an ecumenical team of scholars and church leaders, many of whom have been involved in producing *The Oxford Handbook of Deification* (Oxford, 2024). The primary purpose of JDD is to articulate the fundamental aspects of a common Christian vision of salvation as deification. The secondary purpose of JDD is to transcend the debates of the Reformation over the doctrine of justification. The plenary will publicize a preliminary draft of JDD and include commentaries by three recognized ecumenical authorities in the field of Deification Studies. We will also invite the members of our learned audience to make their recommendations for revising and improving the preliminary draft of JDD, which is currently a living document.

	Rev. Prof. Andrew Hofer, OP (Italy) / **Prof. Paul Gavrilyuk** (United Kingdom): The Joint Declaration on Deification (Draft Text) **Rev. Prof. Andrew Davison** (United Kingdom): A Commentary on the Joint Declaration on Deification from an Anglican Perspective **Prof. Daria E. Spezzano** (USA): A Commentary on the Joint Declaration on Deification from a Catholic Perspective **Prof. Norman E. Russell** (Italy): A Commentary on the Joint Declaration on Deification from an Orthodox Perspective

6.3 Plenary Session: The Orthodox Church in the Age of Artificial Intelligence Chair: **Dr. Gayle E. Woloschak** (USA)	
Tuesday, 19 January 11:30–13:00	**Session Description:** This plenary session will open with 10-minute reflections from each speaker followed by an audience-driven discussion. The goal of this panel is to provide some reflections and considerations for understanding AI in the context of the Church, including impacts on an understanding of human personhood and impingement of AI on the life and functions of humans through various applications. Is AI merely a tool or something more?
	Dr. Hermina Nedelescu (USA) **Dr Ioan Vasilev** (Bulgaria) **Rev. Vasileios Thermos** (Greece) **Dr. Peter Bouteneff** (USA)

Lunch Break | 13:00–15:00

Tuesday, 19 January 13:00–15:00	Lunch on your own

15:00–16:30

Patristics Group / Philosophical Theology Group **7.1 Patristic Tradition and Philosophy** Session Chair: **Dr. Ivan Christov** (Bulgaria)	
Tuesday, 19 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** This session brings together papers at the intersection of patristic studies and the philosophy of religion, understood in the broadest and most intellectually generous sense. The contributions explore themes including the patristic reception of Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic philosophy, epistemology and the knowledge of God, the metaphysics of personhood and creation, theological language, and philosophical approaches to the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation.

	Several papers examine these questions through the thought of Maximus the Confessor, while others address a broader range of patristic authors and traditions. Together, they illuminate the development of these ideas in Late Antique, Byzantine, and post-Byzantine contexts and assess their enduring significance within the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophical theology.
	Dr. Bogna Kosmulska (Poland): Elaborate or Not to Elaborate? The Case Study of Maximus the Confessor's Prologue to Mystagogia in the Discussion on the Meaning of the Tradition **Mr. Stefan Ivanov** (Bulgaria): Facing the Logos: Noetic Gaze, Freedom, and the Discernment of Tradition in Maximus the Confessor **Dr. Daniel Heide** (Serbia): Fully One – Fully Many. A Maximian Contribution to the Tradition of Byzantine Philosophical Theology **Mr. Dario Postolovsky** (North Macedonia): The Question of the Trinitarity of the World and Humans in the *Ambigua* of St. Maximus the Confessor

IOTA Dialogues

7.2 Can the Anathemas Be Lifted? From Christological Agreement to Ecclesial Reception in the Eastern Orthodox–Oriental Orthodox Dialogue

Session Chair: **Dr. Nikos Kouremenos** (Greece)

Tuesday, 19 January 15:00–16:30	**Session Description:** This session examines one of the key unresolved questions in the Eastern Orthodox–Oriental Orthodox dialogue: the lifting of the mutual anathemas and condemnations. Bringing together historical, theological, canonical, and pastoral perspectives, it asks how the substantial Christological convergence already achieved might be translated into ecclesial recognition and reception, and whether lifting the anathemas could constitute a concrete step toward deeper communion.
	Dr. Michael Hjälm (Sweden): The Rehabilitation of Severus in the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553) **Dr. Andrew Youssef** (Canada): Can Anathemas Lose Their Force? Anathema and the Making of Canonical Boundaries **Dr. Nikos Kouremenos** (Greece): An Unfinished Recommendation: The Lifting of the Anathemas from Chambésy to the Present **Dr. Elke Speliopoulos** (USA): Beyond the Dialogue: Awareness in Syriac Orthodox Parish Life

Women and the Orthodox Church Group **7.3 Women's Liturgical Participation** Session Chair: **Dr. Carrie Frederick Frost** (USA)	
Tuesday, 19 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** Women have participated in the liturgy in many ways over the centuries; as deaconesses, chanters, readers, choir members, etc. This panel will illuminate past, present and possible future liturgical roles of women in the Orthodox liturgy.
	Prof. Susan Ashbrook Harvey (USA): Towards a Theology of Liturgical Participation **Ms. Photini Downie Robinson** (USA): Completing the Kingdom: Liturgical Choirs and the Eternal Amen **Dr. Sevi Mazera-Mamali** (Greece): The Female Psaltic Presence at the Contemporary Liturgical Performance in Greece

Political Theology Group **7.4 Trinity and Politics** Session Chair: **Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis** (Greece)	
Tuesday, 19 January 15:00–16:30	**Session Description:** This panel will explore the intersection of Trinitarian theology and political thought. The doctrine of the Trinity has profoundly shaped the political imagination, yet the precise nature of this relationship remains contested. From patristic debates over divine unity and multiplicity to contemporary discussions of personhood and relational ontology, Trinitarian thought has generated diverse and sometimes contradictory political implications. How have Trinitarian formulations influenced political arrangements across different eras? What role did Trinitarian debates play in shaping concepts of authority, sovereignty, perichoresis, and community in patristic or modern contexts? Can the Trinity provide resources for thinking about unity-in-diversity, equality, reciprocity, hierarchy, or relationality in political life? How do different Trinitarian models (e.g., social vs. psychological analogies) generate different political theologies? What are the dangers of deriving political norms from Trinitarian doctrine? How have Trinitarian concepts been misappropriated to justify particular political orders? What methodological safeguards should govern the movement from theology to politics? How might Trinitarian theology address current political challenges such as pluralism, authority, democratic participation, or global solidarity? What resources does the doctrine offer for thinking beyond the nation-state or addressing ecological crisis?
	Dr. Nikos Asproulis (Greece): How Is Democratic Orthodoxy in Nature? The Holy Trinity and Its Significance **Dr. Sarah E. Hunt** (USA): Bulgakov, Zizioulas, and the Politics of Trinitarian Communion

	Dr. Dina Zingaro (USA): The Trinity and Civil Rights **Dr. Georges El Hage** (France): TBD

Special Session **7.5 Book Review: *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Conciliarity in Modern Orthodox Christianity* (Wiley Blackwell, 2025)** Session Chair: **Prof. Irina Paert** (Estonia)	
Tuesday, 19 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** This review panel is dedicated to *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Conciliarity in Modern Orthodox Christianity* (2025), edited by Irina Paert, Andrey Shishkov, and Alison R. Kolosova. The panel brings together contributors and external reviewers to discuss the significance of the volume for contemporary Orthodox studies and for broader conversations in ecclesiology, church history, political theology, and ecumenism.
	Dr. Riad Ghobrial (United Kingdom) **Dr. Julija Naett Vidović** (France) **Dr. Assaad Elias Kattan** (Germany) **Dr. Adalberto Mainardi** (Italy)

Missiology Group **7.6 Incarnating the Apostolic Tradition** Session Chair: **Fr. John Njoroge** (Kenya)	
Tuesday, 19 January 15:00–16:30	**Session Description:** This panel asks how Orthodox Christianity remains faithful to one apostolic Tradition while allowing that Tradition to become incarnate as “many traditions” within contemporary contexts. Papers range from theological principles to historical case study: three marks of apostolic, incarnational, and ecclesial witness; Pentecost and sacramentality as the ground of North American parish mission; the missionary trajectory of Fr. Seraphim Rose and the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood; and the rise of Orthodox digital influencers alongside Fr. Alexander Schmemann’s Radio Liberty broadcasts. Together, the papers probe how Orthodoxy proclaims Christ amid pluralism, secularism, and digital transformation.
	Rev. Dr. Grigory Edwards (USA): Case Study on Contemporary Witness/Mission in the United States: The Missionary History and Trajectory of Fr. Seraphim Rose and the St. Herman of Alaska Missionary Brotherhood **Rev. Dr. Nektarios Morrow** (USA): The Apostolic Character of Contemporary Orthodox Mission: Pentecost, Sacramentality, and the Incarnation of Tradition in North American Parish Contexts

	Dr. Nathan Hoppe (USA): Three Theological Principles That Guide Orthodox Missionary Practice **Rev. Dr. Milutin Janjic** (Sweden): From Radio Liberty to Orthodox Influencers: Authority, Conversion, and the Missionary Representation of Orthodoxy in the Digital Age

Orthodoxy and Visual Arts Group
7.7 Icon and Church
Session Chair: **Lect. Dr. Mihai Coman** (Romania)

Tuesday, 19 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** The session explores in greater depth the intrinsic connection between the icon, hymnography, and liturgical reality, emphasizing their organic unity within the life of the Church. From this perspective, the presence of the image within the church edifice is not merely decorative or didactic, but profoundly rooted in the liturgical and theological consciousness of the Church. Despite its centrality within ecclesial life, the icon remains largely absent from the curricula of most Orthodox educational institutions worldwide, revealing a significant disjunction between liturgical practice and academic formation.
	Dr. Tais Gea Guinovart (Mexico): The Icon: A Gateway to the Mystery. The Biblical Concept of μυστήριον as a Pedagogical Approach to Teaching Iconography in New Contexts **Lect. Dr. Andrei Mușat** (Romania): Transcultural Tradition in Contemporary Ecclesiastical Art: A Case Study of the Mural Program of Saint Onuphrius the Great Chapel (Romania) **Dr. Jennifer Awes Freeman** (USA): What's an Icon For? Some Historical Answers and Contemporary Realities **Fr. Rijo Geevarghese** (India): Seeing and Singing the Nativity: A Liturgical Dialogue Between Iconography and Hymnography in the Nativity Service of the Malankara Tradition

Church Music Group
7.8 Whose Authenticity? Transmission, tradition, and Tradition in Orthodox Liturgical Music
Session Chair: **Dr. Alexander Khalil** (Ireland)

Tuesday, 19 January 15:00–16:30	**Session Description:** This session explores the complex intersections of authenticity, transmission, and tradition across musical practices and contexts. While authenticity as a discursive construct has largely been de-emphasized in fields such as folklore, anthropology, and ethno/musicology—understanding it is a product of perspectival grounding that holds no explanatory power—it still plays a significant role in shaping perceptions of liturgical music and how traditions are passed down.

	Assoc. Prof. Maria Takala-Roszczenko (Finland): Authenticity Received: Attitudes towards Byzantine Chant in Finland and Lithuania **Boniface Kithinji** (Kenya): Tradition and Transformation: Orthodox Liturgical Music in the Kenyan Context **Dr. Svetlana Poliakova** (Portugal): "Ὡς γενναῖον ἐν Μάρτυσιν": Some Questions of Transmission from Greek to Old Russian Manuscripts up to the 13th Century **Dr. Tala Jarjour** (United Kingdom): Language as broker of music authenticity in Levantine Antiochian Orthodoxy

Afternoon Break | 16:30–17:00

Tuesday, 19 January 16:30–17:00	Break

17:00–18:30

IOTA Dialogues
8.2 Beyond Ecclesiological or Institutional Reconciliation: Ecumenical Meta Reflections on Being the Church
Session Chair: **Rev. Dr. Rathnakara Sadananda** (India)
co-sponsored by the World Communion of Reformed Churches

Tuesday, 19 January 17:00–18:30	**Session Description:** The panel has members from Orthodox and Reformed traditions and considers questions beyond the classical faith-and-order framework that engage with conceptualizations of personhood, relationality, participation, woundedness, accountability, and the legitimacy of the visible church in crisis situations: Who is welcome at the table? What reforms to build Peace? Who has the authority to teach? Which order of the church is in accordance with the Gospel? When does obedience to Christ take precedence over institutional conformity? These questions are fundamental and currently relevant for all church traditions across the globe. They also reflect the discussion of an Orthodox–Reformed conversation group exploring a broader framework for ecumenical dialogue between Orthodox and Reformed churches.
	Dr. Petre Maican (Netherlands): The Form of Christ Crucified and the Recognition of Ecclesial Otherness: A Cruciform Approach to Ecumenical Methodology **Dr. Antoine Arjakovsky** (France): Straight Truth and the Truth of Law **Dr. Hanns Lessing** (Germany): From Barmen to Covenantal Communion: The Journey of the World Communion of Reformed Churches toward Embodying Confessional Authority

Patristics Group / Philosophical Theology Group **8.1 Patristic Tradition and Philosophy** Session Chair: Dr. Ivan Christov (Bulgaria)	
Tuesday, 19 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** This session brings together papers at the intersection of patristic studies and the philosophy of religion, understood in the broadest and most intellectually generous sense. The contributions explore themes including the patristic reception of Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic philosophy, epistemology and the knowledge of God, the metaphysics of personhood and creation, theological language, and philosophical approaches to the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation. Several papers examine these questions through the thought of Maximus the Confessor, while others address a broader range of patristic authors and traditions. Together, they illuminate the development of these ideas in Late Antique, Byzantine, and post-Byzantine contexts and assess their enduring significance within the history of philosophy and contemporary philosophical theology.
	Dr. Lyubomira Stefanova (Bulgaria): The Concept of the Image in the Work of St. Maximus the Confessor and Its Continuity in Christian Fine Art **Dr. Smilen Markov** (Bulgaria): Parrhēsia within the Byzantine Intellectual Culture of the First Millennium **Dr. Daniel James Watson** (Ireland): The Reception of Patristic Thought on Natural Revelation in Early Medieval Ireland **Dr. Achilleas Dellopoulos** (Greece): Individual or Person? Distinct or Synonymous Concepts? An Investigation of the Terms in the Western and Eastern Traditions of the 20th Century and a Patristic Critique

Women and the Orthodox Church Group **8.3 Women's Liturgical Participation** Session Chair: **Dr. Carrie Frederick Frost** (USA)	
Tuesday, 19 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** Women have participated in the liturgy in many ways over the centuries; as deaconesses, chanters, readers, choir members, etc. This panel will illuminate past, present and possible future liturgical roles of women in the Orthodox liturgy.
	Ms. Zipporah Mwaura (Kenya): Joy and Resistance: The Case of Deaconess Angelic Molen and Women's Liturgical Participation in the Orthodox Church **Dr. Ashley Purpura** (USA): Liturgy as Work of the People for the People: Theologically Recognizing Women's Labors in Ministries of Care **Dr. Evangelia Spyrakou** (Greece): The Chanting Woman Returns: Selective Memory, Pastoral and Musicological Questions in Contemporary Greek Orthodox Practice

Dogmatic Theology Group **8.4 Dogmatic Theology in Our Era: Migration, AI, and Other Faiths** Session Chair: TBD	
Tuesday, 19 January 17:00–18:30	**Session Description:** Many if not all of the challenges of our contemporary era are timeless: the migration of people, the rise of new and alienating technologies, and relationships with different faiths. Yet each of these bring particular threats—and opportunities—with the advent of artificial intelligence, and heightened suspicion of "the other." If dogmatic theology is to be of use it must consider these matters with fresh creativity and compassion.
	Dr. Srdjan Maksimovic (USA): Christ the Refugee and the Theology of Migration: Toward an Orthodox Theological Framework **Dr. Peter Bouteneff** (USA): An Imbalanced Communion? Reflections on AI with Reference to an Ethics of Personhood **Rev. Dr. Nikolaos Loudovikos** (Greece): Technopithecus and the Dialogue Between Orthodox Theology and Other Religious Traditions

Special Session **8.5 Book Review: *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Conciliarity in Modern Orthodox Christianity* (Wiley Blackwell, 2025)** Session Chair: **Prof. Irina Paert** (Estonia)	
Tuesday, 19 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** This review panel is dedicated to *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Conciliarity in Modern Orthodox Christianity* (2025), edited by Irina Paert, Andrey Shishkov, and Alison R. Kolosova. The panel brings together contributors and external reviewers to discuss the significance of the volume for contemporary Orthodox studies and for broader conversations in ecclesiology, church history, political theology, and ecumenism.
	Dr. Alison R. Kolosova (Russia) **Prof. Irina Paert** (Estonia) **Mr. Andrey Shishkov** (Russia)

Orthodox Theological Institutions Group **8.6 Tradition and Innovation in Orthodox Theological Education** Session Chair: **Rev. Dr. Jacob Joseph** (Australia)	
Tuesday, 19 January 17:00–18:30	**Session Description:** Theological institutions, by their very nature, are inherently forward looking. Their primary mandate is concerned with the formation of students in such a way where they will be enabled to respond to future questions and challenges that will inevitably emerge especially in a world marked by rapid and unprecedented

	change. Within Orthodox circles more particularly, these institutions equally bear a responsibility to account for and faithfully "hand on" the Church's perennial traditions and lived experience accounting for their enduring relevance for contemporary contexts, but also how they might illumine and inform pressing questions of today's society. It is precisely here, however, that a most profound theological paradox becomes evident: how can institutions draw on the treasures of tradition which demand fidelity, continuity and reverence for the past, whilst at the same time preparing students to think creatively, critically and courageously about the future. For Orthodox theology insists that authentic renewal is not possible without tradition and that renewal is valid to the extent that it remains in succession with the past. Therefore, Orthodox institutions are called to bring to light that tradition and innovation are not mutually exclusive but dynamically interwoven. In light of this, the Orthodox Institutions Group welcomes papers that will explore the nature, purpose and vision of Orthodox theological education, particularly those that examine how institutions are called to hold together a deep respect for tradition with thoughtful engagement in contemporary contexts.
	Very Rev. Dr. John Parker (USA): A Thought Experiment for Formation for Ordained Ministry in the United States, Informed by Mother Maria Skobtsova's "Toward a New Monasticism I" **Rev. Dragos Herescu** (United Kingdom): Orthodox Education in an Ecumenical Context and with an Ecumenical Ethos: Novelty, Necessity, or Compromise? – An Observational Report from The Institute For Orthodox Christian Studies **Rev. Dr. Jacob Joseph** (Australia): The Miaphysite Syriac Tradition and Orthodox Public Theology in Asia: A Perspective on Theological Education **Very Rev. Dr. Roman Bozyk** (Canada): Tradition and the Future: The Plague of Plagiarism

Orthodoxy and the Visual Arts Group **8.7 Icon and Church** Session Chair: **Lect. Dr. Mihai Coman** (Romania)	
Tuesday, 19 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** The session explores in greater depth the intrinsic connection between the icon, hymnography, and liturgical reality, emphasizing their organic unity within the life of the Church. From this perspective, the presence of the image within the church edifice is not merely decorative or didactic, but profoundly rooted in the liturgical and theological consciousness of the Church. Despite its centrality within ecclesial life, the icon remains largely absent from the curricula of most Orthodox educational institutions worldwide, revealing a significant disjunction between liturgical practice and academic formation.

	Lect. Dr. Olga Yunak (USA): Painting and Inhabiting the Living Church: Iconographic Programs Beyond Imitation **Rev. Prof. Dr. Todor Enchev** (Bulgaria): The Icon and Prayer **Ms. Maria Galie** (Italy): Bridging Traditions Through Iconography: Teaching Orthodox Icons in Contemporary Italy **Lect. Dr. Mihai Coman** (Romania): The Liturgy of the Icon – Icon as Liturgy

Dinner

Tuesday, 19 January	Dinner on your own

Wednesday, 20 January: Day 3

Breakfast

Wednesday, 20 January	Breakfast on your own

9:00–11:00

Liturgical Studies Group / Women and the Orthodox Church Group
9.1 Book Review: Susan Ashbrook Harvey, *Ministries of Song: Women's Voices in Ancient Syriac Christianity* (University of California Press, 2025)
Session Chair: **Prof. Alexander Lingas** (United Kingdom)

Wednesday, 20 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** *Ministries of Song* is a tour-de-force study of the power of women's liturgical singing in late antique Syriac Christianity. Extending women's religious participation beyond the familiar roles of female saints and nobles, Syriac churches cultivated a flourishing but often-overlooked tradition of women's sacred song. Women's voices, both real and imagined, regularly enriched the ritual and devotional lives of Syriac Christians, on ecclesial and civic special occasions, with authoritative theological significance and social and political resonance. Harvey shows us how and why women's voices mattered for ancient Syriac Christianity and why they matter still. *Ministries of Song* received the Joan Kelly Memorial Prize for Women's History from the American Historical Association.
	Dr. Susan Ashbrook Harvey (USA) **Bishop Damaskinos (Olkinuora) of Haapsalu** (Estonia) **Dr. Evangelia Spyrakou** (Greece) **Dr. Nina Glibetić** (USA) **Dr. Ashley Marie Purpura** (USA)

IOTA Dialogues / Ecumenical Dialogue Group
9.2 Receiving the Theological Orthodox-Catholic Dialogue: Primacy and Synodality
Session Chairs: **Prof. Augustin (Viorel) Coman** (Romania) / **Prof. Gayle Woloschak** (USA)

Wednesday, 20 January 9:00–11:00	**NOTE: This session continues in the 11:30–13:00 session.** **Session Description:** The panel will focus on the theological, ecclesial, practical, and pastoral reception of the last three documents of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church on the relation between primacy and synodality (Ravenna, Chieti, and Alexandria) within the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. The aim is to explore how these documents have been interpreted, received, critiqued, and implemented within ecclesial and academic contexts.

	Dr. Johannes Oeldemann (Germany): The Synod on Synodality and the Synodal Process in the Catholic Church: Living Synodality and Learning from Other Churches **Prof. Edward Siecienski** (USA): Primacy and Synodality in the Orthodox Church: The Debate between Constantinople and Moscow **Very Rev. Prof. Augustinos Bairactaris** (Greece): The Ecumenical Principle of "Tradition/traditions" and the Different Theological Interpretations of Synodality and Primacy in the Orthodox–Catholic Dialogue

Philosophy of Religion Group **9.3 Orthodoxy and the Philosophy of Religion, Part II** Session Chair: **Rev. Prof. Isidoros Katsos** (Greece)	
Wednesday, 20 January 9:00–11:00	**NOTE: This session continues in the 11:30–13:00 session.** **Session Description:** We present here a variety of papers on Orthodox approaches to philosophical issues. The topics discussed include unity and diversity in the Trinity, Christian cosmology and its implications for ethics, virtue epistemology, divine-human interaction, the ontological status of evil, and an Orthodox approach to agent-regret.
	Rev. Prof. Nicholas Lombardo, OP (USA): The Trinity and Divine Unity **Mr. Jonas Eklund** (Finland): Does God have One or Three Consciousnesses – or Both at Once? **Prof. Jennifer Lockhart** (USA): Neo-Aristotelian Naturalism and the Supernatural **Dr. Kirill Karpov** (Russia): The Value Turn in Epistemology and New Opportunities for Orthodox Philosophy

Oriental Orthodoxy Group **9.4 Faith, Tradition, and Culture** Session Chair: TBD	
Wednesday, 20 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** Popular heritage—the way in which people pass on who they are and what is important to them from generation to generation—is one of the most powerful, enduring ways in which faith is transmitted and faith legacies are created. What is the relationship between Church traditions and popular Christian traditions? How does one inform the other? How do we understand the role of popular heritage in sustaining faith in non-Christiam majority contexts in which churches and peoples can experience all forms of targeting?
	Ms. Helana Botros (Canada): Extending Conversational Arms Towards Anthropology and Theology in Phenomenology

	Dr. Elke Speliopoulos (USA): Between Order and Service: Deaconesses in the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch as a Case of Lived Tradition **Mr. Mena Basta** (USA): A Tale between Two Gabriels: Coptic Liturgical Commentary as Indigenous Resilience under Islamic Governance **Mr. Jerin Mathew George** (India): Inculturation and Identity: The Synthesis of Indian Cultural Forms and Syriac Liturgical Tradition in the Malankara Orthodox Church

Biblical Studies Group **9.5 Old Testament, Holy Tradition, and Traditions** Session Chair: **Prof. Edith M. Humphrey** (USA)	
Wednesday, 20 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** This session explores the dynamic relationship between Tradition and the Old Testament, whether through close readings of particular passages, thematic studies of how the notion of tradition functions across the biblical canon or within a specific testament, investigations tracing historical, theological, or literary traditions in the Old Testament, or methodological reflections on Orthodox understandings of their interrelationship on Scripture and Tradition.
	Rev. Assoc. Prof. Bogdan G. Bucur (USA): Modes of Reading the Old Testament in Melito's Peri Pascha **Rev. Dr. Serhii Smahlo** (Germany): Enactment of the Divine Will in Early Jewish Traditions and the Markan Passion Narrative **Assoc. Prof. Michael C. Legaspi** (USA): Can Opposition to Tradition Be Traditional? The Case of Ecclesiastes **Dr. Myrto Theocharous** (Greece): Songs from the Furnace: An Exegetical Analysis of The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Young Men **Sopio Gozalishvili** (Austria): Walter Benjamin's Messianic Caesura and Three Old Testament Paradigms

Pastoral Theology Group **9.6 Applied Aspects of Pastoral Theology and Care in Dialogue with Contemporary Realities** Session Chairs: **Rev. Vasileios Thermos** (Greece) / **Rev. Harry Pappas** (USA)	
Wednesday, 20 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** This session will examine issues of pastoral theology, care and guidance by exploring the challenges posed by the swift development and use of AI, transactional analysis and orthodox anthropology, gender in contemporary controversies of identity, marriage in a digital age, and dementia as a disorder of inner sense. Each of these includes the impact on our understanding and pastoral response to human persons, families and ecclesial communities.

	Rev. Dr. Eugen Rosu (USA): The Paradosis of the Algorithm: AI-Generated Traditions and the Eclipse of Personal Pastoral Encounter in Orthodox Theology **Dr. Ana Djordjevic** (North Macedonia): Personality and Relationship: The Dialogue between Orthodox Christian Anthropology and Transactional Analysis **Ms. Marina Ghebrial** (Canada): An Orthodox Framework for Gender Based on Schmemann: A Heuristic for the Contemporary Cultural Crisis on Gender **Rev. Prof. Christoforos Chronis** (Greece): The Mystery of Marriage in the Digital Age: Anthropological Challenges and Orthodox Pastoral Care **Mr. Philip Andrews** (Belarus): Dementia as "De-sensia": Pastoral and Spiritual Guidance of the Cognitively Declined

Asceticism and Spirituality Group **9.7 New Directions in the Study of Orthodox Asceticism and Spirituality** Session Chair: **Prof. Marcus Plested** (United Kingdom)	
Wednesday, 20 January 9:00–11:00	**NOTE: This session continues in the 11:30–13:00 session.** **Session Description:** TBD
	Mr. Andrey Shishkov (Russia): Mystical as Aesthetic: An Object-Oriented Analysis of Religious Experience **Dr. Sergius Halvorsen** (USA): Faith-Based Storytelling: A Creative Application of Ascetical Spirituality **Rev. Dr. Thomas Colyandro** (USA): Deepening the Case for an Uncreated Silence of the Holy Spirit: Max Picard, Christos Yannaras, and a Phenomenology of Ascetic Perception **Prof. Dr. Teresa Obolevitch** (Poland): Myrrha Lot-Borodine on Theosis **Mr. Victor Niachayeu** (Estonia): "Let Go of the World": Exploring the Role of Ascetic Suffering Among Orthodox Monks in Prompting Self-Transcendence

Canon Law Group **9.8 TBD (invited session)** Session Chair: TBD	
Wednesday, 20 January 9:00–11:00	**Session Description:** TBD

Morning Break | 11:00–11:30

Wednesday, 20 January 11:30–13:00	Break

11:30–13:00

Patristics Group / Slavic Orthodoxy Group
10.1 Slavic Monasticism in the Early Modern Period
Session Chair: **Dr. Anna Briskina-Müller** (Germany)

Wednesday, 20 January 11:30–13:00	**Session Description:** This session explores the development of Slavic monasticism through the transmission, reception, and creative transformation of Byzantine spiritual and intellectual traditions. The papers examine the theological imagination of hesychasm, the adaptation of Byzantine liturgical practices in changing historical contexts, and the relationship between contemplative spirituality and rational reflection within the ascetic tradition. Particular attention is given to the ways in which monastic communities functioned as centers of theological creativity, liturgical renewal, and cultural exchange across the Slavic Orthodox world. Together, the contributions highlight the dynamic interplay between inherited Byzantine models and their reinterpretation in diverse regional settings.
	Dr. Anna Briskina-Müller (Germany): The Rationality of Watchfulness: Sts. Nil Sorsky and Basil of Poiana Marului — Silence for the Sake of Ratio, or Ratio in the Service of Hesychia? **Prof. Vladimir Cvetković** (Serbia): Circle, Center, and Radii: Diagrams and Theological Imagination in Serbian-Slavonic Hesychasm under Despot Jovan Uglješa **Dr. Witali Michalczuk** (Poland): The Transformation of Liturgical Order in Orthodox Monasteries of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the Late 15th and Early 16th Centuries: The Reception of the Byzantine Tradition after the Fall of Constantinople

Ecumenical Dialogue Group
10.2 Receiving the Theological Orthodox–Catholic Dialogue: Primacy and Synodality
Session Chairs: **Prof. Augustin (Viorel) Coman** (Romania) / **Prof. Gayle Woloschak** (USA)

Wednesday, 20 January 11:30–13:00	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 9:00–11:00 session.** **Session Description:** The panel will focus on the theological, ecclesial, practical, and pastoral reception of the last three documents of the Joint International Commission for Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church on the relation between primacy and synodality (Ravenna, Chieti, and Alexandria) within the Orthodox and Catholic Churches. The aim is to explore how these documents have been interpreted, received, critiqued, and implemented within ecclesial and academic contexts.

	Prof. Peter de Mey (Belgium): Promoting the Mutual Reception of Regional and International Ecumenical Dialogues: The Example of the Orthodox–Catholic Dialogue **Dr. Julija Naett Vidović** (France): The Reception of Orthodox–Catholic Dialogue in France **Very Rev. Dr. Amfilochios Miltos** (Greece): The Interdependence of Primacy and Conciliarity at the Local, Regional, and Universal Levels of the Church: A Critical Reassessment of Their Reception in Modern Greek Theology

Philosophy of Religion Group **10.3 Orthodoxy and the Philosophy of Religion, Part II** Session Chair: **Rev. Prof. Isidoros Katsos** (Greece)	
Wednesday, 20 January 11:30–13:00	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 9:00–11:00 session.** **Session Description:** We present here a variety of papers on Orthodox approaches to philosophical issues. The topics discussed include unity and diversity in the Trinity, Christian cosmology and its implications for ethics, virtue epistemology, divine-human interaction, the ontological status of evil, and an Orthodox approach to agent-regret.
	Prof. David Bradshaw (USA): How Does the Eternal God Interact with Creatures? **Prof. Nikoloz Kopaleishvili** (Georgia): The Ethical Meaning of Christian Ontology: Saint Augustine Against the Manicheans **Ms. Julie D. Gunby** (USA): The Ontological and Therapeutic Significance of Orthodox Hamartiology for Clinical Bioethics

Oriental Orthodoxy Group **10.4 The Role of the Church in Safeguarding Lived Religious Experience and Oral, Popular Intangible Heritage** Session Chair: TBD *co-sponsored by Christian Solidarity International*	
Wednesday, 20 January 11:30–13:00	**Session Description:** In contexts of religious homogenization, proxy wars and high levels of conflict, members of many Orthodox communities in the Middle East and West Asia can find themselves vulnerable to many sources of identity erasure. One of the most powerful mechanisms of erasure is the exercise of gradual, opaque and pernicious encroachment on everyday expressions of lived faith in particular with respect to popular (people's) heritage. The Orthodox churches in Armenia, Egypt, Iraq and Syria play a central role not only in the preservation of faith, but also in safeguarding their intangible heritage. Such heritage can take the form of language, popular music and art, festivals and feasts, cultural practices that promote "togetherness" and manifest identity. This panel will explore the many ways in which the Orthodox Church in different contexts contributes

	to the safeguarding of people's multifaceted identities. While the Church can play multiple roles in relation to preserving identity, we will particularly focus on open resistance and defiance (Armenia), institutional accommodation (Egypt), and bridging the ritualistic and the intangible (Syria).
	Metropolitan Thomas (Cairo): The Relationship between the Coptic Orthodox Church, Identity and Heritage **Archbishop Andrawos** (Syria): The Role of the Syriac Orthodox Church in Preserving the Syrian Christian Heritage and Identity **Dr. Shivan Toma** (Iraq): The Syriac Orthodox Church and the Preservation of Intangible Christian Heritage in Northern Iraq

Orthodoxy and Literature Group **10.5 Tradition and Traditions in World Literature** Session Chair: **Rev. Dr. Chrysostom Koutloumousianos** (Greece)	
Wednesday, 20 January 11:30–13:00	**Session Description:** The dynamic relation between "Tradition" (Holy Tradition transmitted through Scripture, liturgy, patristic writings, and conciliar wisdom) and "traditions" (local, cultural expressions of faith) perpetually negotiates continuity and change within specific cultural, religious, and literary contexts. This session explores ways Orthodox Tradition interacts with cultural traditions in literature.
	Rev. Dr. Renish Geevarghese Abraham (India): Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*: An Experiment in Kenotic Imagination **Mr. Leo Andre Proctor** (United Kingdom): Tradition and Trauma in Alexandros Papadiamantis's *The Murderess* (1903) and Borisav Stankovic's *Bad Blood* (1910) **Dr. Elina Kahla** (Finland): The Life, Thought and Legacy of Father Pavel Florensky (1882–1937) **Dr. Claude N. Stulting** (USA): "Earth's Great Altar": Greek Eucharistic Theology and the Sacrament of Nature in Milton's *Paradise Lost*

Moral Theology and Theological Anthropology Group **10.6 Themes and Issues in Theological Anthropology and Moral Theology** Session Chair: **Fr. Demetrios Harper** (USA)	
Wednesday, 20 January 11:30–13:00	**Session Description:** This session considers a number of vital themes and issues in Orthodox theological anthropology and moral theology, including the intersection of psychoanalysis and patristic anthropology; human rights; and the contribution of Metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon's posthumous *Remembering the Future*.
	Fr. Philip Lemasters (USA): Peacemaking and Human Rights in Orthodox Social Ethics

	Rev. Tina Woof (United Kingdom): Theosis and the Eucharist in Metropolitan John Zizioulas' Theological Anthropology: A Foundation for Creaturely Kenosis **Mr. Stefan Cvetanovski** (North Macedonia): Desire between Lack and Infinity: Jacques Lacan and Gregory of Nyssa on Eros and the Human Person **Fr. Alexis Torrance** (USA): Back to the Future: Achievements and Ambigua in Zizioulas' Final Work

Asceticism and Spirituality Group **10.7 New Directions in the Study of Orthodox Asceticism and Spirituality** Session Chair: **Prof. Marcus Plested** (United Kingdom)	
Wednesday, 20 January 11:30–13:00	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 9:00–11:00 session.** **Session Description:** TBD
	Prof. Irina Paert (Estonia): Aesthetics as Asceticism: Saint Sophrony Sakharov and Arvo Pärt **Dr. Kalin Anguelov** (Bulgaria): Structure and Organization of the Ascetic Community (ἀδελφότης) of St. Basil the Great **Dr. Olga Sevastyanova** (United Kingdom): "The Light Shining through Thorny Flesh": Materiality in Gregory of Nyssa's Burning Bush **Mr. Fady Ghattas** (United Kingdom): Living Flesh and the Consuming Fire: Michel Henry and Emmanuel Falque on the Suffering Body of Amma Syncletica

Special Session **10.8 The State of the Church: Christianity and Nationalism in the Orthodox World and the Christian West Today** Session Chair: **Prof. John W. Martens** (Canada)	
Wednesday, 20 January 11:30–13:00	**Session Description:** How churches relate to political power has taken different forms at various periods in the Christian East and the Christian West. But the rise of nation states in the eighteenth century and the creation of liberal democratic and communist states complicated the relationship even further. This session will look at some emerging trends in the relationship of state and Church in the Orthodox world and the Christian West today and examine what we can learn from each other as significant shifts in the relationship of Church and state continue to emerge.
	Dr. Ionuț Biliuță (Romania): Nationalism as Orthodox Tradition? Ethnicity and Orthodox Theology in the Modern Age **Rev. Dr. Rob James** (United Kingdom): The Anglican Paradox: Christian Nation and Christian Witness

	Dr. Aristotle Papanikolaou (USA): A Theotic Politics versus a Politics of Truth **Dr. John W. Martens** (Canada): Can Canadian Churches Resist the Embrace of Christian Nationalism?

Lunch Break | 13:30–15:00

Wednesday, 20 January 13:30–15:00	Lunch on your own

15:00–16:30

Special Session
11.1 The *Täwaḥədo* Churches: Indigenous Creativity and Orthodox Tradition
Session Chair: **Dr. Ralph Lee** (United Kingdom)

Wednesday, 20 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** This session explores the theologizing of the *Täwaḥədo* Churches of Ethiopia and Eritrea and their diaspora. It approaches theology as an expression of indigenous creativity, showing how the *Täwaḥədo* Churches developed their own theological register in textual, linguistic, and aesthetic forms. Focusing on medieval, early modern, and modern sources, the papers explore how the classical Ge'ez literature and later Amharic works function in theological creativity. By reading theology across genres and media, the session presents *Täwaḥədo* theologizing as a distinctive mode of theological expression shaped by practices of reception, elaboration, and transmission.
	Dr. Ralph Lee (United Kingdom): Voicing the Mystery of Qene: Dynamism and Tradition in the Extempore Poetry of the Täwaḥədo Churches **Dr. Daniel Assefa** (Ethiopia): The Merciful Archangel Michael in the Traditional Ethiopian (Andəmta) Commentary on the Book of Enoch (1 Enoch) **Rev. Dr. Calum Samuelson** (Sweden): The Cascading Traditions of Spiritual Steps as Received and Reworked through Täwaḥədo Monasticism: The Case of Adam's Ten Stages **Dr. Girma Batu** (Ethiopia): ተዋሕዶ (Täwaḥədo) Christology and Theosis: A Theological Exploration of the Ethiopian Orthodox Täwaḥədo Church

IOTA Dialogues **11.2 Anglican–Orthodox Dialogue** Session Chair: TBD	
Wednesday, 20 January 15:00–16:30	**Session Description: TBD**

Special Session **11.4 Eucharistic Ecclesiology: Royal Priesthood in Theology and Practice** Session Chair: **Dr. Anastacia Wooden** (USA)	
Wednesday, 20 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** This session explores the theology and practice of royal priesthood as a fundamental idea of eucharistic ecclesiology. While the work of Nicolas Afanasiev serves as a starting point, the session invites other approaches. Afanasiev's idea that the primary area of the exercise of royal priesthood is in liturgy had influence on ecclesial practice in and beyond Orthodoxy. How extensive is this influence? Has our knowledge about the theology of royal priesthood developed? How is it related to reception by the church? Our answers to these and similar questions determine both the relevance of eucharistic ecclesiology today and its future.
	Dr. Uliana Gutner (Russia): The Experience of the Russian Student Christian Movement as a Source of Eucharistic Theology of Nicolas Afanasiev **Dr. Aleksei Volchkov** (Germany): Exegesis or Eisegesis? How Nicolas Afanasiev Read the Early Christian Sources **Dr. Anastacia Wooden** (USA): The Dos and Don'ts of Royal Priesthood: Clarifications from the Eucharistic Ecclesiology **Victor Alexandrov** (Hungary): The Church: Assembly or Temple?

Orthodoxy, Politics, and International Relations Group **11.5 Orthodoxy, Politics, and International Relations** Session Chair: **Prof. Ansgar Joedicke** (Switzerland)	
Wednesday, 20 January 15:00–16:30	**NOTE: This session continues in the 17:00–18:30 session.** **Session Description:** Eastern Orthodox Christianity, as an institutional fellowship of churches and a lived religion, is directly linked to state-formation and nation-building processes in the Westphalian world order. Both global Orthodoxy and the Westphalian world order are undergoing massive flux and reconfiguration. This panel explores the epistemic and empirical intersections of Orthodoxy and international relations, touching on issues of geopolitics, nationalism and civilizational narratives, religious and social pluralism, democracy and regime type, and leadership and governance.

	Rev. Dr. Nicholas Denysenko (USA): Casting Off Caesar to Be the People's Church: The Legacy of the Origins of Ukrainian Autocephaly for Contemporary Orthodoxy **Rev. Dr. Alexander Zanemonets** (Netherlands): Pastoral Care of Ukrainian War Refugees: The Case of the Orthodox Church of Finland **Dr. Marianna Napolitano** (Italy): The Ukrainian Orthodox Church after 2018: Shifts in Identity Patterns

11.6 Short Communications Session Chair: TBD	
Wednesday, 20 January 15:00–16:30	**Dr. Christopher Howell** (USA): The Trip Nietzsche Didn't Take: Nietzsche's Criticism of Christianity in Light of Modern Greek Orthodoxy **Ms. Maria Kabara** (Greece): Women and the Orthodox Church: Between Living Tradition and Idealogized Interpretation **Mrs. Elizabeth Bare** (USA): Christian Modesty in the Ante-Nicene Fathers

Afternoon Break | 16:30–17:00

Wednesday, 20 January 16:30–17:00	Break

17:00–18:30

Special Session **12.1 The *Täwaḥədo* Churches: Indigenous Creativity and Orthodox Tradition** Session Chair: **Dr. Ralph Lee** (United Kingdom)	
Wednesday, 20 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** This session explores the theologizing of the *Täwaḥədo* Churches of Ethiopia and Eritrea and their diaspora. It approaches theology as an expression of indigenous creativity, showing how the *Täwaḥədo* Churches developed their own theological register in textual, linguistic, and aesthetic forms. Focusing on medieval, early modern, and modern sources, the papers explore how the classical Ge'ez literature and later Amharic works function in theological creativity. By reading theology across genres and media, the session presents *Täwaḥədo* theologizing as a distinctive mode of theological expression shaped by practices of reception, elaboration, and transmission.
	Fr. Daniel Seyfemichael (Ethiopia): Abba Giorgis of Gassecha (c. 1365–1425), The Architect of Ethiopian Orthodox Apologetics **Dr. Tsehay Ademe** (Ethiopia): Qəne and the 1975 Revolution: Tradition, Resistance, and Engagement in the EOTC

	Dr. Mersha Alehegne (Germany): Kinetic Theology: The Symbolic Language of Movement in the Ethiopian Orthodox Liturgy

IOTA Dialogues **12.2 Book Review: Love in Religion: An Inter-Faith Approach** Session Chair: **Dr. Smilen Markov** (Bulgaria)	
Wednesday, 20 January 17:00–18:30	**Session Description:** Three speakers will review some of the books recently produced by the Project for the Study of Love in Religion at Regent's Park College, University of Oxford, and the Director of the Project will respond to the reviews. The project networks scholars from Christian, Jewish, Muslim and Hindu traditions to explore the difference that love of God and neighbor makes to critical areas of society and culture. Books reviewed: *Love as Common Ground*, ed. Paul S. Fiddes (2021), *Loving the Planet*, ed. Paul S. Fiddes (2022/2025), and *Interpreting the Bible and the Qur'an Through Love*, by Tareq Moqbel (2026).
	Rev. Prof. Dr. Philip LeMasters (USA) **Dr. Dionysios Skliris** (Greece) **Rev. Prof. Dr. Paul S. Fiddes** (United Kingdom) **Dr. Nikolaos Asproulis** (Greece)

Dogmatic Theology Group **12.3 Book Review: Peter C. Bouteneff, *Union Without Confusion: Councils and Christology Beyond the Chalcedonian Divide*** Session Chair: **Very Rev. Dr. John Behr** (United Kingdom)	
Wednesday, 20 January 17:00–18:30	**Session Description:** The book *Union Without Confusion* addresses the centuries-long divide between the Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches. Its main section—a historical/theological review of the fourth to the eighth centuries—is bookended by chapters on the contemporary division and the modern dialogue between the church families. This session will bring scholars from both families together to discuss the book, the issues it raises, and the conclusions it draws.
	Dr. Andrew Youssef (Canada) **Dr. Norman Russell** (France) **Rev. Dr. Nikolaos Loudovikos** (Greece) **Dr. Peter Bouteneff** (USA)

Special Session **12.4 Eucharistic Ecclesiology: Royal Priesthood in Theology and Practice** Session Chair: **Dr. Anastacia Wooden** (USA)	
Wednesday, 20 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** This session explores the theology and practice of royal priesthood as a fundamental idea of eucharistic ecclesiology. While the work of Nicolas Afanasiev serves as a starting point, the session invites other approaches. Afanasiev's idea that the primary area of the exercise of royal priesthood is in liturgy had influence on ecclesial practice in and beyond Orthodoxy. How extensive is this influence? Has our knowledge about the theology of royal priesthood developed? How is it related to reception by the church? Our answers to these and similar questions determine both the relevance of eucharistic ecclesiology today and its future.
	Rev. Matthias Gabriel Beckmann (Germany): Reception as Discernment: Re-reading Afanasiev on Royal Priesthood **Prof. Will Cohen** (USA): Refracting Afanasiev's Ideas of Priesthood and Reception through the Ministry and Martyrdom of St. Óscar Romero **Rev. Aaron John** (India): From Altar to Cosmos: Reframing Royal Priesthood through Cosmic Participation in Indian Orthodox Thought **Olga Kuznetsova** (Russia): The Royal Priesthood of the Faithful: From Eucharistic Ecclesiology to Conciliar Ecclesiology

Orthodoxy, Politics, and International Relations Group **12.5 Orthodoxy, Politics, and International Relations** Session Chair: **Prof. Ansgar Joedicke** (Switzerland)	
Wednesday, 20 January 17:00–18:30	**NOTE: This session is a continuation of the 15:00–16:30 session.** **Session Description:** Eastern Orthodox Christianity, as an institutional fellowship of churches and a lived religion, is directly linked to state-formation and nation-building processes in the Westphalian world order. Both global Orthodoxy and the Westphalian world order are undergoing massive flux and reconfiguration. This panel explores the epistemic and empirical intersections of Orthodoxy and international relations, touching on issues of geopolitics, nationalism and civilizational narratives, religious and social pluralism, democracy and regime type, and leadership and governance.
	Mr. Aleksandre Gabunia (Belgium): What the Kremlin Sees, the Church Sees: Theopolitical Continuities Between Stalinism and Russkiy Mir **Prof. Lavinia Stan** (Canada): Orthodox Responses to the Istanbul Convention in Romania and Bulgaria

	Dr. Maria Hämmerli (Switzerland) / **Prof. Ansgar Jödicke** (Switzerland): The Study of Polarization in Orthodox Christianity

Orthodoxy, Politics, and International Relations Group **12.6 Book Review: Nathan Hoppe, *Fostering Local Eucharistic Communities* (Aschendorff, 2025)** Session Chair: **Prof. Lori Peterson Branch** (USA)	
Wednesday, 20 January 17:00–18:30	**Session Description:** This panel reviews Nathan Hoppe's *Fostering Local Eucharistic Communities* (Aschendorff, 2025), which argues that renewed attention to local eucharistic communities (LECs) offers the most effective response to the challenges facing Christian ministry today. Drawing on decades of Orthodox missionary service in Albania and field research in the United States, Hoppe develops an eightfold framework for nurturing thriving LECs: eucharistic life, community life, formation, stewardship, governance, evangelism, philanthropy, and cultural incarnation. Panelists assess the book's method and its implications for Orthodox parish and mission life.
	Rev. Dr. John Parker (USA): "Do this and you shall live": The Absolute Necessity of Vibrant, Local, Eucharistic Communities **Dr. Gayle E. Woloschak** (USA): An Orthodox Missionary Vision for the 21st Century **Dr. Grant White** (Finland): The Parish as a Local Eucharistic Community **Dr. Nathan Hoppe** (USA): The Eight Attributes of a Vibrant Local Eucharistic Community

Closing Reception | 19:30–21:30

Wednesday, 20 January 19:30–21:30 Georgia Palace Hotel	Closing Reception

Thursday, 21 January: Optional Excursion

Optional Excursion	
9:00–TBD	All registered attendees are invited to join a day-long excursion featuring Georgia's most significant spiritual sites. To register, purchase a ticket at https://iota-web.org/2027-conference-registration/. We will visit the Bagrati Cathedral (eleventh century) and Motsameta Monastery (eleventh century). The trip will start at 9:00 am (subject to change; follow the announcement to be made on the last working day of the conference) from the lobby of the Georgia Palace Hotel in Kobuleti. The bus drive to the first site will take approximately two hours; the length of the drive between each site is approximately 30 minutes. The excursion cost of Euro 55 per person includes a brown bag lunch and a dinner. The cost of this optional excursion is **not** included in the conference registration fee. To participate, please purchase either a conference registration option that includes "With Excursion" or purchase the "Excursion Ticket" separately from your conference registration.

Practical Information

Registration
All conference attendees, including all speakers, session chairs, support staff, volunteers, and guests, are required to register on this page: https://iota-web.org/2027-conference-registration/

Location
All concurrent conference sessions on 18–20 January 2027 will be held at Georgia Palace and Spa Kobuleti Hotel. The events of the Opening Day, 17 January 2027, will be held at different venues in Poti (not in Kobuleti). Transportation to the events of the Opening Day will be provided from the Georgia Palace and Spa Kobuleti Hotel on the morning of 17 January.

Address
Georgia Palace and Spa Kobuleti Hotel, 275 Agmashenebeli Avenue, Kobuleti, 6200, Georgia

Arrival and Departure
- Conference Start Date & Time: Sunday, 17 January, 8:30.
- Conference End Date & Time: Wednesday, 20 January, 21:30.
- Recommended arrival and departure times: Out-of-country attendees should plan to arrive in Batumi or Kutaisi at any convenient time on 16 January and depart at any convenient time on 22 January.

Airport Transfers
- New Georgian University will provide free airport transfers from Batumi and Kutaisi Airports on 16 January to the area hotels in Kobuleti. Return transfers from the Kobuleti hotels to the Batumi and Kutaisi Airports will be provided on 22 January. Free transfers will *not* be available on other days. To sign up for a free airport transfer, visit this link: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfg-WPvqMG6A5UKMsGffYa5yP8FW4IzhPS-oITL80P7lYS43g/viewform?usp=dialog

Medical Assistance

JSC Georgian Clinics – Kobuleti Hospital
- Address: 18 Memed Abashidze Street, Kobuleti, Georgia
- Telephone: (+995) 598 47 63 50

Kobuleti Medical Center
- Address: 31 Tbilisi Street, Kobuleti, Georgia
- Telephone numbers: (+995) 32 2 15 20 25; (+995) 599 92 33 66

Taxi Service in Kobuleti
- **Maxim Taxi**
- Website: https://taximaxim.ge/en/order-a-taxi-online
- Telephone numbers: (+995) 0426 26 86 86; (+995) 322 60 60 60
- The Maxim app is available for download on both Android and iOS devices (I recommend using the app).

Intercity Transfers

GoTrip.ge

- GoTrip provides private transfer services between cities in Georgia.
- Website: https://gotrip.ge/en/transfer/from-qobuleti-to-tbilisi
- Telephone: (+995) 511 333 443

Bolt

- The Bolt app is another option for intercity transfers. The application is available for both Android and iOS devices: https://bolt.eu/en-ge/rides/

Session Format and Visual Aids

In order to provide enough time for discussion, each paper in the regular sessions is limited to fifteen minutes or 1,800 words of the main text followed by a five-minute q&a. Each paper in the short communication session is seven minutes with two minutes reserved for q&a.

If you would like to show a PowerPoint presentation, bring it on a thumb drive to your session and inform the volunteers 20 mins before the start of your session.

Wi-Fi

For a Wi-Fi connection at the Georgia Palace and Spa Kobuleti Hotel, choose network **gph** (no password required)

Live Updates During the Conference

For program changes and updates, follow the conference WhatsApp Channel by scanning this code: TBD

Livestream of Opening Day

The talks of the Opening Day will be streamed on New Georgian University's YouTube Channel. To watch these talks online, scan this code: TBD

Conference Protocol

All participants are advised to secure their belongings. No one should leave their property unattended.

Dining Recommendations

TBD

International Orthodox Theological Association
I O T A

Appendix: Additional Meeting: 8th Maximus Symposium

All registered conference attendees are welcome to attend this additional meeting.

8th International Colloquium on St Maximus the Confessor

"The Path of St. Maximus: Life, Travels, and Exile"

Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, University of Belgrade
Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary
Under the auspices and with the support of the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA)

Kobuleti, Georgia | 16 January 2027
Georgia Palace Hotel & Spa, Aieti Room

Programme

10:15 Opening

Chair: Alex Leonas (Károli Gáspár University, Budapest)

10:30 Tamara Grdzelidze (Ilia State University, Tbilisi)
St Maximus the Confessor as an Ally of Orthodox Theologians in Ecumenical Theology

10:55 Thomas S. Drobena (Comenius University, Bratislava)
Maximus the Asekretis: Imperial Administration and the Socio-Political Networks of Pre-Monothelite Constantinople (c. 610–614)

11:20 Bogna Kosmulska (University of Warsaw)
Maximus the Confessor and His Possible Connection with Stephen of Alexandria

11:45 Coffee Break

Chair: Daniel Heide (University of Belgrade)

12:00 Michael Bakker (Radboud University, Nijmegen)
Maximus' Afterlife in Elias Ekdikos

12:25 Karolina Kochańczyk-Bonińska (University of Warsaw)
Tracing Syriac Influences in Maximus the Confessor's Mystagogy

12:50 Matthew Keil (Fordham University)
Between Ephrem and Maximus: Compunction, Monastic Formation, and the Attribution of Ascetic Authority

13:15 Ivan Surkov (Institute of Philosophy, RAS; Sretensky Theological Academy)
The First-Principle Aporia: From Iamblichus to Maximus the Confessor

13:40 Lunch Break

Chair: Karolina Kochańczyk-Bonińska (University of Warsaw)

15:00 Sergio E. Mainoldi (Istituto teologico ortodosso "Santa Eufemia di Calcedonia," Venice)
Maximus and Dionysius: Summing Up Convergences and Divergences

15:25 David Bradshaw (University of Kentucky)
The Natural Energies in St Maximus the Confessor

15:50 Coffee Break

Chair: Vladimir Cvetković (University of Belgrade)

16:05 Georgios Siskos (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)
St Maximus the Confessor's Use of Communicatio Idiomatum as a Hermeneutical Key to Patristic Expressions of a Single Activity

16:30 Stefan Radoslavov Ivanov (Sofia University "St Kliment Ohridski")
Neither Fusion nor Divergence: Γνώμη in the Formation of Maximus' Account of Will and Freedom

16:55 Thomas Cattoi (Pontifical University of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Angelicum)
The Athonite Reception of the Life of the Virgin Attributed to Maximus the Confessor: From Euthymios the Georgian to Palamite Hesychasm and Beyond

17:20 Closing Discussion