



INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

NICAEA – 1700

The First Ecumenical Council
Yesterday and Today

October 3, 2025 | Kaunas, Lietuva

In A.D. 325, at Nicaea (present-day İznik, Türkiye), bishops representing the whole of Christendom gathered to address dogmatic disputes concerning the nature of God and other matters of concern to Christians. The Fathers of the Council initiated what would become the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, adopted canons for the governance of the Church, and resolved practical questions of Christian communal life. The Council of Nicaea was significant not only for the Church of the fourth century; the doctrinal and other issues it began to address have remained relevant to this day. They continue to surface in theological scholarship and in various contexts of Christian life and spirituality. On the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea, we invite the scholarly community to mark the occasion by reflecting on the content of the Creed affirmed at the Council, the significance of the Council's twenty canons, and the Council's near and distant reception.

This conference is interdisciplinary and ecumenical: participating scholars include not only theologians but also historians, philosophers, art historians, linguists, and researchers and practitioners from related fields, representing Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant traditions.

The conference will consist of a morning plenary session (20–30-minute presentations) and an afternoon session (15–20-minute presentations). Sessions are organized under the following sub-themes: Reception of Nicaea; Nicaea and Theology; Nicaea and History; Nicaea and the Arts; Nicaea and Apologetics.

Keynote Speakers

Very Rev. Dr. Cyril Hovorun — Orthodox priest-monk; Professor of Ecclesiology, International Relations, and Ecumenism at the Stockholm School of Theology (Stockholm, Sweden); Director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount University (Los Angeles, USA); and Visiting Professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University (Rome, Italy). More than 500 of his scholarly and public writings

have been published in 30 languages. Selected books: "Eastern Christianity in Its Texts" (London: T&T Clark, 2022); "Political Orthodoxies: The Unorthodoxies of the Church Coerced" (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2018); "Meta-Ecclesiology, Chronicles on Church Awareness" (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); "From Antioch to Xi'an: an Evolution of 'Nestorianism'" (Hong Kong: Chinese Orthodox Press, 2014).

Rev. Dr. Saulius Rumšas, OP — Dominican friar; Doctor of Catholic Theology and Licentiate of Orthodox Theology. Senior Research Fellow at the Department for the Studies of Ancient and Medieval Culture, Lithuanian Culture Research Institute. Research interests include patristics, dogmatic theology (especially the Trinity and Christology), and Christian anthropology. Recent publications include: "Theological and Anthropological Aspects of Gregory of Nyssa's Homilies on the Beatitudes" (Logos, 2016); "Is Man Created 'according to the Image of God' and/or 'according to the Likeness'? Theological Challenges in Basil of Caesarea's Commentary on Gen 1:26–27" (Annals of the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Science, 2022); "Basil of Caesarea versus or adversus Origen? On Creation 'according to Likeness' (Gen 1:26–27)" (Annals of the Lithuanian Catholic Academy of Science, 2023); "Theōsis: The Concept of Deification from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period" (LKTI, 2024).

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Benas Ulevičius — a permanent deacon, dean and professor at the Faculty of Catholic Theology at Vytautas Magnus University. He is known for his catechetical ministry and is the host of Catholic radio programmes and the author of theological articles and books. Two monographs are worth mentioning: "Divine East: Post-Vatican Liturgical Reform and the Question of the 'Turning of the Altars'" (Aidai, 2002) and "Divine Play: On the Liturgical Mind" (Aidai, 2009). His academic interests include dogmatic theology, liturgical theology, and anthropology.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

MORNING SESSION

9:00–9:30 **Registration and Coffee**

9:30–12:00 **Plenary Session:** Opening and Keynotes
(with simultaneous interpretation)

- **H.E. Dr. Kęstutis Kėvalas, Archbishop of Kaunas** — Welcome Address
- **Very Rev. Dr. Cyril Hovorun** — “Many Nicaean Dialectics”
- **Rev. Dr. Saulius Rumšas, OP** — “The Course and Agenda Challenges of the Council of Nicaea in the Testimony of 6th–5th-Century Church Writers”
- **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Benas Ulevičius** — “Wrestling With the Divine Paradox: What Does It Mean to Understand the Nicene Creed?”
- Discussion and Q&A

12:00–13:30 **Lunch Break**

AFTERNOON SESSION

13:30–15:30 **SECTION SESSION I**

Reception of Nicaea (in English)

Chairman — Rev. Holger Lahayne (Lithuania)

- **Dr. Juris Jefuni**, University of Latvia, Daugavpils University, European Christian Academy (Jūrmala, Latvia) — “The Calendar Question in the Latvian Orthodox Church in the Interwar Period (1920–1940)”
- **Rev. Dr. Gintaras Sungaila**, (Orthodox Christian Institute for Education and Research, Lithuania) — “The Orthodox Church as a Church of Councils: from Nicaea (325) to Crete (2016)”
- **Dr. Travis L. Myers**, LCC International University — “Making Old Things New: Claims to Authentic Christianity by Modernist U.S.-American Liberal Protestant Spokesmen (1880-1930)”
- **Lic. Milda Vitkutė**, Vytautas Magnus University — “Echoes of Nicaea in St. Thomas Aquinas’s Christology”

Nicaea and Theology (in Lithuanian)

Chairman — Rev. Dr. Saulius Rumšas, OP (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Lithuania)

- **Rev. Prof. Dr. Rimas Skinkaitis**, Vytautas Magnus University — “The Theological Significance of the First Council of Nicaea”
- **Rev. Dr. Algirdas Akelaitis**, Vytautas Magnus University — “Does ‘ousia’ in Luke 15:12–13 Mean Only Property and Possessions?”
- **Prof. Dr. Artūras Lukaševičius**, Vytautas Magnus University — “The Place of the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed in Contemporary Catechesis”
- **Rev. Egidijus Kumža**, Vytautas Magnus University — “Christ’s Pre-existence in the Authentic Letters of Paul: Biblical Sources of the Christology of Nicaea I”

Nicaea and History (in Lithuanian)

Chairman — Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aušra Vasiliauskaitė, OSB (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)

- **Dr. Darius Alekna**, Lithuanian Culture Research Institute — “Religious Policy during the Reign of Emperor Constantine”
- **Dr. Vytas Jankauskas** — “The Periodization of Lithuanian History and the Contexts of the Council of Nicaea”
- **Rev. Dr. Vytautas Saladis** — “The Third Canon of Nicaea and the Origins of Clerical Celibacy: Historical and Legal Context”
- **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Augustinas Dainys**, Vytautas Magnus University — “Why Does Arianism, Condemned at Nicaea, Keep Reappearing? The Relevance of Fausto Sozzini’s Teaching in Contemporary Philosophical Debates”

15:30–15:45 **Coffee Break**

15:45–17:30 SECTION SESSION II

Nicaea and Apologetics (in English)

Chairman — Dr. Gintaras Sungaila (Orthodox Christian Institute for Education and Research, Lithuania)

- **Dr. Laurynas Jacevičius** — “How Convictions Form: The Case of Arius”
- **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Iva Mršić Felbar**, University of Zagreb — “The Council of Nicaea and Theological Language: Between Ontological Precision and Metaphorical Expression”

- **Rev. Holger Lahayne** — “Nicaea and Evangelization / Apologetics”
- **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paulius Čerka**, Vytautas Magnus University — “‘Who Spoke through the Prophets’: A Wider-than-Verbal Inspiration”

Nicaea and the Arts (in Lithuanian)

Chairman — Lic. Milda Vitkutė (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)

- **Augminas Petronis**, Lithuanian Culture Research Institute — “The Council in Fiction: Evelyn Waugh’s Historical Novel *Helena*”
- **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aurelija Mykolaitytė**, Vytautas Magnus University — “Philosophical Christian Debates in Contemporary Literature.”
- **Vitalija Truskuskaitė**, Vytautas Magnus University — “Imagery of the Creed in Lithuanian Sacred Theatre: A Case Study”

17:30–17:45 — **Coffee Break**

17:45–18:15 — **Byzantine Music Choir “Artos” from the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Lithuania** (conductor Pavel Gonta)

Organizer Vytautas Magnus University, Faculty of Catholic Theology

Scientific Committee

Chair: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Paulius Čerka (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)

Members:

Dr. Saulius Rumšas, OP (Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Lithuania)
 Lic. Milda Vitkutė (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)
 Dr. Gintaras Sungaila (Orthodox Christian Institute for Education and Research, Lithuania)
 Holger Lahayne (Reformed pastor, Lithuania)
 Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aušra Vasiliauskaitė, OSB (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)
 Prof. Dr. Rimantas Skinkaitis (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania)
 Prof. Dr. Jacek Kempa (University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland)
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 Prof. Dr. Žanete Narkēviča (Higher Institute of Religious Sciences, Riga, Latvia)
 Prof. habil. Dr. Marek Chmielewski (John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Poland)