



PONTIFICIA
UNIVERSITÀ
GREGORIANA

Ufficio Stampa e Comunicazione



Universität
Münster



Religion and Politics
CLUSTER OF EXCELLENCE | UNIVERSITY OF MÜNSTER

1700 years after the Ecumenical Council of Nicaea (325-2025)

THE CONFESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF NICAEA *History and Theology*

*Matteo Ricci' Conference Hall of the Pontifical Gregorian University
Thursday 27 February - Saturday 1 March 2025*

The year 2025 marks the 1700th anniversary of the celebration in Nicaea of the first ecumenical council in history. Convened by the Emperor Constantine to settle disputes in the Christian Church that had finally gained official recognition, the Council of Nicaea was a pivotal event in history, politics and theology. “Even today this Council is an invitation to all Churches and Ecclesial Communities to move forward on the path towards visible unity,” recalls **Fr. Mark Lewis S.J.**, Rector of the Pontifical Gregorian University.

It is to commemorate this anniversary that the Pontifical Gregorian University and the University of Münster, through the Cluster of Excellence ‘Religion and Politics’, are organising an international conference entitled *The Confession of the Council of Nicaea: History and Theology*.

The aim of the conference is to promote dialogue between the historical research on the Council and the theological-systematic questions concerning the current meaning of the Nicene Creed. The conference will therefore be divided into two parts. The first part, which will take place in Rome from 27 February to 1 March, will feature eminent Nicaea scholars from the fields of theology, philosophy, philology and history. The second part, which will be celebrated in Münster from 15 to 17 October 2025, will focus on the question of what the Council means for the relationship between Christianity and Judaism, and between Christianity and Islam.

The words of the organisers

“The first ecumenical council in history formulated a creed that is still fundamental for almost all churches today. It unites Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Christians,” says **Michael Seewald**, Professor of Dogmatics and History of Dogma at the University of Münster. “From today’s perspective, the Council of Nicaea turned conventional images of God upside down: God himself became man in Jesus. This is the main message of the Nicene Creed. Figuratively speaking, God is not only at the top, but also at the bottom, as a crucified man, a failed existence - and precisely in his failure he proves to be God. This fundamental idea of Nicaea has left theology with intellectually challenging questions”.

“What makes the difference between before and after Nicaea is what has remained since: the truth of the faith has been brought into a common form,” adds Jesuit **Philipp G. Renczes**, Dean of the Faculty of Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University. “With Nicea, the personal confession ‘I believe’ is coagulated and sustained in content and form in the common confession ‘We believe’. Just as the faith of the individual is a gift of God’s grace that escapes the origin of the believer's will, so the profession of faith in the community is experienced not as the result of rational deduction, but as an ‘inspiration’... the Church did not invent the Creed, it found it already made, it was also given to the Church as a whole. It was given not only to individuals, but to the whole Church”.

The conference in Rome and the exhibition in the Atrium

The day of **Thursday, 27 February** will open with opening addresses by the Rector Fr Mark Lewis S.J. and the organisers of the conference, Michael Seewald and Fr Philipp G. Renczes S.J. The papers will discuss the Council of Nicaea from the historical perspective (Emanuela Prinzivalli, Alfons Fürst, Young Richard Kim) and the authority exercised (Henryk Pietras, Uta Heil, Daniel Galazda). **Friday 28 February** will instead focus on the reception of the Nicene Council in Eastern traditions (Arsenius Mikhail, Herman G.B. Teule, Michael Grünbart) and the implications for metaphysics in the following centuries (Sergio P. Bonanni, Michael Seewald, Anna Marmodoro).

A further original feature of the conference in Rome is the exhibition, curated by Yvonne Dohna Schlobitten and Lucien T. Lechintan, which will be set up in the Atrium of the Pontifical Gregorian University. The exhibition “*...Of All Things Visible and Invisible*” - *Nicaea I. An Eye-Opener to Synodality* will offer a historical yet contemporary approach to engage visitors in a deeper contemplation of this defining event for the Church, then and now. The exhibition will be opened on the afternoon of Thursday, 27 February and will remain open to the public until 13 March.

Accreditation Procedure

Journalists and media operators who wish to participate must apply, no less than 24 hours before the event, through the Holy See Press Office online accreditation System available at press.vatican.va/accreditamenti.

For interviews and technical information on the event, please contact: press@unigre.it