

## Epilogue

With the issue at hand, we have propitiously completed the publication of the Proceedings of the International Conference for the 100th Anniversary of the journal *Θεολογία/Theologia*. Just one year has passed from the prosecution of the Conference, and all three issues of the Proceedings (a process which has already borne fruit since the first issue was published last June) are available to readers and all interested parties, including almost all the papers presented at the Conference. This Herculean feat is due to our collaborators, considering the fact that the publication of the Proceedings, because they require arduous and time-consuming work (collecting contributions, proofreading, publishing), are usually published several years after the Congresses have taken place.

The Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, which organized this Conference, that has been a pioneering event, provided the opportunity to express concerns, not only at the level of orthodox and inter-Christian but also at the socio-political level. In this way, the Holy Synod has made a key contribution to seeking causes, exploring attitudes, behaviors and deontological issues, paving the way and laying the foundations for the way forward and setting the right direction, but above all to raising awareness of the general theme of the Conference among as many people as possible.

We believe that, even though we live in a materialistic age, the conflicting tendency to de-materialize the world and man has been largely demonstrated. The challenges of the technological explosion, AI and digital, disembodied communication have been exposed. Various scientific aspects of the parameters that make up the issue –and beyond the good or bad use of technology– were analyzed and an attempt was made for the formulation of proposals related to a coherent theological and ecclesiastical discourse on the future of the world, of man and of the human person in the emerging digital context of secular history. In short, the question has been raised as to whether the Church and theology can

cope and co-exist with the technical spirit and technology, since the latter de-socializes, dehumanizes, disembodies, and, eventually, turns man away from the Church. Besides, very recently in a Swiss church we saw Christ as an *avatar*, an AI creation, talking and conversing with believers individually, confessing them, and answering their questions and pursuits!

Orthodox theology understands all these developments; it is called upon to interpret them without fear and aggression. It is called upon to discern whether all these means are mere tools or vectors of a different attitude to life. Therefore, Orthodox theology is called upon to position itself responsibly on these “new” issues, always based on the truth of Holy Scripture and the Holy Fathers of the Church, which is none other than the authentic projection of the God’s Incarnate Word, the second person of the Holy Trinity, as the only truth transcending time and place, but expressing itself within the world in time and place, without abolishing either of them.

The now published contributions of the accredited speakers of the Conference constitute a first attempt to laying the foundations and parameters for the formation of a relevant theological discourse.

We are particularly pleased to note that, after this Conference, it seems that a greater awareness has been generated; other interesting International Academic Conferences followed suit, focusing –either exclusively or partially– on issues related to the new digital reality. It would be very interesting and useful for the relevant reflection, fermentation and dialogue to be continued in relation to the issues that were first raised on the occasion of the centenary of the journal *Θεολογία/Theologia*, with most prominent among them the question of whether technology is a matter of correct or false use, and that its applications are not just the means, but constitute the message itself, thus deeply altering the nature of things filtered through them. It would be a most desirable task for the above issue to be further analyzed in depth and for the relevant scientific research to proceed at the ontological level. The absence of ontology is shifting the center of gravity from God to man, to the good or bad use of technology, with all the attendant consequences.

Once again, we should extol the participation of almost all the other Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, whose contribution was not only honorable and loving but especially substantial, with the presence of their Bishops and Representatives at the Conference, thus pushing and extending even further the Conference's international scope, but, above all, it strengthened the relevant reflections on the matter under discussion. We do not know if this is the first time in the history of the Church that twelve total Autocephalous Orthodox Churches attended a conference, of which five were represented by their Heads and seven by their Representatives, with the additional presence of the Presidents of the two Autonomous Orthodox Churches and the representation of the Semi-autonomous Church of Crete, as a Pan-Orthodox Synaxis. The end of the Conference was sealed with the solemn Divine Liturgy in the Metropolitan Church of Athens, presided over by His Holiness, Pope and Patriarch Theodore of Alexandria.

In addition, we should extol the major contribution of the Eminent members of the Standing Holy Synod of the Church of Greece for the periods 2022-2023 and 2023-2024. The Standing Holy Synod adopted the rationale of the Conference through its decisions and assumed direct responsibility for its organization, thus playing a pivotal role. A substantial contribution was made by the respected and distinguished members of the Conference's Organizing Committee, who actively supervised the Conference's organization, decisively contributing to its smooth and uninterrupted conducting.

Furthermore, we would like to express our warmest thanks to the most erudite members of the Scientific Committee, namely the Deans of the Theological Faculties and the Presidents of the Theological Departments of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, as well as the learned scientific speakers of the Conference, whose contributions were incisive and essential. Without the contribution of all of the above, as well as of other persons who supported the Conference in various ways, and of course of the employees and collaborators of the Communication and Educational Service of the Church of Greece as well as the volunteers, the whole

project for honoring the completion of a century since the first issue of the journal *Θεολογία/Theologia* was published could not have been realized.

Finally, it is a great pleasure for us to announce from the pages of the journal that the “Second International Scientific Conference for the 100 years of the journal *Theologia* and its contribution to theological literature and the Orthodox Church’s future and theology in the digital age” it’s going to be held in Thessaloniki, from September 29 to October 1, 2025. The relevant Call for Expressions of Interest will be published in the next issue of the journal *Θεολογία/Theologia*.

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