

Concilium Seminar

NICAEA AFTER 1700 YEARS

*Critical Insights into
a Living Legacy*

European Academy of Religion
Palermo, May 20-21, 2024



Born with mainly liturgical and catechetical purposes, the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed immediately showed a double capacity for adaptation: of a cultural kind, as a bridge towards the Arian populations, and of a linguistic kind. Translations of the Symbol begun as early as in the 4th century (produced in the Armenian, Syriac, and Coptic regions and, later, also in the Arab world) and the expansion of Christianity during the Modern Age has resulted in the production of translations into even more diverse languages, from Slavonic to the idioms spoken in each of the so-called "mission lands".

Yet the historical and theological analysis of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed was marked in the past century by two ideas: one was expressed by Harnack in his book "Grundriss der Dogmengeschichte", which considered the Creed the evidence of a mixture between Christian faith and Greek philosophy and urged the modern (Protestant) confessional historiography to uncover such a process in order to draw into the essence of the Christian message; the other one, becoming e.g. visible during the late Sixties in J. Ratzinger's "Einführung in das Christentum", declares a perpetual and irrevocable right of the Greek philosophy on the Christian faith.

However, in the late 20th century the research on the Creed in the philological, historical, and theological fields challenged both these conceptual schemes. Papers offered in this panel will demonstrate how, despite any thesis tending (positively or negatively) to crystallize the Creed in rigid and perennial linguistic and theological formulas, the Symbol of Nicaea and Constantinople was in fact a dynamic expression of the Christian faith, charged with universal value but at the same time open to processes of enculturation.

In the roundtable that will close the conference, Prof. Fainche Ryan and Steven Battin will offer two short statements (10 minutes) on Ratzinger's position and how the emerging paradigm of "World Christianity" challenged the idea that Aristotelian categories are the only way to transmit and understand the Christian faith. We will then discuss whether in contrast to Ratzinger's theory about the Nicene Creed as the cornerstone of a process of Hellenization of Christianity which is binding for other cultures, it is possible to interpret the Symbol of Nicaea and Constantinople as a dynamic reality bearing universal and ecumenical significance for the contextualization of Christianity.

MONDAY, MAY 20

08.30

SUSAN ABRAHAM (Pacific School of Religion/President of Concilium)
Welcome Address

09.00-9.30

ALBERTO MELLONI (Fscire)
Opening Lecture: *Transmitting the Faith, Preserving Orthodoxy*

Session I - Transmitting Nicaea

 COSTANZA BIANCHI (Fscire)

09.30-10.30

GIACOMO FREDA CIVICO (Sapienza University of Rome)
The Reception of the Nicene Creed Beyond the Limes: A Case Study of the Goths

BISHARA EBEID (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)
An Apology of the Nicene Orthodoxy for Muslims: Elias of Nisibis' Commentary on the Creed

PAOLO ARANHA (Italian Institute for German Studies)
Introducing Trinity and Avoiding Trimurti: The Reception of the Trinitarian Doctrine of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in Early Modern India

Discussion & Coffee Break

11.30-12.30

AUSTIN ORTINERO (KU Leuven)
What does Nicaea have to do with Manila?: Theological Gaps and Contextualization in Filipino Christology


MASSIMILIANO PROIETTI (Fscire)
Beyond the Nicene Creed: Rediscovering the Baptismal Formulas in the Post-Vatican II Liturgy

SAMUELE ADORNO (Fscire)
Nicaea between Paul VI (1968) and Communio (1975)

Discussion & Lunch

TUESDAY, MAY 21

Session II - Reinterpreting Nicaea

 LUCA FERRACCI (Fscire/Concilium)

09.00-10.00

VALENTINA CICILLOT (Ca' Foscari University of Venice)
The Unnecessary Creed: The Rise of Pentecostal, Charismatic and Non-Denominational Christianity

SILVIA MARTÍNEZ CANO (Universidad Complutense de Madrid/Concilium)
The Re-Signified Creed: Aportaciones de la teología feminista a la teología trinitaria

JOHANNES OELDEMANN (Johann Adam Möhler Institute, Paderborn)
The Shared Creed: "Confessing the One Faith": A Study Project of the Faith and Order Commission and its Significance for the Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in 2025

Discussion & Coffee Break

11.00-13.30

Round Table

Transmitting the Faith in the Crisis of the “Classical Mediation of Meaning” (Loneragan)

🎤 STEPHAN VAN ERP (KU Leuven/Concilium)

Opening Statements:

FAINCHE RYAN (Trinity College, Dublin)

About Ratzinger and the Irrevocable Right of Greek Philosophy on the Christian Faith

STEVEN BATTIN (University of Notre Dame/Concilium)

“Enriched in Translation”: Decolonial Theology and Transcultural Interpretations

Discussion:

FREDERICK AQUINO (Perkins School of Theology) • LEO GUARDADO (Fordham University/Concilium) •
LUDOVIC LADO (CEFOD, Ndjamená/Concilium) • WAI-CHING ANGELA WONG (The Chinese University of
Hong Kong/Concilium)