



INTRODUCING EASTERN ORTHODOXY: PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

VOLOS, GREECE
MARCH 8 - 15, 2026





VOLOS ACADEMY FOR THEOLOGICAL STUDIES
in cooperation with
VALPARAISO UNIVERSITY (IN, USA)

**INTRODUCING EASTERN ORTHODOXY:
PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE**

Training Seminar

“Thessalia” Conference Center
Melissatika, Volos, Greece
March 8 – 15, 2026

Timetable

SUNDAY, MARCH 8, 2026

20:00-21:30 Welcoming Reception

MONDAY, MARCH 9, 2026

09:00-11:00 **Dr Nikolaos Asproulis** (Deputy Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Greece):

*Greek Orthodoxy (20th-21st c.):
An Introduction (Trends and Figures)*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Dr Nikolaos Asproulis** (Deputy Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies, Greece):

Theosis/Deification in the Orthodox tradition

13:30-17:00 Lunch Break, free time

17:00 Excursion to Makrinita, Pelion, visit to the local Byzantine Museum

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2026

09:00-11:00 **Dr Nikos Kouremenos** (Research Associate, Volos Academy for Theological Studies):

*Monasticism as Ecclesial Witness:
Continuity and Renewal from Late Antiquity to Today*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Dr Lidiya Lozova** (Post-Doctoral Researcher, Exeter University, UK; "Spirit and Letter" Research and Publishing Association, Kyiv, Ukraine):

Icons in the Church and in History

13:30 Lunch break, free time

17:00-19:00 **Rev. Dr Nicholas Denysenko** (Professor of Religious Studies, Valparaiso University, IN, USA) & **Dr Lisa Driver** (Professor of Religious Studies, Valparaiso University, IN, USA)

Divine Liturgy and Repentance in Patristic Tradition
(round table)

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11, 2026

09:00-11:00 **Rev. Dr Amfilochios Miltos** (Member of the Joint Commission for the Dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches; Research Associate, Volos Academy for Theological Studies):

Introduction to Orthodox Ecclesiology

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Rev. Dr Amfilochios Miltos** (Member of the Joint Commission for the Dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches; Research Associate, Volos Academy for Theological Studies):

*The Dialogue between
the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches*

13:30-17:00 Lunch Break, free time

17:00 Visit to the St John the Forerunner Monastery, Anatoli, Aghia

THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 2026

09:00-11:00 **Dr Vladimir Latinovic** (Lecturer & Research Associate, University of Tübingen, Germany):

Late-Antique Christology and the Council of Nicaea

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Dr Vladimir Latinovic** (Lecturer & Research Associate, University of Tübingen, Germany):

Orthodoxy between Tradition and Modernity

13:30 Lunch Break, free time

FRIDAY, MARCH 13, 2026

09:00-11:00 **Dr Pantelis Kalaitzidis** (Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies):

*Orthodox Political Theology:
An Introduction to figures and trends*

11:00-11:30 Coffee break

11:30-13:30 **Dr Pantelis Kalaitzidis** (Director, Volos Academy for Theological Studies):

*"Russki Mir":
The modern temptation of Judas
and the Moscow Patriarchate*

13:30-18:30 Lunch Break, free time

18:30-20:00 Salutations of Theotokos

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2026

07:00-20:00 All day excursion to the Meteora Monastic Complex

SUNDAY, MARCH 15, 2026

07:30-11:00 Divine Liturgy

11:00 Departure

Participants and Abstracts

Dr Nikolaos Asproulis

Deputy Director, Volos Academy;

Lecturer,

Hellenic Open University, Greece



Dr. Nikolaos Asproulis is Deputy Director of Volos Academy for Theological Studies and lecturer in systematic theology at the Hellenic Open University (Patras, Greece). He has authored many articles on the history and theology of the Orthodox Church, theological methodology and hermeneutics, political theology, eco-theology and theological education. He is executive manager of the Volos Academy's eco-theological project "Green parish initiative and parallel activities". His recent publications include *The Orthodox Church addresses Climate Crisis* (co-edited with Theodota Nantsou, Volos Academy Publications-WWF Greece, 2021); *Priests of Creation: John Zizioulas on Discerning an Ecological Ethos* (co-edited with John Chryssavgis, T&T Clark, 2021); *The Mystery of the Christ and the Mystery of the Church: Georges Florovsky and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Volos Academy Publications-St Sebastian Orthodox Press, 2023), *Theologically Reading Metropolitan of Pergamon John Zizioulas: Ecumenical, Orthodox, and Modern*, (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2025), *History and the Absolute* (Volos Academy, 2025).

Greek Orthodoxy (20th-21st c.): An Introduction (Trends and Figures)

As a primary branch of Eastern Orthodoxy, Greek Orthodoxy has played a pivotal role in the evolution of Christianity since its inception. This lecture examines the prominent theological trends of the 20th century, contextualized within the socio-political landscape of modern Greece. Furthermore, it explores the relationship between the Church of Greece and diverse religious communities, both Christian and non-Christian, while analyzing various forms of evangelism to elucidate the contemporary relevance of Greek Orthodoxy.

Theosis/Deification in the Orthodox tradition

The doctrine of *theosis*, or deification, constitutes a defining characteristic of Eastern Orthodoxy and has increasingly garnered interest across diverse Christian traditions in recent centuries. While historically centered on the human person, the cosmic dimensions of theosis—encompassing both sentient beings and the material universe—remain underdeveloped in modern discourse. This lecture utilizes key elements of the Orthodox tradition, specifically St. Maximus the Confessor's *Logos-logoi* theory and St. Gregory Palamas's essence-energies distinction, alongside insights from contemporary Orthodox thinkers. The objective is to establish the theological framework for a holistic understanding of *theosis*, addressing the exigencies of the current climate crisis and the ethical imperatives regarding non-human life.

Dr Nikos Kouremenos

Research Associate,
Volos Academy



Nikos Kouremenos holds a PhD in Oriental Ecclesiastical Sciences from the Pontifical Institute for Oriental Studies (PIO) in Rome. His research interests focus on the historical course of Christianity in the Mediterranean world and the engaging of the contemporary Orthodox theology with the ecumenical movement as well. In 2020, he co-edited a volume with the title *Nationalism and Ecumenical Orthodoxy* published by CEMES publications. He is currently Research Associate at the Volos Academy of Theological Studies (Volos, Greece).

Monasticism as Ecclesial Witness: Continuity and Renewal from Late Antiquity to Today

This lecture offers a historical and theological introduction to the monastic tradition of the Church, tracing its emergence in late antiquity and exploring its significance today. Beginning with the transition from the age of martyrdom to the “martyrdom of conscience,” it examines why Christians sought the desert and how monasticism developed in complementary forms: eremitic solitude, cenobitic community, and ecclesially integrated patterns shaped by figures such as Antony, Pachomius, and Basil. The lecture then considers monasticism not as an escape from the Church or the world, but as a charismatic form of life within the Church—ordered to prayer, discernment, and the healing of the human person. Particular attention is given to monasticism’s ecclesial contributions: the formation of liturgical rhythm, spiritual pedagogy, theological anthropology, hospitality, and cultural transmission. In its final part, the lecture addresses contemporary questions: new monastic expressions in modern societies, the reception of monastic values in lay life, and the challenges of politicization, consumer spirituality, and media visibility. The guiding thesis is that monasticism functions as the Church’s “memory of the absolute,” witnessing—across changing contexts—that communion with God remains the decisive horizon of Christian life.

Dr Lidiya Lozova

Post-Doctoral Researcher
Exeter University, UK;

“Spirit and Letter”

Research and Publishing Association, Kyiv,
Ukraine



Dr. Lidiya Lozova defended her doctoral thesis on the theological dimension of the Leningrad School of avantgarde art at the Modern Art Research Institute of the National Academy of Art of Ukraine in 2015. Earlier, she completed her Bachelor's and two Master's degrees in cultural studies and intercultural humanities at National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in Kyiv and Jacobs University in Bremen, Germany. Before February 2022, for twelve years she worked at the European Humanities Research Centre of the University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and at “Spirit and Letter” Research and Publishing Association (Kyiv), focusing on Christian theology, ecumenical relations, and civic peacebuilding involving faith communities. Her current research project at the University of Exeter concerns the social ethos of Eastern Christian icons, specifically modern icons and icon-like images that appear during wartime in Ukraine.

Icons in the Church and in History

Icons in the Church and in History will explore the tension between two inseparable dimensions of iconography. On the one hand, the icon is a phenomenon of the church: not an addition, but a visual manifestation of Orthodox Christian tradition itself. Born in Byzantium, it transfigured elements of antique art into a visual language capable of showing an invisible, heavenly, liturgical reality, which crystallised into what we now call the iconographic canon. Because of this, icons are often perceived as timeless and are contrasted with Western art, which is associated with history, change, and the world. On the other hand, icons have always lived in history and developed with it. Even though their basis has remained the Byzantine tradition, they have witnessed to the Incarnation of Christ and the deification of the human person in differing ways across cultures, periods, materials, and styles. They also carry history within themselves — through the subjects they depict, the contexts they respond to, and the cultural theologies they embody. The lecture will introduce students to the theology of the icon, its materials and liturgical use, the ways human history may be present within icons, their social and cultural contexts, the variety of schools and styles, the relationship of the icon with modernity and the West, the debate over whether icons are art or not, and the relation between aesthetics and ethics in iconography..

Rev. Dr Nicholas Denysenko

Professor of Religious Studies,
Valparaiso University, Indiana, USA



Rev. Dr. Nicholas Denysenko is Emil and Elfriede Jochum University Professor and Chair and Professor of Religious Studies at Valparaiso University in Indiana, USA. The author of numerous books and articles on Orthodox liturgy and the Orthodox Church in Ukraine, Denysenko is also a priest of the Orthodox Church in America.

Dr Liza Driver

Professor of Religious Studies,
Valparaiso University, Indiana, USA



Dr Lisa Driver, a Lutheran, began her academic pilgrimage at Ball State University in Indiana where she was drawn to the ancient and medieval world. Shepherded primarily by classics professors and a specialist in the medieval mystic Hildegard of Bingen, her first steps toward theology began in a Byzantine history course. There she encountered the origins of Christianity and monasticism in the orthodox tradition, highlighted by a visit from His Eminence Kallistos Ware. Her PhD in medieval studies at the University of Toronto was pursued under Ware's student Robert Sinkewicz. Since then, she has continued research in and lay instruction about early Greek pastoral care, social teaching, asceticism, prayer, and Christian formation.

Divine Liturgy and Repentance in the Patristic Tradition

Professor Driver will begin with a presentation on the parable of the prodigal son in the early Cappadocian fathers. Professor Denysenko will then present reflections on the dynamic tension between unworthiness and redemption in the Divine Liturgy. The two panelists will then discuss how their respective traditions have embraced these themes and practices in the present, followed by questions from participants.

Rev. Dr Amfilochios Miltos

Member of the Joint Commission for the
Dialogue between the Orthodox and Ro-
man Catholic Churches

Research Associate, Volos Academy



Rev. Amphilochios Miltos (Secretary and parish priest of the Diocese of Demetrias, Volos, Greece), holds a PhD in History (Paris-Sorbonne University) and a PhD in Theology (Catholic Institute of Paris). He is a research associate of Volos Academy for Theological Studies, he is also Member of the Joint International Commission for the Theological Dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church. Among his recent publications: “Collegiality or Episcopal Synodality? Challenging Universalistic Ecclesiology”, *Louvain Studies* 46 (2023), pp. 168-190; “Regards sur le diaconat en perspective orthodoxe”, in Luc Forestier, Gabriel Planchez, Olivier Rota (eds), *Diaconat. Un ministère en chantier*, Paris: Parole et Silence, 2025.

Introduction to Orthodox Ecclesiology

After mentioning the Ecclesiology as a Modern Theological Discipline, we will take as a point of reference the Local Realization of the Church, in order to discuss crucial issues like: The Church and the Churches: Unity and Plurality and “Orthodox Ecclesiology and Nationalism”.

The Dialogue between the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches

A view of the historical Context of the Rapprochement between Orthodox and Catholics will allow us to understand how important the procedure from the “Dialogue of Love” to the “Dialogue of Truth” is. A brief overview of the seven Documents of the Joint International Commission will be completed by a presentation of its current phase, its perspectives and challenges.

Dr Vladimir Latinovic

Lecturer & Research Fellow,
University of Tübingen, Germany



Vladimir Latinovic graduated from the Faculty of Orthodox Theology at the University of Belgrade (Serbia) and obtained his PhD in Catholic Theology from the University of Tübingen (Germany). Currently, he is pursuing a habilitation (second PhD) in Protestant Theology at the University of Heidelberg (Germany) with the project “Orthodoxy Between Tradition and Modernity”. He is employed as a research fellow and lecturer at the Ecumenical Institute in Tübingen, where he teaches on topics related to Dogmatics, Ecumenism, and Orthodox theology. He has published 11 books so far, most recently the two-volume work “Decolonial Horizons”. Furthermore, he serves as a board member of the International Research Network Ecclesiological Investigations (EIIRN) and co-chairs the Orthodox/Eastern-Catholic Dialogue Group (OECD).

Late-Antique Christology and the Council of Nicaea

Though Christological reflection emerges already in the earliest Christian communities, its most formative period extends from the early fourth through the late seventh century. Two major controversies define this era: the disputes surrounding Arian Christology and the eventual resolution of the Monothelite question. Within this broader trajectory, the Council of Nicaea stands as both foundation and enduring touchstone. Its doctrinal determinations proved decisive for all subsequent development and continue to structure Orthodox theological understanding—a significance underscored by the recent commemoration of its 1700th anniversary. According to the traditional Orthodox narrative, the Nicene controversy began with Arius, an Alexandrian presbyter who taught that the Son was created by God and therefore not identical with Him. The Son, in this view, did not exist eternally but was brought into being before time, thus denying co-eternity with the Father. Arian teaching is said to have spread rapidly, provoking sustained resistance from figures such as Athanasius in the East and Ambrose in the West. The struggle against this position is often portrayed as spanning centuries before orthodoxy prevailed again. Over the twentieth century, however, critical scholarship—predominantly outside the Orthodox tradition—has increasingly challenged this account. Despite the scarcity of direct sources from Arius and the overwhelmingly polemical mediation of what survives, the coherence and simplicity of the traditional narrative have grown increasingly questionable. This lecture engages these scholarly reassessments and considers how they might be brought into critical dialogue with the Orthodox Church's doctrinal tradition.

Orthodoxy between Tradition and Modernity

Orthodox Christianity is widely identified by its profound fidelity to tradition, yet this fidelity prompts urgent questions about continuity, authority, and adaptation amid rapid cultural and intellectual change. This lecture examines the relationship between the Orthodox Church and modernity, focusing on its historical resistance to social and cultural transformation and the implications of its commitment to tradition. Orthodox theology treats tradition not merely as inherited experience but as the living repository of revealed truth, the very “life of the Holy Spirit in the Church,” and the foundation of the Church's identity. However, this strong attachment has often produced the belief that the past alone is the legitimate source of theological authority, rendering change suspect or even dangerous. This stance has shaped Orthodox self-understanding and contributed to a broader reluctance to engage creatively with contemporary realities.

Dr Pantelis Kalaitzidis

Director,
Volos Academy



Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis studied Theology in Thessaloniki, and Philosophy in Paris, Sorbonne. He has published extensively in many languages in the areas of the eschatological dimension of Christianity, the dialogue between Orthodoxy and modernity, religious nationalism and fundamentalism, political theology, contemporary Orthodox and Western theology, issues of renewal and reformation in Eastern Orthodoxy, Ecumenical and Inter-religious dialogue, Religious education, and more. He is serving as the editor of the theological series “Doxa & Praxis: Exploring Orthodox Theology” (WCC Publications), while he is a member of the Board of various theological journals (Political Theology, Journal of Orthodox Christian Studies, Review of Ecumenical Studies, The Wheel). He taught Systematic Theology at the Hellenic Open University, and St Sergius Institute of Orthodox Theology in Paris. He has also been a Research Fellow at Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology (Boston), Princeton Theological Seminary and Princeton University (New Jersey), DePaul University (Chicago), Faculty of Theology of KU Leuven (Belgium), and the Faculty of Protestant Theology of Münster University (Germany). He is a member of the Executive Committee of the European Academy of Religion (EuARE), and co-Chair (with Prof. Papanikolaou) of the Political Theology group of IOTA. For the last 25 years Dr. Kalaitzidis has been the Director of the Volos Academy for Theological Studies. His English publications include among others *Orthodoxy and Political Theology* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 2012), *Orthodoxy and Modernity: Introducing a Constructive Encounter* (Brill/Schoningh, 2025), and (as co-editor) *Orthodox Handbook on Ecumenism: Resources for Theological Education* (Oxford: Regnum Books International, 2014), *Individual and Community in the Public Discourse of the Orthodox Church* (Brill, 2025).

Orthodox Political Theology: An Introduction to figures and trends

Orthodox political theology is an emerging field that, despite the rich resources of the Orthodox tradition, has only recently begun to take systematic shape. The Orthodox conviction is that salvation concerns the whole human person and the whole of history: “church” and “the political” are not sealed compartments, but a shared space where witness, diakonia, and the transformation of social reality are tested. Particular emphasis is placed on the idea of the “liturgy after the Liturgy” and on the patristic image of the “two altars,” which shifts attention from ritual formalism to concrete responsibility for the suffering, the poor, and the marginalized. Major trajectories and representative figures include the enduring attraction of Byzantine “symphonia” and its modern reconfigurations; the temptations of religious nationalism and civil religion; and Orthodox voices that offer a critical theological assessment of state-centered models while seeking a constructive engagement with modernity, democracy, human rights, and plural societies. The goal is to clarify the field’s internal tensions and to show why Orthodox political theology remains an open, contested, and necessary project.

“Russki Mir”: The modern temptation of Judas and the Moscow Patriarchate

This session examines the ideology of the Russkii Mir (“Russian World”) as a paradigmatic contemporary theologico-political temptation, tightly intertwined with the Russian invasion of Ukraine. At its core, Russkii Mir presents an allegedly transnational unity of East Slavic peoples and their ecclesial-cultural bonds, claimed to stand above internationally recognized borders and oriented toward Russian hegemonic leadership. It reactivates older motifs such as the “Third Rome” promoted through the close alignment of state narratives and church leadership, especially in the period after 2009. The phrase “the modern temptation of Judas” names precisely this exchange of the Gospel’s ethos—cruciform witness, freedom, repentance, truth—for the security of power, imperial imagination, and the instrumentalization of faith for political ends. The session concludes by considering the theological and ecclesial responses provoked by this crisis: the growing critique of religious nationalism within global Orthodoxy, the articulation of new criteria for Orthodox public responsibility, and the international condemnation of Russkii Mir as an attempt to re-anchor Orthodox witness in a Eucharistic and eschatological, non-imperial trajectory.

Cover: *Christ Pantokrator*,
Church of St Nikolaos, Chorefto, Pelion, Greece, 2025

Design and typesetting: Costis Drygianakis

Printing: Monochromia, Thessaloniki





<https://linktr.ee/VolosAcademy>

Volos Academy for Theological Studies

"Thessalia" Conference Center, Melissatika, Volos, Greece

P.O.Box 1073, Volos 38001

Tel. +302421093553, +302421093573

info@acadimia.org

