

THE HOLY SYNOD OF THE CHURCH OF GREECE
Communication and Education Service of the Church of Greece
Department of Editions – Editorial Board of the Journal *Theologia*
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Open Call for Papers
for the International Theological Conference
of the Journal *Theologia*
(Athens, October 11-15, 2023)

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the founding and continuous publication of the academic journal *Theologia*, the Standing Holy Synod of the Church of Greece is organizing an international theological conference entitled “**Orthodox Theology *in via* in the dematerialized Reality of Late Modernity**” with the participation of distinguished theologians from all over the Orthodox –but not exclusively– world.

Theology is commonly described as the fruit of Church’s constant vigilance and long-term struggle against concrete challenges and deviations. It attempts to interpret, in time and space, the divine Revelation, manifested in many ways and in many forms, as salvific truth for all Creation.

God’s repulsion to the hereafter and degradation of the suprasensible world, both occurred mainly during the modern times (e.g. Enlightenment), left the sensible world dangling, resulting the contemporary fluidity, since it is not self-created. Contemporary man tries to confront the abyss of fluidity by seeking a foundation in “mechanization”.

The challenges of scientific developments, technological progress, virtual “reality”, and biotechnology along with their conditions of fluidity and multiple changes and crises that characterize our postmodern era, are redefining anthropological and cosmological parameters.

The era of the metaverse has already dawned promising the abolition of the physical limitations of space-time. “Augmented” reality, virtual world, technical environments are deconstructing, threatening, and massively replacing the physical and social environment.

Yet humanity seems unaware of the metaphysical background of virtuality and its deeper implications, as well as its side effects. The technology issue is related to the level of usage. The merely rational use of technology cannot remove or even limit these

implications, because the “post-fallen” “neutrality” of technology is an illusion, as has been demonstrated many times throughout history.

Unfortunately, contemporary man has equated technical ability (a gift of the Triune God), as a human feature, with technique as an attitude of life. However, Martin Heidegger, since decades, has warned that: “the essence of technology is not itself something technological”. As Spiros Kyriazopoulos put it, (see *The Origin of the Technical Spirit*, Athens 1965, p. 15), technique “does not appear in our time as property of the technician alone but as *the attitude of man within the world* [...]. Technique is, therefore, not simply the set of mechanical objects, but the way in which modern problems are formed as well as the method of solving them, and from this point of view *the precondition of human essence*. This is the reason why the discourse of technique does not refer to things but to human being; it is not a discourse of technical work, but of *technical spirit*”. Therefore, technological achievements and technical spirit are different: they are related but not identical.

The “technologization” of human life is now universal and takes on soteriological, existential, and ontological dimensions. Belief in techno-logical progress and the facilitation that provides, take on in the here and now characteristics of a messianic nature religious ritual, weakening and undermining any traditional expression of religiosity. In view of the aforementioned, a crucial question arises: To what extent is the essence of our theological tradition altered by the mediation of technique?

The antinomy of contemporary culture lies in the fact that on the one hand it remains attached to matter and on the other hand it projects an dematerialized, virtual model of life. In its very core, contemporary civilization, by detaching itself from matter and becoming dematerialized, devalues matter to such an extent that one wonders whether the Incarnation becomes “meaningless” and the transformation of matter in Christ becomes unattainable.

Faced with these complex issues, Orthodox theology is called upon to critically define the presuppositions of the technical spirit as an attitude of life and to announce an authentic proposal for life on a planet in danger of total destruction. The theological discourse of the Church is called, once again, upon to rescue and highlight the value of matter and body, “*for which*” Christ born, “*died*” (*Rom 5:8*) and rose again, defining the vital truth of life in Christ.

With this *ratio* in prospect, the Standing Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, through the Organizing Committee of the Conference and the Editorial Board of the Journal *Theologia*, wishing to celebrate its centenarian contribution to theological literature, invites those interested in participating with a paper (holders at least of a PhD) to submit to the

Secretary of the Conference, at the e-mail address: synedrio2023@ecclesia.gr, in two separate files (word or pdf): a) a short CV (approx. 200 words) and, b) the title and an abstract (approx. 300 words) of their proposal, no later than **May 8, 2023**. Contributions should not exceed the duration of 15 minutes. Subsequently, the submitted proposals will be forwarded anonymously by the Conference Secretary to the Scientific Committee for evaluation, and then the interested applicants will be informed of the outcome no later than **June 12, 2023**.

The conference will be held in **Athens** between **October 11-15, 2023** in the presence of the members of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, with an opening keynote lecture at the Holy Metropolitan Cathedral of Athens, while the remaining sessions will be hosted at the Megaron-Athens Concert Hall. The official languages of the conference will be Greek and English (with simultaneous translation). For any information, interested applicants may contact the following e-mail address: synedrio2023@ecclesia.gr or tel. 2111824316.

The President of the Organizing Committee
The Archbishop

† Hieronymos of Athens

The Secretary

Alexandros Katsiaras