



# WASHINGTON THEOLOGICAL CONSORTIUM

*Crossroads of Faith, Learning and Dialogue*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Washington Theological Consortium Lecture and Orientale Lumen Conference Highlight 1700-Year Legacy of the Council of Nicaea**

*Events to feature scholarly discussions on the Church Council's meaning for today*

**[Washington, February 5, 2025]** – The Washington Theological Consortium (WTC) and the Orientale Lumen Conference (OLC) will hold separate but related scholarly events next week on the campus of Virginia Theological Seminary (VTS) in Arlington, Va.

The gatherings will commemorate the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea. Held in 325 CE, the worldwide Council of Christian bishops called by the Roman Emperor Constantine clarified the doctrine of the Trinity as a cornerstone of Christian faith. Churches across the world celebrate the Creed that emerged from Nicaea as a foundational statement and symbol of faith. The WTC and OLC events will bring together diverse and ecumenical scholars to assess the historic impact of the Council.

The WTC presentation, “The Council of Nicaea and Our Common Life of Prayer,” will take place on Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 6 p.m. The OLC’s two-day event, taking place February 14-15, 2025, is entitled “Nicaea: Meaning of the First Ecumenical Dialogue for Today.”

The WTC event will feature:

- Rev. Dr. John Behr of the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, and
- Rev. Dr. Katherine Sonderegger of VTS.

These two acclaimed scholars will represent Orthodox and Anglican views, respectively. Dr. Larry Golemon, Executive Director of the WTC, recognized how the two scholars will draw lines of connection across 1700 years of history: “Two internationally known scholars examine the founding Council of Ecumenical Christianity – Nicaea – to see what it has to say about our prayer and worship life today. They will bring the teaching of the Trinity alive!”

The presentation by Drs. Behr and Sonderegger is the centerpiece of the WTC’s annual Figel Address on Ecumenical Dialogue, an event which will also feature an ecumenical prayer service and presentation of the WTC’s Ecumenism Award to both scholars. Details about the event, background about the presenters, and an RSVP form are available at [washtheocon.org/nicaea](http://washtheocon.org/nicaea). The WTC event is free and open to the public.

The OLC two-day gathering will also feature Dr. Behr, and include presentations by:

- Bishop John Michael Botean, Romanian Catholic Eparchy of Canton, Ohio
- Bishop John Bauerschmidt, Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee, Nashville, Tenn.
- Fr. Hyacinthe Destivelle, OP of The Vatican’s Dicastery on Promoting Christian Unity, and
- Dr. John Borelli, Moderator, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

The OLC event has a range of modest costs for attendance and meals. Students from WTC member schools are admitted free, with registration, thanks to a scholarship provided by the Consortium. The event is sponsored by the Orientale Lumen Foundation, the WTC and the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at the Hellenic College of the Holy Cross, Brookline, Mass. The event will include prayer, social and meal gatherings, and Q&A with the plenary speakers.

According to Jack Figel, Chairman of the Orientale Lumen Foundation and Conferences, "This year's conference is our 29th annual meeting in the Washington area, and is the first time we are gathering at Virginia Theological Seminary. Appropriately, our theme is linked to the 1700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea which all Christians – Catholic, Orthodox and Protestants – accepted as the foundation of our faith. Our speakers this year come from three of the major Christian Churches and represent a wide range of expertise: historical, ecumenical and pastoral." WTC's Golemon further recognized the historic nature of the OLC event itself, identifying it as "one of the most ecumenical gatherings of scholars in North America."

Details and registration information for the OLC event are available on their website at <https://olfoundation.net/upcoming-events/orientale-lumen-xxix/>.

Members of the media are encouraged to participate in the events, and interviews with Dr. Golemon, Mr. Figel or the speakers are available upon request.

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### **About the Washington Theological Consortium**

Founded over 50 years ago, the Washington Theological Consortium is a community of theological schools and partners from diverse traditions that pursue ecumenical dialogue, interfaith understanding, and educational collaboration to better equip clergy and laity for the ministry of the Church in a diverse society. For more information, please contact Rev. Larry Golemon, Ph.D., Executive Director of the Washington Theological Consortium, at (202) 832-2675 or [lgolemon@washtheocon.org](mailto:lgolemon@washtheocon.org) or visit [washtheocon.org](http://washtheocon.org).

### **About Orientale Lumen Foundation**

The Orientale Lumen Foundation sponsors annual ecumenical conferences, occasional specialized pilgrimages, and offers audio and video recordings of lectures, liturgies and other events on CD, DVD, streaming video and podcasts. For additional information, please contact Jack Figel at (703) 691-8862 or [jackfigel@ecpubs.com](mailto:jackfigel@ecpubs.com), or visit [olfoundation.net](http://olfoundation.net).