



1700º ANO DO CONCÍLIO DE NICÉIA E 60º ANO DO ENCERRAMENTO DO
CONCÍLIO VATICANO II DOSSIÊ Nº 2

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SIXTEEN CENTURIES OF DIALOGUE: FROM NICAEA TO VATICAN
II, TOWARDS A SYNODAL CHURCH

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In 2025, a year whose abundance of anniversaries lends it an almost epochal significance, we find ourselves commemorating two events which, though separated by sixteen centuries, engage in a surprisingly profound dialogue: the *1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea* and the *60th anniversary of the closure of the Second Vatican Council*. These are not mere calendar dates, but rather foundational milestones that have irreversibly shaped the identity, theology, and mission of the Church. Indeed, these two events constitute true cornerstones in the history of Christianity, inviting us today to a reflection that is not only historical, but eminently theological, ecumenical, and spiritual, concerning our past and the path ahead.

At this profoundly significant temporal crossroads, Dossier Nº 2 of vol. 16, no. 39 of the journal *Paralellus*, which we had the honour of coordinating, proposes itself as an instrument for deciphering the current fruitfulness of these Councils – the first and, for now, the last in the series of ecumenical councils recognised by the Catholic Church.

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Nicaea, in 325, was a foundational moment for the universal Church. In an era of profound doctrinal turmoil, the Council pronounced on the divinity of Christ, giving shape to a Creed that still today unites almost all Christians, partly due to the ecumenical reflection that accompanied its re-reading throughout the 20th century. Its inestimable theological heritage, its crucial decisions, and its complex, and at times controversial, reception over the centuries, make it an inexhaustible source for understanding the very roots of our faith. It is not, therefore, a nostalgic exercise in historical memory, but a living rediscovery of categories and tensions which, although generated in specific contexts, continue to urgently challenge our present.

This edition of *Paralellus* is not an isolated initiative, but the mature fruit of a vast international historical-theological research project entitled “Always Nicaea: Present, Ecumenical Memories and History of the Council of Nicaea (2023-2025)”. Such a project is part of a broader vision and a constant impulse given by Pope Francis (2013-2025) to the proposition and development of important initiatives for dialogue and historical rediscovery. These initiatives have already been experienced with the project “The Legacy of the Reformation: Reading and Re-reading the Reformation, 500 years after its beginning” (2016-2018), with its two Colloquia, one in Florence and the other in Recife; with the project “FLORENCE: A Council for Today. The memory, reception, and present of the Council of Florence (1439-2019)” (2019); and now with “Always Nicaea” (from 2023 to the present). The latter is an ambitious project that has involved over sixty scholars from thirteen countries, who have shared their research to explore the fruitfulness and contemporary relevance of the Nicene Council from multidisciplinary and pluriconfessional perspectives. The ultimate goal was and remains to promote a profound understanding of Nicaea and its reception, through a critical analysis of the sources, the interpretations that have followed over the centuries, and its presence in the documents of various Churches and in the ecumenical dialogue of the last 60 years.

As Bishop Donato Oliverio, Bishop of the Eparchy of Lungro, opportunely recalled at the opening of the Neapolitan conference, held on 2-3 December 2025 and an integral part of this project, the need to “put Christ back at the centre of all our thinking and acting” and to “seek unity and collaborate, together, for the building of unity in the name of Christ, light of the nations” is more pressing than ever in the current global

landscape. The “Always Nicaea” project has explored precisely this urgency, and some of its most significant results are presented in this volume, offering the reader an overview of ongoing research and new interpretive avenues.

The intertwining between the memory of Nicaea and the legacy of Vatican II proves exceedingly fruitful for the Church of our time. Vatican II, in its sixtieth anniversary, continues to be a beacon that invites a profound “conversion of the heart to Christ” and an “irreversible choice to build full and visible unity” among Christians. Both Councils, albeit with different methodologies, languages, and sensibilities, have focused on fundamental questions such as the identity of Christ, the nature of the Church, and the imperative of unity – indispensable elements for an authentic and incisive Christian witness in the fragmented and secularised world of the 21st century.

The diverse voices collected in this issue of *Paralellus* attest to the vast scope and depth of this reflection.

It begins with **Carmine Napolitano**’s reflection, “I Believe in the Holy Spirit. A Pentecostal Interpretation of the Council of Nicaea and its Effects,” which highlights how the Council of Nicaea, while defining the nature of Christ against Arianism, revealed a pneumatological lacuna in the Creed – a theological deficiency that persists, manifesting itself paradoxically in the modern Pentecostal movement with anti-Trinitarian components.

This is followed by the contribution of **Pablo Blanco-Sarto**, “An Anglican Visits Nicaea. John Henry Newman and the Arian Crisis of the Fourth Century,” which explores how Newman’s research on 4th-century Arianism underpinned his spiritual and theological development. The Anglican clergyman understood that this current was motivated by rationalism and ecclesiastical politics, and for him, to understand Jesus Christ, contemplation and true faith rooted in Scripture, prayer, and liturgy were necessary. His work *The Arians of the Fourth Century* offers a profound analysis of Arianism, which provides a better understanding of the Council of Nicaea, also underscoring the role of the laity in the reception of true Christological faith.

Alexander Buzalic, in “Anthropological Changes in the Contemporary World and their Impact on the Evolution of Tomorrow’s Church,” analyses contemporary

anthropological changes and their impact on the future Church. The author notes how Nicaea marks the transition from the forbidden Church to the institutional one and how the model of unity in diversity and synodality remains valid throughout history, highlighting that the co-evolution of humanity, nature, and digital technology demands an ecclesial adaptation to maintain catholicity and ecumenical mission.

Subsequently, **José Joaquim Pereira Melo** and **Marcos Roberto Pirateli**, with “Apostolic and Apologetic. A Reflection on the Movement of Construction of the Doctrinal and Formative Body of the Catholic Church,” analyse the formative proposals for the Christian person in the writings of the Apostolic and Apologetic Fathers (1st-4th centuries), studying how their reflections reveal the development of the Church’s Catholic identity and the doctrinal systematisation that guided later thinkers, reminding us how the defence of faith and fidelity to apostolic tradition have been constant imperatives in the life of the Church.

José Aguiar Nobre, **Fábio Fernandes dos Santos Silva**, and **Rodrigo Costa Silva**, in “Conciliar Celebrations: 1700 Years of Nicaea and 60 of Vatican II, Synodality as the Identity of the Church,” reflect on the importance of the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea (325) and the 60th anniversary of Vatican II (1962-1965), offering an overview of the modalities and sensitivities with which the contemporary Church approaches this important recurrence, demonstrating that conciliar reception requires a continuous process of reflection and refinement for the current synodal Church.

The contribution of **Gerson Francisco de Arruda Júnior**, “The (In)direct Influence of the Pneumatology of the Council of Nicaea in Theodore of Mopsuestia’s ‘Commentary’,” analyses the influence of the pneumatology of the Council of Nicaea on Theodore of Mopsuestia’s thought, examining his arguments on the divine nature of the Holy Spirit in the Commentary on the Nicene Creed and demonstrating alignment with the Nicene Fathers, including the context of the works and final considerations on his pneumatology.

Donizete José Xavier, **André L. Boccato de Almeida**, and **Boris Agostin Nef Ulloa**, with “The *Homoousios* and Trinitarian *Eusebia*. Theological and Existential Re-reading of Nicaea’s Legacy,” revisit the theological relevance of Nicene faith on the occasion of the celebration of the 1700th anniversary of Nicaea (325-2025). Their integrated

approach combines a dogmatic analysis of the *homoousios*, biblical reading, and ethical-moral reflection, highlighting that Trinitarian faith constitutes an existential, ecclesial, and pastoral matrix for the communion and mission of the Church.

Waldecir Gonzaga and **Anderson Moura Amorim**, in “The Genesis of the Definition of Mary *Theotókos* in the Horizon of Nicaea,” analyse the title *Theotókos* in the Christological context and that of the Council of Nicaea (325), demonstrating patristic roots predating Ephesus (431). They show how, although Nicaea did not deal with Mariology, *Theotókos* synthesises the divinity of the Son, highlighting the evolution from a devotional term to a criterion of Christological orthodoxy.

Finally, **Sérgio Sezino Doetz Vasconcelos** and **Lucileide Cavalcante Silva** in “The Council of Nicaea: Synodality as the Path for Dialogue amongst Christian Churches”, analyse how Pope Francis reaffirms synodality as the essence of the Church. The authors establish a connection between this concept and the Council of Nicaea (325), a historical moment when the Christian Churches elaborated the Creed in communion (*koinonia*). The study demonstrates that synodality emerges as a fundamental theological locus for ecumenical dialogue, constructing unity through Christian diversity.

The variety of these perspectives, along with others present in the volume, demonstrates the vast reach of Nicene influence and its capacity to generate new research and questions even today.

In an era marked by profound divisions, not only religious but also socio-cultural and geopolitical, and by continuous challenges ranging from the ecological crisis to social tensions generated by the speed of the digital age, the critical and conscious re-reading of the historical and theological sources of Nicaea and Vatican II is not an exercise in mere academic erudition. It is, rather, an urgent invitation to grasp their “fruitfulness and timeliness” for the Church of the 21st century. These events remind us of the responsibility to promote a profound and contextualised understanding of Christianity, contributing concretely to the reconciliation of memories, which, as we have often emphasised, is the first step towards removing violence and building peace.

The search for a common heritage, rooted in the daily sharing of what already unites Christians, emerges as the principal path to a more effective and significant witness in a world that, although divided and fragmented, needs shared values and concrete gestures of communion more than ever before. We are convinced that this issue of *Paralellus*, through the contributions of numerous scholars, can offer a valuable instrument to nourish this reflection and to guide the Church in its unceasing journey towards unity and towards a witness more faithful to the light of Christ.

In the Free Thematic Section, we publish “For a Humanistic Education under the Didactics of Proximity, Persistence, and Unease,” by **Josineide Oliveira Silveira**, **Umberto Medeiros Araújo**, and **João Batista Nunes Filho**; “The Contributions of Accounting to Integral Ecology,” by **Antônio Dias Pereira Filho**; “The Demons are Women: The Representation of Evil from a Gender Perspective in the Series Lucifer,” by **Thaís de Matos Barbosa** and **Gleza Alves de Melo**; “Educating to Transform. Integral Ecology and Secular Franciscans,” by **Nilton Rodrigues Junior**; “Pilgrimage in Light of Psalms 120-134: The Case of Morro da Conceição,” by **Rita Maria Gomes** and **Edmara Ferreira de Lima**; “Between Supplication and Decree: Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal Perspectives on Prayer in Contemporaneity,” by **Edjaelson Pedro Silva** and **Mary Katherine Araujo de Souza**; “Human Rights Education, a Space for Encounter and a Ground for Emancipation. Contributions to the Promotion and Implementation of Secularism in Education,” by **Evanilson Alves de Sá** and **Carlos André Silva de Moura**.

Happy reading to all.