



PROGRAM

*The Symposium: Crisis in Global Orthodoxy
& the Sankt Ignatios Order Prize Ceremony*
December 9-10 2024, Södertälje

The Symposium:

Crisis in Global Orthodoxy & The Sankt Ignatios Order Prize Ceremony

Date: December 9-10, 2024.

Place: Hagabergs Folkhögskola, Södertälje.

Organizers: Sankt Ignatios College, Sankt Ignatios Foundation, Huffington Ecumenical Institute.

Cost: Free entrance.

DECEMBER 9th

9.00-9.15	Introduction & Welcome
9.15-12.00	Session 1 Focus: Post-Soviet Spaces Moderator: Ms. Yulia Naidych.
09:30 - 10:00	<i>Crisis in the Global Orthodoxy: an Overview.</i> Prof. Dr. Cyril Hovorun. Sankt Ignatios College.
10:00 - 10:30	<i>Georgian Orthodoxy and Performative Security in Times of Crisis.</i> Dr. Tornike Metreveli, Associate Professor, Docent in Sociology of Religion, Department of European Studies, Lund University.
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 - 11:30	? Dr. Grant White
11:30 - 12:00	<i>Ukrainian Political Theology as it Stands in Relation to different Concepts of Representation.</i> Dr. Denis Bakirov, Lecturer, University of Kharkiv.
12:00 - 13:15	Lunch
13.15 - 15.00	Session 2 Focus: Africa Moderator: Prof. Dr. Samuel Rubenson.
13:30 - 14:00	<i>Local Implications of the (Uncanonically Established) Russian Church in Africa</i> Very Rev. Fr. Evangelos Thiani (ThD), Senior Protospesbyter and Senior Lecturer, Makarios III Orthodox Seminary, Department of Practical & Public Theology.
14:00 - 14:30	?

14:30 - 15:00	<i>Imitatio imperii, the Ethiopian World, and the Rise of the Church in Africa.</i> Dr. Michael Hjälml, Dean, Sankt Ignatios College.
15:00 - 15:15	Coffee Break
15:15 - 16:15	Panel Discussion Day 1 Moderator: Prof. Samuel Rubenson.
16.45 - 18:15	Keynote Lecture: <i>Evening and Morning - ramsho and sapro - as Deacons and School-Masters, waking up the faithful to praise the Lord of Nature.</i> Dr. Jacob Jacob Thekkeparampil, Founder-Director of the St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute [SEERI], St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute [SEERI].
19:00 - 21:30	Dinner at Barolo Ristorante Slussgatan 7, 151 71 Södertälje
DECEMBER 10th	
08.30 - 10.15	Session 1 Focus: Ukraine Moderator: His Grace Bishop MILAN of Krizhevtsi.
08:45 - 09:15	<i>The Inter-confessional Dimension of the Intra-Orthodox Conflict in Ukraine.</i> Dr. Denis Brylov, Senior Researcher A. Krymskiy Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Also: Research Fellow of the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin, Germany.
09:15 - 09:45	<i>Local Orthodox Churches and Divisions in the Ukrainian Orthodoxy.</i> Dr Volodomyr Vakin, Rector of the Volyn Orthodox Theological Academy, Volyn Orthodox Theological Academy.
09:45 - 10:15	<i>The way of the samurai: The changes in the Orthodox environment in Ukraine during the war.</i> Dr. Tetiana Kalenychenko, Guest Lecturer at Sankt Ignatios College, Head of Dialogue in Action Peace-building Organization, Bucha, Ukraine.

10:15 - 10:45 Coffee Break

10.45 - 12.00	Session 2 Focus: Ethiopia Moderator: Dr. Miriam Hjälml.
11:00-11.30	<i>Mahibere Kidusan: Youth Movements, The Disestablishment of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, and Political Engagement.</i> Dr. Ralph Lee, Associate faculty in Orthodox Mission, The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.
11:30 - 12:00	<i>Moving Forward through Fresh Theologizing: Ethiopian Leap-frogging, Diaspora, Demography, and Secularity.</i> Mr. Calum Samuelsson, Doctoral student, Intitute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambrige, and Anglia Ruskin University. And, Fellow of Sankt Ignatios College.
12.00 - 13:00	Lunch
13.00 - 14.15	Session 3 Focus: Tigray Moderator: Dr. Grant White.
13:15 - 13:45	<i>Faith in Action: "The Church's Advocacy for Human Rights" The Case of Ethiopia-Tigray.</i> Mr. Tigabu Abreha, Reverend (Human Rights Expert, Theologian), United Nations.
13:45 - 14:15	<i>Crisis on the Tigray Orthodox Tewahedo Church (TOTC) during the genocidal war since Nov. 2020.</i> Mr. Tesfay Hadera, Dean, St. Frumentius Abba Selama Kessate Berhan Theological College.
14:30 - 16:00	Panel Discussion Day 2 Moderator: His Grace Bishop MILAN of Krizhevtsi.
16:00 - 16:30	Coffee Break
16:30 - 18:00	Keynote Lecture: <i>Contemporary theological, social and cultural challenges facing the Orthodox World.</i>

Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis,
Director, The Volos Academy for
Theological Studies.

19:00 - 21:00 Sankt Ignatios Order Prize
Ceremony and Gala Dinner

INFORMATION

Hagabergs Folkhögskola Erik Dahlbergs väg 60
152 70 Södertälje
GPS: 59.189732, 17.646988
<https://hagaberg.fhsk.se/>
08-550 910 00

A Walk from Sankt Ignatios College to Hagaberg:

1. Walk on Nygatan and cross Järnagatan.
2. Continue on Saltsjögatan.
3. Turn left to find a footbrige over the Chanal.
4. Continiue to Slussbron and over the Chanal again.
5. Walk on Grödingevägen untill you see a bigger road.
6. Turn left before the crossing to a walk way.
7. Follow the walk way and you are there.

CONTACT

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SANKT IGNATIOS
FOUNDATION

*The Symposium: Crisis in
Global Orthodoxy
December 9 – 10, 2024*

Abstracts

SECTION: POST-SOVIET SPACE

Moderator: Ms. Yulia Naidych, Sankt Ignatios College.

Biography: Yuliia Naidych is a Master's student in International Relations and Ecumenism at University College Stockholm and the Religious Education Program at Sankt Ignatios College. She completed the postgraduate program Leadership for Educational Transformation at the University of Warwick (UK) and holds a BA in Linguistics and Literature from Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. She previously led the School for Educational Managers at Kyiv-Mohyla Business School and initiated the study circle *Philokalia*, which serves as a platform for Ukrainians from various confessions to engage with contemporary theological and philosophical discourse. Her research interests focus on educational systems centered on cultivating personality (such as Ancient Greek *paideia* and *Bildung*) and education within the context of metamodernism. She aims to integrate religious principles into civil educational systems.

CRISES IN THE GLOBAL ORTHODOXY: AN OVERVIEW

Presenter: Prof. Cyril Hovorun

Position: Professor

Institution: Sankt Ignatios College, University College Stockholm

Abstract: Global Orthodoxy faces a profound crisis similar to the one it experienced a century ago following the collapse of major empires. The current crisis has challenged long standing theological ideas and identities, including synodality, eucharistic ecclesiology, and personalism. Recent events, such as the Holy and Great Council, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Russian war against Ukraine, have further exposed the tensions and contradictions within the Orthodox Church. To address these crises, it is imperative to re-examine fundamental questions about the nature of the Church and its relationship to its members. A distorted ecclesiology, often rooted in fear and a desire for control, has contributed to the current disarray. By fostering a more open and inclusive ecclesiology that respects individual freedom, the Orthodox Church can overcome its challenges and rediscover its true essence.

Biography: Archimandrite Cyril Hovorun is a professor of Ecclesiology, International Relations and Ecumenism at Sankt Ignatios College, University College Stockholm, and a director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles. He was a research fellow at Yale and Columbia Universities and a visiting professor at the University of Münster in Germany. He is an international fellow at Chester Ronning Centre for the Study of Religion and Public Life at the University of Alberta in Canada, an invited professor at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, and a guest professor at the Institute of Sino-Christian Studies in Hong Kong.

GEORGIAN ORTHODOXY AND PERFORMATIVE SECURITY IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Presenter: Dr. Tornike Metreveli

Position: Associate Professor, Docent in Sociology of Religion

Institution: Department of European Studies, Lund University

Abstract: This paper examines the religious responses to the COVID-19 pandemic within Georgia, focusing on how the Georgian Orthodox Church (GOC) adopted practices that balanced public health directives with deeply rooted religious rituals. During the pandemic, Orthodox churches in Georgia engaged in what I call “performative security”—a practice involving the simultaneous adherence to certain health guidelines (such as wearing masks and sanitizing) while maintaining core religious rituals like communion with a shared spoon, which is considered essential for expressing faith and spiritual protection. This approach highlights the dichotomous nature of their response, underscoring the tension between religious belief and public health measures. Influenced by fideistic epistemologies that prioritize spiritual knowledge over empirical evidence, the GOC viewed participation in religious rituals during the pandemic as vital to both spiritual and physical well-being, portraying COVID-19 as a divine test of faith. Rituals such as communion from the shared spoon, prayers for protection and icon veneration were framed as essential for community security. Using qualitative methods, including analysis of official church statements and interviews with clergy and laypeople, I find that this performative approach allowed the Church to superficially comply with health regulations while subtly challenging political authority of the Georgian state.

Biography: Tornike Metreveli is Associate Professor of Sociology of Religion and Associate Senior Lecturer in European Studies at Lund University, specializing in church-state relations, Orthodox Christianity and nationalism studies. Prior to Lund, Tornike was a Research Fellow at the Harvard Ukraine Research Institute, University of St. Gallen, and Harvard’s Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies. Tornike holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from the University of Bern, Switzerland. In 2023, Tornike won the EU Prize for Journalism for a project on the territoriality of the Georgian Orthodox Churches.

U.S.-RUSSIAN RELATIONS: PERSPECTIVES AND QUESTIONS IN THE FACE OF CRISIS IN GLOBAL ORTHODOXY

Presenter: Dr. Grant White

Position: Senior lecturer

Institution: Sankt Ignatios College, University College Stockholm.

Abstract: This presentation will focus on questions about United States-Russian relations in the light of the current crisis of global Orthodoxy. It will suggest that the analysis set forth by the late Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, an Orthodox theologian with experience of Orthodox “diaspora” communities in both western Europe and the United States, in his 1964-1965 series of articles entitled “Problems of Orthodoxy in America,” can provide insights into the global crisis of Orthodoxy, and of U.S.-Russian relations today.

Biography: G.S. (Grant) White is a Senior Lecturer in Eastern Christian Studies at Sankt Ignatios College. He has taught in institutions of theological higher education in the United States, Finland, England, and Sweden. He holds a Ph.D. in Theology (Liturgical Studies) from the University of Notre Dame, and an A.B. in Comparative Religion from Harvard University. He has also studied as a Fulbright scholar at Oxford University, and has served as Principal of the

Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge, England.

*UKRAINIAN POLITICAL THEOLOGY AS IT IS STANDS
IN RELATION TO DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF
REPRESENTATION*

Presenter: Dr. Denis Bakirov

Position: Lecturer

Institution: University of Kharkiv

Abstract: The aim of this article is to explore the potential impact of Ukrainian churches on Ukrainian democracy. The method consists in comparing the concepts of political representation implicit in the groups relevant to the Ukrainian case. To frame the discussion, I examine two extremes of contemporary thinking on representation. Carl Schmitt reduced representation to immediate aesthetic ‘identity’ between the leader and the people. Gilles Deleuze denied the logic of representation altogether, instead foregrounding ‘difference’. The relevance of this research rests on the hypothesis that Ukraine finds itself on the border between these two extremes. Namely, Russia has succumbed to Schmitt’s illusion of identity. The West, on the other hand, has partly succumbed to Deleuze’s radical denial of the possibility of representation, seen in the so-called identity politics based on the encouragement of oppressed groups to double down on their radical difference. (The West also succumbs to Schmitt’s aesthetic concept of representation insofar as it embraces populist politics.) On the side of the West, the result of the primitivization of the concept of representation is the erosion of trust in the classical institutions of representative democracy, i.e., parliaments, political parties, and “legacy media,” which are coterminous with the support of Ukraine and the rules-based world order (as distinct from an order grounded in the balance of power between ‘great powers’). On the side of the East (Russia), I argue that the aforementioned concepts have explanatory power with regard to the recent transformation of Russian ideology—from Vladislav Surkov to Alexander Dugin. To examine the intellectual resources available to Ukrainian churches when it comes to developing political thought, I examine two seminal orthodox treatments of liberal democracy — Konstantin Pobedonostsev’s “The Great Lie of Our Time” and Christos Yannaras’ *The Meaning of Politics*. The novelty of the article is the critique of these positions based on articulation of the “orthodox” concept of representation derived from the theories of G. W. F. Hegel and Rowan Williams. This concept treads between the aforementioned extremes—between assuming that people already know their needs and assuming that we know better than people do what they really need. Between “Tell me what to do” and “Say no more, I already know what you want,” there is a place for saying, “Come now, let us reason together”. Under this concept, representation is seen as constitutive of reality writ large because it sustains the life-giving contradiction of ‘identity’ and ‘difference’. The conclusion of the article is that, with this concept of representation, Ukrainian churches get access to the theoretical and terminological apparatus necessary for the civic education of participants in representative democracy. Moreover, the application of this concept returns churches to thinking about politics from the first principles of the orthodox dogma. However, for this to happen, vast swaths of prevalent Orthodox perspectives on the topic must be discarded.

Biography: Denys Bakirov has worked as a lecturer at the University of Kharkiv for 5 years.

Among his scholarly interests are: representative democracy and orthodox church. Favorite pet: cat.

SECTION: AFRICA

Moderator: Very Rev. Dr. Samuel Rubenson, Sankt Ignatios College.

Biography: Born and brought up in Ethiopia I inherited a strong interest in cultural exchange, foreign languages and religious dialogue with a focus on the Middle East. I studied theology, history and Oriental languages in Lund and Tübingen, did much of my research in Egypt and defended my doctoral thesis in Lund in 1990. I have been Professor of Church history at Lund University from 1999 to 2023 and senior professor of Eastern Christian Studies at Stockholm School of Theology and Sankt Ignatios college from 2016 to 2024. I have also taught in Jerusalem, Beirut, Budapest, Kiel, Göttingen and Bergen. My research has mainly dealt with emerging Christianity, the Oriental Churches and Early Christian literature in Greek and Oriental translations. My main publications deal with the emergence of monasticism and with education, including numerous articles and encyclopedia entries as well as the volumes *The Letters of St. Antony*, *Early Monasticism and Classical Paideia and Monastic Education in Late Antiquity*. As preses of Collegium Patristicum Lundense I have been responsible for the lively patristic milieu at Lund University and the strong Nordic cooperation in the field including the Nordic Master program “The Religious Roots of Europe”. Other engagements include tasks within the theological, ecumenical and international work of the Church of Sweden, within the Academy of St. John and its journal *Pilgrim* and within Lund Mission Society. I am currently member of the board of Sankt Ignatios Foundation.

LOCAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE (UNCANONICALLY ESTABLISHED) RUSSIAN CHURCH IN AFRICA

Presenter: Very Rev Fr Evangelos Thiani (ThD)

Position: Senior Protopresbyter and Senior Lecturer

Institution: Makarios III Orthodox Seminary, Department of Practical & Public Theology

Abstract: The Moscow Patriarchate (MP) invaded the territory of the Patriarchate of Alexandria (PA) in December 2021 due to the See of Saint Mark’s stand on the Ukrainian autocephaly. Since then, MP has considered PA a schismatic church and, according to them, took over Africa as a rescue mission of the Orthodox flock in Africa. Subsequently, they now have over 200 African priests under their omophorion. Are unauthorized clergy transfers the only effect the Orthodox Church in Africa has had since this MP invasion? What impact has this invasion brought to the Orthodox Church in Africa? This study will use existing literature, court proceedings, surveys, and questionnaires to unravel the consequential impact of this invasion and the cost the PA is paying for recognizing the autocephaly of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU).

Biography: Fr Evangelos is a Senior Protopresbyter of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa serving in the Metropolis of Nairobi, and a Senior Lecturer and Researcher of Practical and Public Theology at Makarios III Orthodox Patriarchal Seminary in Nairobi, Kenya, and Bishop Gathuna Theological Institute in Kiambu Kenya. His studies, research, and teachings have revolved around Liturgical Studies, Orthodox Spirituality, Missional Studies, Philanthropic-Diakonia Studies, and Development Studies.

IS IT IN VULNERABILITY THE UNITY OF THE TÄWAḤDO CHURCH, NOW?

Presenter: Dr. Habte Michael Kidane

Position: Senior lecturer

Institution: Sankt Ignatios College

Abstract: The critical situation of the Täwaḥdo Church, in Ethiopia and in Eritrea, is indeed worrying. The Church, which is the greatest and ancient Church in Africa, is experiencing a difficult experience. The conflict within the Church, as many exteriors observe, seems there is exterior manipulation based on ethical, linguistic issues to threaten the strong plurisecular Unity: the Täwaḥdo. If the Church wants to maintain its unifying unity as it is testified by the identifying term Täwaḥdo, she must be able to identify and remove the exterior hands which look seemingly interested in keeping her protected, but its purpose is all different.

Biography: Dr. Habte Michael Kidane is Senior lecturer at the Sankt Ignatios College. He earned his doctorate in Liturgical studies from the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome, where he studied with Robert Taft JS in a dissertation on the Liturgy of the Hours in the Ge'ez Liturgical Tradition. Habte Michael Kidane has published books, articles and contributed also to the realization of the Encyclopaedia Aethiopica, Hamburg (Germany), and several dictionaries. He is co-founder and member of the Society of Oriental Liturgy (SOL), an academic society dedicated to the scholarly study in Eastern Christian Liturgy.

IMITATIO IMPERII, THE ETHIOPIAN WORLD, AND THE RISE OF THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

Presenter: Dr. Michael Hjälms

Position: Dean

Institution: Sankt Ignatios College, University College Stockholm.

Abstract: Already in the Post-Justinian church we can find an African resistance to imperial imposition. Instead we find an Ethiopian autonomously that sparked a cooperation between Justinian and the Ethiopian negus Kaleb in their joint effort in invading Himyar in 525. Before that we find already in 450 CE an imitatio imperii (imperial imitation), where the Ethiopian ruler MHDYS imitated the Constantine in hoc signo vinces, by claiming that "temawe [he will conquer] by the masqal [cross]". Today there is a movement in Ethiopia of re-iterating the idea of the cross as the path to be victorious, but, through the Abiy government, embracing all Christian denominations and in some cases embracing all religions. Behind this political movement is the reconstruction of the unique Ethiopian World, with the intention to transcend the regional diversity, and through the religious plurality strengthen the one Ethiopia. The various Christian denominations have eagerly joined forces with the government, and the EOTC has been instrumental in forging a more unified Ethiopian World, where the primary identity is supposed to be precisely Ethiopian. The Ethiopian Orthodox diaspora has been particularly instrumental in this effort, especially after the Exile Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church was unified with the domestic patriarchate. Another important factor is also the efforts of the

Mahebere Kidusan, which is an organisation that has been most important in the unification project. The consequences of this ecclesiastical and political movement toward unity has been civil war, discrimination in the diaspora, and ecclesiastical division. The lecture makes a critical analysis, and argues that there are other alternatives, and that unity through identity will risk causing continued conflicts in Ethiopia, and will hamper the core of Christian belief in the long run. Though, it is a long journey for Ethiopia to travel from an imitatio imperii to a unity built on mutual understanding and co-existence, and the EOTC will be in the midst of this.

Biography: Michael Hjälms studied theology at the University of Uppsala, beginning with Patristic Studies, and later changed to Ecclesiology. He was awarded the grade of “Doctor of Theology” with a thesis on a descriptive comparative analysis between the theory of sublation in the works of Jürgen Habermas and negated sublation in the works of Alexander Schmemmann in regard to his theory of Liturgical Theology. In 2012 he was appointed Dean of Sankt Ignatios foundation (later Sankt Ignatios College), and later in 2018, he was appointed Dean of Faculty at Stockholm School of Theology for the Department of Eastern Christian Studies. Hjälms is co-chair for the Ecclesiology Group in the International Orthodox Theological Association (IOTA). His research is focused on understanding the relation between history and tradition, as well as understanding the relation between theory and practice. As Dean he has focused on overcoming the historical misrepresentation between the so-called Chalcedonian and non-Chalcedonian Churches.

First Keynote Lecture

EVENING AND MORNING - RAMSHO AND SAPRO - AS DEACONS AND SCHOOL-MASTERS, WAKING UP THE FAITHFUL TO PRAISE THE LORD OF NATURE

Presenter: Dr. Jacob Thekkeparampil

Position: Founder-Director of the St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute [SEERI]

Institution: St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute [SEERI].

Biography: Dr. Jacob Thekkeparampil receives the 2023 Order of Sankt Ignatios for his outstanding work in promoting studies in the Syriac tradition from an Asian perspective. Instead of viewing the Asian tradition as subordinate to Western traditions, Dr. Thekkeparampil has restored the unique historical voice of the indigenous Indian Christian tradition. Through the work of Dr. Thekkeparampil and the scholars connected to St. Ephrem Ecumenical Research Institute (SEERI), Christianity in India is recognized as having originated prior to both Western colonization and Western confessionalization. The ecumenical perspective of Dr. Thekkeparampil’s work has been very important in preserving original indigenous perspectives beyond confessionalization and colonization, thereby promoting the Gospel proclaimed in the ancient Syriac sources, which transcend the variety of confessions, establishing the antiquity of Indian Christianity. Dr. Thekkeparampil’s work has established the connection between sources and people, people and nations, and nations to the one Church.

SECTION: UKRAINE

Moderator: His Grace MILAN (Stipic)

Biography: Bishop Milan Stipić is a Croatian Greek Catholic hierarch, who serves as Bishop of Greek Catholic Eparchy of Križevci since 8 September 2020. Previously he was an Apostolic Administrator of Greek Catholic Eparchy of Križevci. Bishop Stipić was born in Bosanski Novi, Republika Srpska, Bosnia and Herzegovina. He attended elementary school in Lipik, but due to the war, continued in Zagreb and Čazma. After elementary school in 1993, he enrolled in the Archdiocesan Classical High School in Zagreb and began his priestly formation at the Inter-Diocesan Minor Seminary. In 1997 he entered the Greek Catholic Seminary in Zagreb and studied at the Catholic Theological Faculty in University of Zagreb. He was ordained deacon on 8 November 2002 and priest on 18 October 2003, for the Greek Catholic Eparchy of Križevci. In the same year, he started serving pastoral work in the local Greek Catholic parishes.

THE INTER-CONFESSIONAL DIMENSION OF THE INTRA-ORTHODOX CONFLICT IN UKRAINE

Presenter: Dr. Denys Brylov

Position: Senior Researcher

Institution: A. Krymskiy Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine. Also: Research Fellow of the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin, Germany

Abstract: Ukraine is a multi-confessional state in which both various Christian denominations and other faiths (primarily Islam and Judaism) are widely represented. At the same time, the most numerous denomination is Orthodoxy, represented by competing jurisdictions - the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC-MP), canonically affiliated with the Russian Orthodox Church, and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyiv Patriarchate (UOC-KP), which transformed into the Orthodox Church of Ukraine (OCU) after the 2019 Unification Council and receipt of the Tomos of autocephaly from the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The relationship between these jurisdictions largely determines the religious landscape of Ukraine. After the OCU gained autocephalous status, the conflict between these two Orthodox jurisdictions intensified, and after the Russian invasion in 2022, in which the ROC was actively involved, it became particularly radical. Moreover, because of the ROC's justification of the Russian invasion, the Ukrainian power became involved in the inter-Orthodox conflict and tightened its policy towards the UOC. The position of the state, as well as the actively formed public discourse "the UOC as a fifth column", led to the fact that the majority of Ukrainian confessions were drawn into the conflict. To a large extent, this was caused by the position of the state, which expects Ukrainian confessions to support its policy towards the UOC-MP, as well as by public opinion. The main inter-confessional institution speaking on behalf of the majority of Ukrainian religious organizations is the All-Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (AUCCRO), which includes both the UOC-MP and the OCU. In my paper, based on official documents of the Council, I will show how the position of the AUCCRO towards the UOC changed after the beginning of the Russian invasion. In addition, I will demonstrate how the adoption of the Law of Ukraine "On the Protection of the Constitutional Order in the Sphere of Activities of Religious Organizations," often also referred to as the "Law on the Prohibition of the UOC-MP," led to negative reactions from Pope Francis, the World Council of Churches, a number of Orthodox churches, the Anglican Church, and others. I will also show how the intervention of the state in the inter-Orthodox conflict on the side of one of the participants in the conflict has increased fears in the religious community of Ukraine about the possibility of changing the model of state-confessional relations from "denominationalism" to the model of "state church", the role of which is claimed by the

OCU.

Biography: Denys Brylov is psychologist and anthropologist of religion, doctor of philosophical sciences (Dr. habil.) in Religious Studies and Theology. He is senior researcher of the A. Krymskiy Institute of Oriental Studies of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Research Fellow of the Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient (Berlin) and co-founder of the “Dialogue in Action” think-tank. His main academic interests are religious factors in conflicts, religion and nationalism, and political activism in Islam. Brylov has authored some 80 publications in English, French, German, Polish, Danish, Ukrainian and Russian.

LOCAL ORTHODOX CHURCHES AND DIVISIONS IN THE UKRAINIAN ORTHODOXY

Presenter: Dr. Volodymyr Vakin

Position: Rector of the Volyn Orthodox Theological Academy

Institution: Volyn Orthodox Theological Academy

Abstract: Today, in Ukraine, there is a military confrontation not only between two neighboring states, Russia and Ukraine, but also a clash of worldview-based civilizational values. The ecclesiological aspect of the division in Ukrainian Orthodoxy has a clearly expressed global dimension. Considering the involvement of the Russian Orthodox Church in the conflict, which openly supports military aggression against Ukraine, we are witnessing a confrontation between at least two Local Churches. Currently, there is no effective mechanism for resolving conflicts between Local Orthodox Churches. This points to a crisis in the higher authority governing the coexistence of Local Churches within the Catholic Universal Church. The last Ecumenical Council took place more than a thousand years ago, and the Pan-Orthodox Council in Crete did not receive the necessary status. In this context, a whole spectrum of unresolved issues arises — from the statute of the Pan-Orthodox Council as a supreme governing institution of the Orthodox Church, whose decisions must be accepted by all Local Churches, to the very method of voting. The failure to resolve these issues is already showing signs of mutations in the ecclesiological forms of Catholicity within the Universal Church, leading to the creation of a model of coexistence among Local Churches based on the principle of confederations. In such a scenario, the Eucharistic communication of the Local Churches expresses not so much the ontological unity of the Catholic Church as the Body of Christ, but the presence of proper church-diplomatic relations.

Biography: Prot. Volodymyr Vakin was born on August 19, 1983 in Lutsk, Volyn region, Ukraine. In 2005, he graduated from Kiev Theological Seminary and received master’s degree of Theology. In 2009, he graduated from the Kiev Theological Academy and defended his PhD thesis in the field of Theology on a theme: “The practice and tradition of the ecclesiastical court in the life of Metropolis of Kyiv”. Volodymyr Vakin has been working at the Volyn Orthodox Theological Academy since 2010 as a Senior Teacher, Associate Professor, Vice-Rector. In 2014, he graduated from the History Faculty of Lesya Ukrainka East European National University. According to the decision of the Holy Synod of Ukrainian Orthodox Church Kyiv Patriarchate on 20 October 2013 was appointed as a Rector of the Volyn Orthodox Theological Academy. Since 2018, Professor of the Department of Practical and Humanitarian Disciplines of the Volyn Orthodox Theological Academy.

THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI: THE CHANGES IN THE ORTHODOX ENVIRONMENT IN UKRAINE DURING THE WAR

Presenter: Dr. Tetiana Kalenychenko

Position: Deputy Senior Lecturer, Head

Institution: Sankt Ignatios College, Dialogue and Action Peacebuilding Organization, Bucha, Ukraine

Abstract: Losses, death and destruction as a result of the war, value dilemmas of identity, opposition to propaganda and the search for one's own points of support, challenges of inter-church diplomacy, state-confessional relations and, most importantly, one's own theology during the war - these are the crises that the Ukrainian Orthodox community had to face. If the previous crisis of 2014 and the beginning of hostilities, as well as seclusion during the covid (2020-2021) only actualized some questions for the churches, the full-scale war after 2022 forced to answer them. The current inter-Orthodox conflict in Ukraine affects a much wider church environment and generally raises the question of what the Church of the future should be and whether it will be ready to respond to people's needs. Maybe on the contrary, society will have to adapt and find ways to dialogue, even when it seems not very realistic. These challenges, through the prism of practical peacebuilding work, will be considered during the presentation, as well as the discussion of practical cases.

Biography: Dr. Tetiana Kalenchenko, Ph. D. in Sociology of Religion, her thesis work about "Religious component in Socio-Political Conflict in Ukraine 2013-2017 years". Together with other colleagues, created an organization called "Dialogue in Action" that aims to develop culture of dialogue by uniting secular and religious leaders in the fieldwork. Tetiana has more than 10 years of experience in Peacebuilding, Sociology of Religion, Conflict studies, Conflict management, Restorative practices and dialogues in cooperation with international (USIP, OSCE, UNDP, USAID, MCC, DRC and others) and many national organizations. Educated as peacebuilder at Mirovna Academia (Sarajevo, Bosnia and Hercegovina). She is combining work in the field of analysis and academic research as well as field work as dialogue facilitator and trainer in the frames of adult education.

SECTION: TIGRAY

Moderator: Docent Thomas Arentzen, Sankt Ignatios College

Biography: Thomas Arentzen studied theology at the University of Oslo and went on to do a PhD in early Christianity at Lund University. From 2015 to 2019 he conducted his own postdoctoral research project Bodies in Motion: Religion and Corporeality in Late Antiquity at the University of Oslo (funded by the Research Council of Norway) and spent spring term 2016 as Visiting Scholar at Brown University. In 2018, he became Reader (docent) in Church History at Lund University. For the academic year 2018–19, he was awarded a fellowship in Byzantine Studies at Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection. Arentzen's research interests include Byzantine Christianity and ecology. He conducted the research project Beyond the Garden: An Ecocritical Approach to Early Byzantine Christianity (2019–2023 funded by the Swedish Research Council), which focused on trees in late ancient and Byzantine sources. In 2021 he wrote the monograph Byzantine Tree Life with two American colleagues. Arentzen also specializes in early

Christian poetry and devotional literature and has explored popular piety and literary expressions of Christian faith. His monograph *The Virgin in Song* studies representations of the Virgin Mary in late ancient poetry. Arentzen serves as preses of the scholarly society Collegium Patristicum Lundense and article editor and editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed journal *Patristica Nordica Annuarialia*. He is member of the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul's Research Collegium and of l'Association Internationale d'Études Patristiques (AIEP/IAPS)'s council

FAITH IN ACTION: "THE CHURCH'S ADVOCACY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS" THE CASE OF ETHIOPIA-TIGRAY

Presenter: Rev. Tigabu Abreha

Position: Human Rights Expert, Theologian

Institution: United Nations

Abstract: The Ethiopia-Tigray crisis has brought to the forefront the urgent need for human rights advocacy in the face of global crises. Laities, priests, and children were victims of human rights violations. The church, as a moral authority, has a critical role to play in promoting and protecting human rights. This paper examines the church's response to the global crisis, exploring its advocacy efforts to uphold human dignity and promote accountability. Through a mixed-methods approach, it examines the church's mobilization of resources, its engagement with local communities, and its collaboration with international organizations to address human rights violations. The exploration reveals the church's potential to amplify marginalized voices, provide humanitarian aid, and facilitate conflict resolution. The findings highlight the importance of faith-based organizations in human rights advocacy, underscoring the need for increased collaboration between religious institutions, civil society, and governments to address global crises. Ultimately, this project demonstrates the church's capacity to be a powerful catalyst for human rights promotion and protection, inspiring a more just and peaceful world.

Biography: Tigabu Haregewoin Abreha is reverend in Ethiopia, serving in Tigray Orthodox church as a preacher and priest. He has been serving as a higher education Sunday School evangelizer for the past 15 years. He obtained his LLB degree in law from Mekelle University School of law (2008) in Ethiopia, Tigray Region. He has a master's degree in human Rights Law from Addis Ababa University College of Law and Governance (2014), Ethiopia. He is a graduate of Zway St. Gebriel Monastery Clergies' Training Centre (2006), Ethiopia. He also attended and received his Bachelor of Theology (B.Th.) from Holy Trinity University (2012). He served as public prosecutor and attorney in the Ministry of Justice, Addis Ababa. He also served as legal adviser in the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church (EOTC) in Addis Ababa. He worked for Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) as Human Rights Advocacy Officer. Currently, he is working for the United Nations as Human Rights Officer. He has special expertise in Human Rights and humanitarian crimes investigation in conflict affected areas. He is also very much interested in theology and human rights advocacy.

CRISIS ON THE TIGRAY ORTHODOX TEWAHEDO CHURCH (TOTC) DURING THE GENOCIDAL WAR SINCE NOV. 2020.

Presenter: Very Rev. Tesfay Hadera

Position: Dean

Institution: St. Frumentius Abba Selama Kessate Berhan Theological College

Abstract: In history, Ethiopia facades many wars within her inside and many more outside invaders and the Ethiopian Orthodox ‘Tewahido’ Church is among the religious institutions which have become a victim from the wars. Similarly, since Nov. 4/2020 a war has been waged in the Northern part of the Country in which 96.7% of the population is the follower of the Orthodox ‘Tewahido’ Church of Ethiopia. Tigray is depicted as a center for the Axumite civilization. It is also said that, Tigray is the doorway for the world’s greatest three religions namely; Judaism, Christianity and Islamism. The war in Tigray right now tots up two years with its severing distraction and human crisis. As the press statement of the United States indicates, three predominant actors, namely the Ethiopian Federal forces, the Eritrean Government, and the Amahra Regional forces. The aim of this paper is to show crisis the Tigray Orthodox Tewahedo Church has faced during the genocidal war since Nov. 2020. The war happened in Tigray is said to have caused such many damages as massacre and death of civilians, raping, gang raping, looting, vandalizing, disgracing the Church, destruction of Church buildings, displacing, forcefully migrating people and ethnic cleansing. The Tigray Orthodox Tewahedo Church is the reason why Ethiopia is considered one of the oldest Christian countries in the world. It is the cradle of Christianity with lots of manuscripts and and world heritages. It is this land that has been facing lots of crisis during the genocidal war.

Biography: Tesfay Hadera Gebremedhin (Title: Megabie Berhanat) is a permanent employee of St. Frumentius Abba Selama Kessate Berhan Theological college since 2006. He has been serving the college as dean of students (2006-2008), Theology department head (2008-2010), Academic Vice Dean (2010-2012), Administrative and Development Vice Dean (2012-2014). He has been also serving the Tigray Orthodox Tewahedo Church as a priest, instructor, trainer and preacher. He obtained his B.Th in 2006 from St. Frumentius Abba Selama Kessate Berhan Theological College, his M.A in Advanced Leadeshiop and Community Development from same college in 2012. He also obtained his LL.B from Mekelle University. He is active participant in community service like giving counselling for fistula survivals, Trauma Healing Trainer, a member of the Tigray draught emergency response, founder and executive director of Tigray Public Diplomacy. Currently, since 2015 he is deal of St. Frumentius Abba Sellama Kessate Berhan Theological College.”

SECTION: ETHIOPIA

Moderator: Dr. Miriam Hjäl m, Sankt Ignatios College, Univerity Collge Stockholm.

Biography: Miriam L. Hjäl m has a PhD in Semitic Languages from Uppsala University (2015). She is currently a lecturer in Eastern Christian Studies at Sankt Ignatios College, University College Stockholm, where she mainly teaches courses in biblical studies, including its later reception, and history of religion. She is also a researcher in the research program Retracing Connections, which centres on byzantine story-worlds, at the Department of Linguistics and Philology at Uppsala University funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (M19-0430:1) and was previously the PI of the research project A Christian Bible in a Muslim Context funded by the Swedish Research Council (2017–01630). Her primary research interests include the reception of the Bible and patristic exegesis among Christian Arabic-speakers in Mediaeval times, the re-writing of biblical material in hagiographies among the same communities, material philology, **inter-religious encounters** among Jews, Christians, and Muslims as well as reception theory in a broader sense. Her publications include the forthcoming work *A Catalogue of Christian Arabic Bible Translations at the*

British Library (Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia 23; Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis), *Christian Arabic Versions of Daniel* (Brill, 2016) and, co-edited with Marzena Zawadowska, *Strangers in the Land: Travelling Texts, Imagined Others, and Captured Souls* (Brill, 2024).

MAHIBERE KIDUSAN: YOUTH MOVEMENTS, THE DISESTABLISHMENT OF THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH, AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Presenter: Dr. Ralph Lee

Position: Associate faculty in Orthodox Mission

Institution: The Oxford Centre for Mission Studies.

Abstract: The Ethiopian Orthodox Täwähädo Church (EOTC) is now the largest Orthodox Christian Church in the world. It has many ‘unique’ aspects, that perhaps mostly arise from its development outside the Roman Empire, and subsequently within what is now known as the Oriental group of churches. The EOTC has been a dominant force in the nation from its inception in the 4th century CE through to the present day, although that influence has been challenged since the Communist revolution in 1974, when the EOTC was effectively disestablished. This paper considers the developments in the EOTC after the revolution, with a particular focus on the development of the Sunday School movement, known as the Maḥbärä Qəddusan, or ‘Association of Saints’. This organisation, which now dominates Orthodox student life on campuses, but also engages many young professionals in offering services to rural communities, emerged in 1991 in the vicissitudes of the collapsing Derg regime, and became a strong force in religious and public life under the new political regime from 1991. This paper will outline significant events that led to the formation of the Maḥbärä Qəddusan and that shaped its outlook and influence.

Biography: Ralph Lee, originally a Chemical Engineer, lived and worked in Ethiopia for 16 years, where he developed a strong interest in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. He retrained in theology and the study of religion at SOAS University of London, and then taught at the Holy Trinity Theological College of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Addis Ababa. Returning to the UK in 2014, he has developed research interests in Ethiopian Christian thought and commentary, especially on Ethiopian Enoch. Working now for the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies, he leads a research project on Ethiopian extempore poetry, ‘qene’, in partnership with Sankt Ignatios College.

MOVING FORWARD THROUGH FRESH THEOLOGIZING: ETHIOPIAN LEAPFROGGING, DIASPORA, DEMOGRAPHY, AND SECULARITY

Presenter: Calum Samuelsson

Position: Doctoral Student, Research Fellow

Institution: Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies Cambridge, Sankt Ignatios College

Abstract: Western theologians have grappled with the forces of globalization, individualism, and

secularism for many decades, with Niebuhr's *Christ and Culture* (1951), Vatican II (1962–1965), and Taylor's *A Secular Age* (2007) marking notable benchmarks. Setting aside the various responses to these forces from Orthodox thinkers broadly speaking, this paper focuses on the current, unprecedented situation of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tāwahədo Church (EOTC). Ethiopia's population and economy are some of the fastest growing in the entire world, and over 50% of Ethiopians now use smartphones on a daily basis—facilitating awareness not just of the Western World in general but also the affairs of the growing Ethiopian diaspora (3+ million). While economists discuss the 'leapfrogging' of the Ethiopian economy, it is simultaneously apparent that Ethiopian society is wrestling on all sides with rapid changes due to 'skipping' typical stages of progression. Today, the EOTC arguably faces cultural change of a scale and speed never encountered by another church in history. Fully conscious of such impending challenges, Yirga Woldeyes has pinpointed an insidious process of Native Colonialism (2017) specifically in the sphere of education, but similar dynamics can be extrapolated to nearly all sectors of contemporary Ethiopia. Thus, the ancient EOTC that was largely insulated from outside influence for 1,500 years increasingly finds itself pressured to engage novel and 'foreign' ideologies. Although the EOTC is among the most vital churches in the world, it has only recently begun types of explicit self-theologizing that have taken multiple centuries in most other church traditions. One small example of accessible self-theologizing for lay people is a prayer book known as the Wəddase 'Amlak, which features abridged excerpts from significant Church Fathers translated into Amharic. This paper draws upon the recent work of Maimire Mennasemay (*Qiné Hermeneutics*, 2021) to argue that the EOTC must harness its own unique Tāwahədo Tradition for fresh theologizing if it wishes to avoid the ossifying effects of conservative impulses and the diluting effects of liberal impulses. Several specific areas of theological focus are identified and recommended for the EOTC moving forward. Most importantly, it will be argued that through its own Tāwahədo thinking, the EOTC has the potential to confront complex modern problems in ways that can uniquely benefit future Christians far beyond its own tradition.

Biography: Samuelson holds an MPhil in Medieval History from the University of Cambridge and will soon defend his PhD in Orthodox Studies focused on Ethiopian monastic texts (at the Institute for Orthodox Christian Studies, Cambridge). He has taught university courses in Theology and Biblical Studies in Chicago and Nairobi and is also currently a Research Associate at the Oxford Centre for Mission Studies (OCMS) in the Ethiopian Orthodox Project funded by the Templeton Trust (through Fuller Theological Seminary), based at Sankt Ignatios College.

SPEAKING FOR THE VICTIMS: CONTEMPORARY ECCLESIOLOGY THE ETHIOPIAN ORTHODOX TEWAHIDO CHURCH NEEDS DURING CONFLICTS AND WAR

Presenter: Dr. Abate Gobena

Position: Deputy Senior Lecturer

Institution: Sankt Ignatios College

Abstract: Being Christian institution, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahido Church, whose tenets are based on Scriptural witnesses and patristic inheritances, are expected to be faith of self-sacrifice and loving one's neighbour. They also should rise above national, ethnic or cultural differences. For very complex reasons related to institutional and historical factors the Church mostly finds

itself entangled with socio-cultural ties and exposed for political perversion. There are two-fold problems contributed towards the difficulties of Ethiopian Church; i.e. misunderstanding and distortion. The first is lack of awareness of the current socio-political facts and unable to devise strategy to lead the Church to adapt the situation and independently operate in the current ethno-regional politics. The second is, lack of will or understanding from the politicians and state officials on the fact that the Church lacks episcopal experience and it is going through wave of surprise changes unprepared. In order the Church to supersede nationalist and ethnicity-oriented sentiments and become a force of reconciliation and unification, the hierarch and the laity need to have common understanding of the current socio-political situation. The fact that ethnic-oriented political and social system is the current prevailing administrative tool in the country from the past three decades the mission of the Church should be mindful of this situation and work for the scriptural and traditional tenets of the Orthodox faith in light of the current situation. In all the current convergences between political and religious discourses, the hierarch should understand their apostolic mission to secure a supra-ethnic and apolitical position and win the confidence of people especially in conflict-riven regions. In order the rifts and divisions emerged between communities be overcome, there should be all-inclusive composed dialogue at all levels of the hierarch and various groups of the laity. The Church has to hold more conciliatory approach to political crises in order to play an overarching role and win the confidence of all in solving problems. We need to be mindful that this is not a straight forward journey as the political machine operates in a quite different direction and orientation, and it needs thorough thinking and genuine action inspired by the Orthodox faith. The solution for this is to develop and employ a well-designed “public ecclesiology”. Viable “public ecclesiology” requires for the Church to realistically understand the current situation, and others to understand the Church in its entirety. The Church, as it is striving to keep “Orthodoxy” in faith and worship it is required to equally keep its “Ecclesiastical” integrity during its religious and social services.

Biography: Dr. Abate Gobena has a PhD from University College Stockholm (Enskilda Högskolan Stockholm). His dissertation is called “Sanctity and Environment in Ethiopian Hagiography: The Case of Gedle Gebre Menfes Qiddus” and handles eco-theology from the perspective of the Ethiopian Tewahedo tradition. He has also a BTh. from Holy Trinity Theology College in Addis Ababa where he has also taught. His research interests are in Eco-theology, Church History, Patristics, and Hagiography. Fr Abate lives in London in the UK and serves as parish priest at the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church there. Fr. Abate also has a BSc. in Agro-Engineering and Mechanization (Hawassa University, Ethiopia), an MSc. in Biodiversity Conservation (Gottingen University, Germany), an M.A. in Sustainable Development (Middlesex University, UK) and an MSc. in Forest and Nature Management (SLU, Sweden). He is involved in several research projects: Eco-Theology and Environmental Ethics (ECOTHEE-2019); Sustainable Alternatives for Poverty Reduction & Eco-Justice (SAPREJ-2020); European Academy of Religion (EuARE-2020) Bologna.

Second Keynote Lecture

CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGICAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES FACING THE ORTHODOX WORLD

Presenter: Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis

Position: Director

Institution: The Volos Academy for Theological Studies

Biography: Dr. Kalaitzidis receives the 2024 Order of Sankt Ignatios for his work on establishing a critical perspective on Greek theology, creating a critical dialogue with church authorities, civil society, and state authorities. Through this critical dialogue, Dr. Kalaitzidis has been a crucial voice in the creation of a new paradigm in Greek theology, where theology has been detached from authority, becoming an independent voice in shaping the future of the Greek Church. The creation of Volos Academy for Theological Studies was in many ways a sequel to the Greek Orthodox Church's developing openness towards the inter-Christian movement with its renewed understanding of mission as solidarity with all nations and all religions. Institutions like Volos Academy and scholars like Dr. Kalaitzidis were instrumental in consolidating this change within Greek Orthodoxy, especially after the departure of Archbishop Christodoulos. By offering the Order of Sankt Ignatios to Dr. Pantelis Kalaitzidis, we want to emphasize that Dr. Kalaitzidis and Volos Academy have been of major importance in maintaining the openness of the Greek Orthodox Church. Through their work, they have promoted emancipation and dialogue instead of upholding the antiquated fortress ecclesiology that marked the early 20th century. Together with other institutions in Greece, they have contributed to guiding the Greek Orthodox Church away from the securitism and control that defined the 20th century toward the hospitable and living ecclesiology that now characterizes the Greek Orthodox Church in the 21st century. Volos through its diocese, academy, and people, has been at the center of this change, leaving an indelible imprint on the Greek nation.

