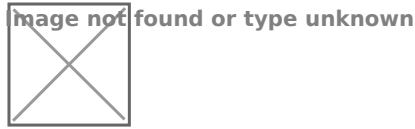


Orthodox and Lutherans Gather at Hellenic College Holy Cross to Strengthen Dialogue and Ecumenical Relations



Over the past week, the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at HCHC had the privilege and pleasure of hosting the Preparatory Committee of the International Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue at Hellenic College Holy Cross. The purpose of this meeting was to set the agenda for the upcoming plenary meeting, which will focus on synodality and primacy in the church on the local, regional, and universal levels.

An important feature of this gathering was a public presentation and conversation, showcasing the long-standing history and significant achievements of the International Lutheran-Orthodox Dialogue over the last decades. Metropolitan Isaias of Tamasos (Cyprus) and Professor Jennifer Wasmuth of the University of Göttingen (Germany) offered the lecture, bringing their extensive theological expertise and experience to respond to lively questions about the importance and future of the dialogue.

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America—who had previously served as co-secretary of this prestigious and historical dialogue—hosted the closing dinner in honor of the member delegates and addressed the distinguished visitors.

The two communions have fostered ecumenical collaboration and mutual understanding since establishing relations between the Lutheran World Federation and the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1967. This formal dialogue was launched in 1981 with the first meeting of the Lutheran-Orthodox Joint Commission in Finland. Over the years, the dialogue has yielded significant joint statements on core theological topics, including “Salvation: Grace, Justification and Synergy” (1998), “Baptism and Chrismation as Sacraments of Initiation into the Church” (2004), and most recently, an in-depth exploration of “The Holy Spirit, the Church, and the World” (2019–2024). This latest work includes a unique agreed statement on the “filioque,” addressing a longstanding theological divergence between Eastern and Western traditions.

Metropolitan Kyrillos of Krini, Orthodox co-chair of the dialogue, had this to say about the meeting in Boston: “It was our honor and joy to gather at Hellenic College Holy Cross at the invitation of Fr. John Chryssavgis, Executive Director of the Huffington Ecumenical Institute, for the preparatory committee of our international commission, which will meet next May in Cyprus to discuss synodality and primacy, a subject discussed also in other theological dialogues, including that with the Roman Catholic Church. During our meeting in Boston, we managed to define the general parameters of our discussion on synodality and primacy. We are grateful to Fr. John, at whose initiative we traveled here. And we hope that, someday soon, our plenary will also meet here, much like the Huffington Ecumenical Institute recently hosted the Anglican-Orthodox dialogue.”

Bishop Johann Schneider, Lutheran co-chair of the dialogue, added: “We are delighted to be hosted by the Huffington Ecumenical Institute for our preparatory committee because we felt very welcome as brothers and sisters by Fr. John Chryssavgis and his staff, but also to Archbishop Elpidophoros for his generous hospitality. The entire atmosphere here is precisely what sustains our dialogue and strengthens our collaboration. All of this encourages us to work intensely and collaboratively to continue producing the significant statements that we have agreed upon to date. The whole campus here is so beautiful and conducive to prayerful and ecumenical dialogue, with vespers in the chapel and meals in the cafeteria, as well as with the presence this evening of Archbishop Elpidophoros.”

For more information about the dialogue and details on future events offered by the Huffington Ecumenical Institute at HCHC, please contact Elena Kontogli at [\[email protected\]](#).

Photo: Huffington Ecumenical Institute.

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