Editorial

Throughout his extensive academic and ecclesiastical career, Metropolitan John Zizioulas of Pergamon engaged in meaningful theological dialogue with prominent figures from various Christian traditions. While pursuing his doctoral studies and conducting research in the United States he became acquainted with several notable thinkers, among them his doctoral advisors: Fr. Georges Florovsky, the founder of the neopatristic synthesis and a prominent émigré theologian; Harvard Church historian George Williams, and the Swedish New Testament scholar Krister Stendahl. In addition, he was conversant with the Lutheran theologian Paul Tillich, and became close to Fr. John Meyendorff, a prominent émigré Russian historian, during his research stay at the Dumbarton Oaks Center.

Upon returning to Europe, where he spent the majority of his academic career in Geneva, Italy, and the United Kingdom, Zizioulas interacted with some of the most important theologians of his time. He engaged directly with figures such as Thomas F. Torrance, Colin Gunton, Yves Congar, and Walter Kasper, and had indirect interactions with scholars like Wolfgang Pannenberg, Jürgen Moltmann, and the late Metropolitan Kallistos Ware. His continuous engagement with distinguished theologians, whether as a lay theologian in Greece during the early 1960s or after his return in the early 1990s, is noteworthy.

His relationships and friendships with figures such as Nikos Nissiotis and Christos Yannaras, as well as other professors at Greek universities—Gerasimos Konidaris, in particular, who supervised his dissertation at the University of Athens—further emphasize

this aspect of his career. Additionally, he became the most influential contemporary Orthodox theologian in Serbia from 1985 to 2016, closely collaborating with bishops like the late Athanasios Jevtić and Ignatios Midić.

More recently, while serving as the Metropolitan of Pergamon and as the primary spokesperson for the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Zizioulas interacted with church leaders, including former Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams and the recently deceased Pope Francis. This ongoing dialogue profoundly influenced his character and enriched his theological vision. It fostered a commitment to constant communication and openness toward others, as well as a deep respect for the quest of Christian unity and advancements in modern science and philosophy—contextual elements within which the Orthodox Church should carry out its mission today.

This dialogical ethos, inspired by his patristic heroes (the Cappadocian Fathers and Maximus the Confessor in particular), became a guiding principle in his intellectual formation and the formulation of his theology. He remained committed to serious theological dialogue on critical existential themes, even in his most recent book, titled *Remembering the Future*, written shortly before his passing, which reveals the fresh spirit of a scholar who seeks to delve deeply into the sources of his research. It is not an exaggeration to say that Zizioulas, not only in his life but also in his work, embodied an occasion for dialogue, where his fundamental theological themes of communion and otherness converged.

Both issues of the 2026 volume explore the most representative paradigms of Zizioulas' theological encounters with important figures in the inter-Christian theological landscape, though the exploration is not exhaustive. Additionally, previously unpublished material—such as a manuscript lecture on the theological anthropology of Fyodor Dostoevsky, personal correspondence, and archival photos—is featured for the first time.

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