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APOSTOLIC JOURNEY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV
TO TÜRKIYE AND LEBANON
WITH A PILGRIMAGE TO IZNIK (TÜRKIYE)
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 1700th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL
COUNCIL OF NICAEA
(27 November - 2 December 2025)
ECUMENICAL PRAYER SERVICE
NEAR THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS OF THE ANCIENT BASILICA OF
SAINT NEOPHYTOS

ADDRESS OF THE HOLY FATHER

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Friday, 28 November 2025

[[Multimedia](#)]

Dear brothers and sisters,

At a period of history marked by many tragic signs, in which people are subjected to countless threats to their very dignity, the 1700th anniversary of the First Council of Nicaea is a precious opportunity to ask ourselves who Jesus Christ is in the lives of men and women today, and who he is for each one of us personally.

This question is especially important for Christians, who risk reducing Jesus Christ to a kind of charismatic leader or superman, a misrepresentation that ultimately leads to sadness and confusion (cf. Leo XIV, *Homily, Holy Mass Pro Ecclesia*, 9 May 2025). By denying the divinity of Christ, Arius reduced him to a mere intermediary between God and humanity, ignoring the reality of the Incarnation such that the divine and the human remained irremediably separated. But if God did not become man, how can mortal creatures participate in his immortal life? What was at stake at Nicaea, and is at stake today, is our faith in the God who, in Jesus Christ, became like us to make us "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet 1:4; cf. Saint Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses*, 3, 19; Saint Athanasius, *De Incarnatione*, 54, 3).

This Christological confession of faith is of fundamental importance in the journey that Christians are making towards full communion. For it is shared by all Christian Churches and Communities throughout the world, including those which, for various reasons, do not use the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed in their liturgies. Indeed, faith "in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages... consubstantial with the Father" (*Nicene Creed*) is a profound bond already uniting all Christians. In this sense, to quote Saint Augustine, in the ecumenical context we can also say that, "although we Christians are many, in the one Christ we are one" (*Exposition on Psalm 127*). Consequently, with an awareness that we are already linked by such a profound bond, we can continue our journey of ever deeper adherence to the Word of God revealed in Jesus Christ, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in mutual love and dialogue. In this way, we are all invited to overcome the scandal of the divisions that unfortunately still exist and to nurture the desire for unity for which the Lord Jesus prayed and gave his life. The more we are reconciled, the more we Christians can bear credible witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which is a proclamation of hope for all. Moreover, it is a message of peace and universal fraternity that transcends the boundaries of our communities and nations (cf. Francis, *Address to participants in the Plenary Session of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*, 6 May 2022).

Today, the whole of humanity afflicted by violence and conflict is crying out for reconciliation. The desire for full communion among all believers in Jesus Christ is always accompanied by the search for fraternity among all human beings. In the Nicene Creed, we profess our faith “in one God, the Father.” Yet, it would not be possible to invoke God as Father if we refused to recognize as brothers and sisters all other men and women, who are created in the image of God (cf. [Second Vatican Ecumenical Council](#), Declaration *Nostra Aetate*, 5). There is a universal fraternity of men and women regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religion or personal perspectives. Religions, by their very nature, are repositories of this truth and should encourage individuals, groups and peoples to recognize this and put it into practice (cf. Leo XIV, [Address at the conclusion of the Meeting for Prayer for Peace](#), 28 October 2025). Furthermore, we must strongly reject the use of religion for justifying war, violence, or any form of fundamentalism or fanaticism. Instead, the paths to follow are those of fraternal encounter, dialogue and cooperation.

I am deeply grateful to His All Holiness Bartholomew, for it was with great wisdom and foresight that he decided to commemorate together the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea in the very place where it was held. I likewise warmly thank the Heads of Churches and Representatives of Christian World Communions who have accepted the invitation to participate in this event. May God the Father, almighty and merciful, hear the fervent prayers we offer him today, and grant that this important anniversary may bear the abundant fruits of reconciliation, unity and peace.

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The HOLY SEE

