

Greetings
Of Her Excellency the President of the Republic
Madame Katerina Sakellaropoulou

Your All-Holliness,
Your Beatitudes,
Mr. President of the Greek Parliament,
Most Reverent Representatives of the Autocephalous and Autonomous
Churches,
Most Reverent Bishops of the Church of Greece,
Ladies and Gentlemen Conferees and other Guests;

I am very pleased to participate in the International Academic Conference, which is organized by the Permanent Holy Synod of the Church of Greece, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the establishment and continuous publication of the scientific journal *Theologia*. It is a journal, which since 1923, in the aftermath of the Asia Minor catastrophe, has greatly contributed to the cultivation of Greek Orthodox theology by hosting exceptionally interesting articles, discussing contemporary social and cultural reality, delving into its various aspects. The interesting and topical thematic content of the journal –in some of the last issues of which I had the opportunity to browse, since, digitized and posted on the internet, they are accessible to all– demonstrates that Orthodox theology is not limited to patristic dogmatic teachings, but with a new theological synthesis it also attempts to face the challenges of the present, including technological developments.

We are living into a volatile, unstable, unpredictable era that tests man's certainties; in an environment saturated by information systems and communication networks, this Conference, which began today, is of great importance; it will attempt to explore, with a critical eye, the

tendencies and resistance of our times to the rapid progress of technology in connection with man's constant search for self-knowledge.

Science and technology have undeniably beneficial effects on our lives. Information systems, communication networks, artificial intelligence, bioinformatics, quantum applications, nanotechnology, medical and biological technologies are just some of the achievements that make everyday life better, to the point where it is now impossible to imagine our existence without them, while the future looks bright and promising.

However, it is equally undeniable that the unrestrained use of the new technologies creates new addictions and risks, without necessarily saving us from the old ones. Artificial intelligence, with its potential unknown even to its creators, and its development at a dizzying pace, causes concern in relation to human values, rights and our democratic conquests, our own constitution; in the advanced societies, this leads to the adoption of measures attempting to regulate its use and operation with binding rules, and reducing as far as possible both its personal and social side effects.

The technologization of human life and the creation of a virtual reality are massively replacing the natural and social environment; there is a great danger of alienating us from it. At the same time, across the globe, the recurring crises (military, geopolitical, economic, political, health, etc.), as well as climate change with its devastating effects, are intensifying our uncertainties and deepening our existential anxieties.

We are literally at a particularly critical juncture in the evolution of humanity. The contradictions of modern civilization, the unprecedented challenges of our times, and the suffering that is multiplying in many parts of the world from wars, violence, barbarism, and inequalities, demand from us to be vigilant and not remain idle.

In this context, the Orthodox view, which sees man in relation to God and vice versa, enriches the content of the social dialogue concerning our relationship with the new technologies and their consequences in our everyday life.

With these thoughts, I welcome the initiative of the Church of Greece and wish every success to the proceedings of the Conference.