

Takeaway from the 2025 Ecumenical meeting of Nicaea

"*Alea iacta est*"! This famous Latin phrase, "the die is cast," was pronounced by Julius Caesar when he crossed the Rubicon River, and signifies that a decisive action has been taken and there is no turning back, leading to an inevitable and irreversible outcome.

For the first time in Church history, the Roman Pontiff and the Ecumenical Patriarch have officially agreed – through an official Joint Declaration – to eagerly work toward the long-awaited one common date of Easter.

On November 28, 2025, at the site of ancient Nicaea (modern-day İznik), Pope Leo XIV joined around 27 other leaders of Christian Churches to commemorate the 1,700th anniversary of the First Ecumenical Council in the Church's history. In his address, he thanked Patriarch Bartholomew I, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, for his "great wisdom and foresight" in calling for Church leaders to celebrate this important anniversary together. The pope and the patriarch prayed together – reciting together the Nicene Creed – and blessed all those who were present. Most importantly, they signed a "Joint Declaration" reaffirming their shared commitment to the path toward restored full communion!¹

The Declaration states, *"Following the example of our venerable predecessors, and heeding the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, we continue to walk with firm determination on the path of dialogue, in love and truth (cf. Eph 4:15), towards the hoped-for restoration of full communion between our sister Churches. Aware that Christian unity is not merely the result of human efforts, but a gift that comes from on high, we invite all the members of our Churches – clergy, monastics, consecrated persons, and the lay faithful – earnestly to seek the fulfilment of the prayer that Jesus Christ addressed to the Father: 'that they may all be one, even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you... so that the world may believe' (Jn 17:21)..."*

We are convinced that the commemoration of this significant anniversary can inspire new and courageous steps on the path towards unity. Among its decisions, the First Council of Nicaea also provided the criteria for determining the date of Easter, common for all Christians. We are grateful to divine providence that this year the whole Christian world celebrated Easter on the same day. It is our shared desire to continue the process of exploring a possible solution for celebrating together the Feast of Feasts every year. We hope and pray that all Christians will, 'in all wisdom and spiritual understanding' (Col 1:9), commit themselves to the process of arriving at a common celebration of the glorious resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ... The

¹ <https://ec-patr.org/joint-declaration-of-h-h-pope-leo-xiv-and-h-a-h-ecumenical-patriarch-bartholomew/> Jesus reveals to Vassula: "be of one mind so that you agree together to a treaty that will glorify My Body which is the Church" (TLIG, June 2, 2015).

goal of Christian unity includes the objective of contributing in a fundamental and life-giving manner to peace among all peoples.”

The pope and the patriarch recalled that the search for full communion is grounded not in human diplomacy² but in obedience to the Lord's Prayer in the Gospel of John: “*that they may all be one... so that the world may believe.*” Pope Leo stated, “**The unity that binds us together around the altar is gift from God.** As such it is strong and invincible because it is the work of his grace. At the same time, however, realization of this unity in time is entrusted to us – to our efforts. For this reason, like the bridges over the Bosphorus, unity needs care, attention and maintenance, so that its foundations remain solid and are not weakened by time and vicissitudes...”³

Patriarch Bartholomew stated, “As you begin your papal ministry, marked by your willingness to serve the Lord’s call toward **Christian unity, which we find to be necessary more now than ever.** It is our common responsibility to work for and be eager to maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. With this in mind we reiterate our joy, great joy in welcoming your holiness as a brother, and renewing our sister churches commitment to labour together for the proclamation of the good news of salvation, bringing peace and reconciliation to the world.”⁴

Pope Leo XIV replied to the Patriarchs kind words by adding, “*inspired by the prayer of Jesus that all his disciples may be one, we are encouraged in our commitment to seek **the restoration of full communion among all Christians** – a task that we undertake with God’s help.*”⁵

Since the pontiff and the patriarch have officially and publicly expressed their shared desire and commitment to work toward full communion and one date of Easter, now more than ever are all True Life in God readers encouraged to pray fervently for its full realization.

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Nov. 29, 2025

² During the 1998 Holy Land Pilgrimage Vassula stated: “Unity will come and will be lived by those who would have allowed the Holy Spirit to touch them in their poverty and be their Light. Unity will come when we use the two keys our Lord is offering us, which are: humility and love. If we use these two keys, unity will triumph over our division which is a sin. Unity will come when we truly begin to love Jesus Christ. Unity will come when we will die to ourselves. Unity will come when we lower our voices to hear Christ’s voice and thus do His Will. Unity will come when we lower our heads and allow Christ’s Head to be seen. Unity will come when we will start looking after Christ’s Interests and not ours.”

³ cf. video mark 0:50-1:27: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ys8KMKwBZk>

⁴ Cf. video mark 28:10-29:08: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUuVXpJGBW4>

⁵ Ibid., video mark 31:21-31:39.