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Statement on Academic Freedom
The Orthodox Theological Society in America

The Orthodox Theological Society in America, organized in 1966 under the auspices and with the blessing of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas, exists to:

- promote the study and development of Orthodox theology,
- coordinate the work of Orthodox theologians in North America, bringing Orthodox scholars from all jurisdictions together for dialogue and to promote the collaboration of the Orthodox churches in North America,
- cultivate scholarship, fellowship, spiritual life, and cooperation in honest, open, and collegial discourse among those engaged in advanced study, teaching, research, and writing in the range of theological subjects and related disciplines (e.g., religious studies, biblical studies, the arts, the sciences, history, law, philosophy, literary studies, and bioethics),
- serve as a resource for the Assembly of Bishops and the Church,
- and engage non-Orthodox theologians interested in Orthodox theology.

The pursuit of truth, central to both Orthodox theology and the life of the Church, requires an environment in which reasoned inquiry and the freedom to question are protected and encouraged. As Orthodox Christians, we affirm that all human beings are created in the image of God with the capacity for reason, dialogue, and moral discernment. These gifts must be nurtured and safeguarded within both educational institutions and ecclesial settings.

Freedom—together with critical evaluation—must therefore be vigorously defended in our universities, seminaries, and churches. Scholars, clergy, and faithful must be free to explore questions, express their conscience, present their findings, and engage in dialogue, discussion, and debate without fear of censorship, coercion, or retaliation.

The Orthodox Theological Society in America calls on its members, the bishops of the Orthodox Churches, and all people of good will to defend the freedoms of speech, religion, the press, and peaceable assembly as enshrined in the Constitution of the United States.

Likewise, in Canada—where OTSA also has members and collaborators—academic freedom is supported by the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, including the fundamental freedoms of thought, belief, opinion, and expression. These rights are also upheld by universities and theological institutions committed to fostering open inquiry and scholarly integrity. OTSA affirms that such freedoms are indispensable to the flourishing of Orthodox theological reflection and dialogue in all contexts.

We call upon all those engaged in theological education—students, professors, clergy, and laity—to stand together in safeguarding these freedoms, so that the Orthodox Christian tradition may continue to offer a living and credible witness in the academy and the world.