

“Imagination is of three kinds: joined with belief of that which is to come; joined with memory and that which is past; and of things present, or as if they were present.”

*Francis Bacon*

“It is only through imagination that men become aware of what the world might be.”

*Bertrand Russell*

“Imagination is more important than knowledge; knowledge of the past and present is essentially ‘dead’, and requires imagination to bring it to life and put knowledge into action.”

*Albert Einstein*

“For those of us who were raised on radio and not music videos we know one undeniable thing: Music videos have ruined the imagination of our young people... Music videos, as a matter of being, defeat those terms of imagining, and the result is a paralysis of innovative thought.”

*David W. Boles*

“Facts. Obviously the facts are never just coming at you but are incorporated by an imagination that is formed by previous experience. Memories of the past are not memories of facts but memories of your imagining of the facts.”

*Philip Roth*

“The future exists first in imagination, then in will, then in reality.”

*Robert Anton*

“The imagination modifies images and gives unity to variety; it sees all things in one.”

*William Oxley*

“When the proper use of imagination ceased, art fatally declined and spirituality itself became unintelligible.”

*Elemire Yolla*

“Imagination is thought to be nonrational and therefore not to be taken seriously. A little reflection, however, makes it abundantly clear that our imagination informs our view of the world considerably, and thus our behaviour toward that world.”

*Laura Sewall*

“What is proven now was once only imagined. The world of imagination is the world of eternity. It is the divine bosom into which we shall all go after the death of the vegetated body. This world of imagination is infinite and eternal, whereas the world of generation is finite and temporal. There exist in that eternal world the eternal realities of everything which we see reflected in this vegetable glass of nature.”

*William Blake*

“It is often said that men are ruled by their imaginations; but it would be truer to say they are governed by the weakness of their imaginations.”

*Walter Bagehot*



**THE ROMANIAN INSTITUTE  
OF ORTHODOX THEOLOGY  
AND SPIRITUALITY**

Theodor Damian, Ph.D.  
30-18 50th Street,  
Woodside, NY 11377,  
Tel./Fax: (718) 626-6013,  
DamianTh@aol.com

Theodor Damian, Ph.D., president  
Mr. George Alexe, chairman

invite you to

*The Fifteenth Ecumenical Theological  
Symposium*

## **Theology and Literature: The Deification of Imagination and Its Cathartic Function in Spiritual Growth**

Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2007  
3:00 PM

at the Romanian General Consulate  
200 E 38th Street  
(3<sup>rd</sup> Ave. at 38<sup>th</sup> Street)  
New York, NY 10016

**George Alexe**

Senior theologian of the Romanian Orthodox Church, member of the Union of Romanian Writers, director and founder of *Romanian Communion*; Chairman of the Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality:

*The Deification of the Creative Imagination as the Theandric Likeness of the Image of God in Us, according to the Byzantine Eastern Orthodox Spirituality*

**Stefan Stoenescu**

Professor, writer, translator, independent scholar: *The Imagination's Quasi-Religious Nature in Later Modernity*

**Richard Grallo, Ph.D.**

Professor of Applied Psychology, Metropolitan College of New York: *Image and Imagination as Components of Learning*

**Rev. Dr. Bert F. Breiner**

Episcopal Church USA, Chaplain Grace Church School, New York; Professor at Hunters College of City University of New York: *Science Fiction: Imaginative Exploration of the Human Condition*

**Ali Shehzad Zaidi, Ph.D.**

State University of New York at Canton: *The Mythical Dream Voyage in "The Cobbles of Hydra"*

**Theodor Damian, Ph.D.**

Professor of Philosophy and Ethics, Metropolitan College of New York; President of the Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality: *Literary Beauties in the Holy Scriptures: When the Mystical Mind of Man sings to God a New Song*

**Carmen Harra, Ph.D.**

Psychologist, best seller author *The Spiritual Cathartic Dimension of the World as Reflected in the Eternal Principles of the Physical Universe*

**Daniela Anghel, Ph.D.**

The Romanian Institute of Orthodox Theology and Spirituality: *Imagination and Contemplation in the Light of the Image and Likeness of God as Gifts of the Holy Spirit and Their Spiritual Dynamism in Our Life*

GUESTS OF HONOR:

**His Eminence Dr. Nicolae Condrea**, Archbishop, The Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

**His Eminence Ioan Casian Tunaru**, Auxiliary Bishop of the Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in the Americas

MODERATOR:

**Victoria Malczanek**  
Ph.D. candidate, University of Bucharest,  
Professor at Metropolitan College of New York

**Dr. Napoleon Săvescu**  
President, Dacia Revival International Society

DISCUSSANT:

**Alina Feld, Ph.D.**  
Professor of Philosophy of Religion, Boston University

**Daniel Damian**  
Ph.D. candidate, Long Island University, Professor at Metropolitan College of New York

Being the oldest social phenomenon in the history of human civilization, religion produced literature from the very beginning when the written word was invented, but even before that, since the oral creation of the unwritten tradition can be rightly considered literature before literature.

What people put in writing was, in particular, the highest value of the entire set of values on which they centered their life at any given moment, and at the top of this set or hierarchy of values was always, and it is still today, religion. Religion generated the theological field, which deals with the elaboration of its fundamental principles in the form of dogmas and doctrines, and as well with their interpretation in the context of, and for the daily life of, the believer.

Since man is essentially a religious being, *homo religiosus*, as Mircea Eliade put it, the human element is ever present in religion in very pregnant ways. The human imagination plays a central role in one's understanding of God.

If religion is an act of the divine revelation, if we look at it theologically, then it is accepted fact that the divine reveals itself to the human mind, reason and imagination.

Jesus Christ, for Christianity, spoke in parables, thus addressing the human imagination for a better understanding of His message about the Kingdom of God.

But even in the case where religion is considered from an atheistic point of view based on which religion is the deification of human imagination, even there, human imagination plays a central role, because this imagination, once deified, becomes the platform on which the believer builds his or her life.

This theological and ecumenical symposium by tradition, and at the same time inter-disciplinary by recent practice, discusses the issue of human imagination in religious context, as it is to be found at the basis of man's permanent religious experience, with the intention to generate critical reflection and dialogue on its nature, and the many implications it has in the post-modern life of today's man in his or her search for God.

*Theodor Damian*