



REGISTRATION OPEN! ICCJ 2024 Conference: Holiness

01.04.2024 | Anette Adelman, ICCJ General Secretary

19.03.2024 - ICCJ's 2024 annual conference, entitled "'Be holy, because I, the Lord, your God, am holy.' (Wajikra / Leviticus 19:2) - Holiness: Religious Imperative and Moral Obligation?", will take place in Salzburg/Austria, June 23-26, and the online registration for participants is now available.

The conference is organized in collaboration with the Koordinierungsausschuss für christlich-jüdische Zusammenarbeit, Österreich, and the Paris Lodron Universität Salzburg, Research Programme Jewish Christian Dialogue and will be offered with simultaneous translation in English and German.

Conference Theme

Everything can be sacralized: music and sports, places and symbols, rituals and objects, and people deemed to have exceptional significance. But are they truly "holy"? The verse from the Book of Leviticus / Sefer Wajikra makes a clear claim: God is holy. In the verse, "holiness" implies a unique relationship - closeness, reconciliation, intimacy - with the God of creation. We experience holiness when we experience God's creative power of life. That is why the people of the Holy God are instructed to be holy themselves.

Holiness gives meaning to specific places, times, and events. The Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions have each developed different interpretations and practices for imbuing life with "holiness". Sabbath and holidays are separated from the other days and sacred spaces are distinguished from the secular. Daily prayer and practice transform mundane acts such as eating into sacred moments. Ethical behavior is another form of holiness. Such times, places, objects, rituals, and actions can connect us to God's holiness, allowing us to have an immanent experience of the transcendent God.

These different practices and interpretations define each tradition's uniqueness but also reveal points of contact and similarity. They can connect us in dialogue as we strive to understand one another and can serve as a rich resource to strengthen our own spirituality.

As we listen and learn from each other, we are also keenly aware of the dangers of political abuse and religious fanaticism. History shows that "God" is often invoked for personal interests and political purposes. We know that extremist understandings of holiness can lead to violence, intercommunal strife, and political intransigence and instability.

How do we prevent the misuse of holiness? What distinguishes between "true" and "false", authentic and instrumentalized holiness? In Wajikra / Leviticus 19:2 the people are called into the holiness of God and the service of life. But the Golden Calf is never far; the challenge of the call is ongoing.

At the 2024 annual conference of the ICCJ in Salzburg we look forward to dialogue about this awe-inspiring and life-giving, dangerous and elusive concept in a spirit of openness and humility.

During its three and a half days, the event will offer keynote lectures and plenary sessions on the theme as well as a number of interactive workshops, site visits, and excursions.

The ICCJ Executive Board, the ICCJ General Secretary and the collaboration partners together with the members of the planning committee look forward to welcoming you to Salzburg, Austria!

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