



Jubilee for the 250th Anniversary of the Greek Catholic Barbareum

*Meeting of Rectors of European
Greek Catholic Seminaries*

20.–22. May 2025



Preface

In 2025, we commemorate the 250th anniversary of the inauguration of the “Barbareum” Seminary for Eastern Catholics in Vienna. On 7 October 1775, Empress Maria Theresia officially established this seminary for candidates to the priesthood from the Eastern Catholic eparchies of Eastern Hungary, Transylvania, Mukachevo, Großwardein, Făgăraș, Croatia (Križevci), Galicia, and Bukovyna. For many years, the “Barbareum” served as a true oasis of shared formation, prayer, and fraternity, bringing together young men from diverse regions, languages, and traditions. From this common wellspring, numerous Church leaders and bishops emerged, each of whom contributed—through the particular gift of his own Church—to building a shared foundation for a united Europe. The heritage of this unity in diversity remains a vital resource for our continent today—spiritually, historically, and socially.

On this occasion, I have invited the Rectors of the Greek Catholic Seminaries of Europe to Vienna. The rectors are earnestly invited to participate in a profound and shared reflection on the decisive role of the Eastern Catholic Churches in proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel and in promoting unity, peace and stability in Europe. Particular emphasis will be placed on the ongoing development and enhancement of priestly formation within their respective Churches, ensuring that future clergy are well equipped to meet the pastoral, spiritual, and societal challenges of our time. Through this shared dialogue, it is hoped that new directions will emerge to strengthen the churches’ commitment to their spiritual and societal mission in a time of significant change.

+Christoph Kardinal Schönborn

Ordinary for the faithful of the Eastern
Catholic Churches in Austria



*Altarpiece of the Greek Catholic Church
of St. Barbara in Vienna
(Subotic Moses, 1775, oil on wood,
150×80 cm).*

250 Years of the Barbareum

A Model for the Future of a United Christian Europe

The theme “Unity in Diversity”—so central to the history of the “Barbareum”—was also echoed in the recent XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. In May and September 2025, the rectors of the Greek Catholic seminaries in Europe and the bishops of the Eastern Catholic Churches will gather to reflect on the future of a united Christian Europe and the role of the Churches in fostering unity, peace, and stability. As we consider this fundamental challenge, the 250th anniversary of the Greek-Catholic Imperial Seminary at Sancta Barbara in Vienna—known as the Barbareum—offers a historical model that remains profoundly relevant today.

The Barbareum: A Vision of Unity and Formation

Founded in 1775 by Empress Maria Theresa, the Barbareum was a pioneering institution that sought to bring together Greek Catholic clergy from various independent eparchies: Mukachevo, Oradea, Făgăraș, Križevci, Lviv, and the Basilian Order. It was established not only to enhance the theological education of Greek Catholic seminarians but also to foster a deeper ecclesiastical and intellectual cohesion across the Eastern Catholic tradition within the Habsburg Monarchy.

At a time when political and confessional divisions threatened stability, the Barbareum provided an environment where Greek Catholic seminarians from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds could receive a common education while maintaining their distinct traditions. This

institution reflected a fundamental principle that remains crucial today: unity does not mean uniformity. Instead, the Barbareum demonstrated how ecclesiastical and theological formation could create a framework for cooperation and understanding between diverse traditions, strengthening their shared mission in a complex and often divided society.

The History of the Barbareum (1775–1784)

The Barbareum was formally established on **October 7, 1775**, when Empress Maria Theresa issued a Handbillet founding the seminary at the former Jesuit Collegium Sanctae Barbarae in Vienna. The institution was created in response to the need for a well-educated Greek Catholic clergy in the spirit of Josephinism who could serve as a bridge between the Latin and Byzantine traditions and help foster ecclesial unity in the Habsburg Monarchy.

The seminary was structured to accommodate **46 students and 4 faculty members**, with financial support provided by the Hungarian, Galician, and Transylvanian regions. **Jozafat Bastašić**, a Croatian Greek Catholic priest, was appointed as the first rector, while **Constantin Philipides de Gaya** was named superintendent. The seminary accepted students from the **Eparchies of Mukachevo, Oradea, Făgăraș, and Križevci**, as well as from the Basilian Order. The initial plans for the “Hungarian Royal” seminary did not include Galicia, but after this territory was integrated into the empire, students from the **Eparchy of Lviv** also became part of the Barbareum. Thus, this institution became the first to unite Greek Catholics from all ecclesiastical unions of Brest-Litovsk, Marča, Mukachevo, and Făgăraș into one. The curriculum combined Byzantine theological tradition with Western academic rigor, ensuring that graduates were well-prepared for both pastoral and scholarly responsibilities.

The Barbareum quickly became a center of theological and intellectual exchange. The Greek Catholic seminarians studied philosophy, theology, liturgical practice, and languages, including Latin, Greek, and Old Church

Slavonic. A significant emphasis was placed on fostering a strong theological identity while remaining in communion with the broader Catholic Church. The students attended lectures at Vienna’s universities, and the seminary maintained close ties with Latin-rite institutions.

Despite its success, the Barbareum faced political and financial difficulties. Following the death of Empress Maria Theresa in **1780**, her son, **Emperor Joseph II**, introduced sweeping reforms that sought to centralize and rationalize religious institutions in the empire. Joseph’s policies aimed at reducing the influence of ecclesiastical authorities and promoting state-controlled centralized education. The Barbareum, which relied on imperial patronage, came under increasing scrutiny as part of these reforms.

By 1783, the government had begun discussions on redistributing Greek Catholic seminarians to institutions in Galicia and Hungary. The final blow came in **1784** when Joseph II ordered the **closure of the Barbareum** as part of his plan to establish central seminaries. The seminary was dissolved, and its students were transferred to other Greek Catholic institutions, primarily in **Lviv and Eger**. Thanks to the efforts of the third rector of the Barbareum, Athanasius Gvozdanović, a Croatian Greek Catholic priest, the Church of St. Barbara, which had been central to the seminary’s liturgical life, became a **Greek Catholic parish**—and it remains so to this day.

The closure of the Barbareum marked the end of an ambitious experiment in ecclesial unity and formation. However, its legacy endured in the seminaries that succeeded it, particularly in Lviv, where many of its alumni went on to play significant roles in the development of the Greek Catholic Church in Eastern Europe.

Today, as we face tendencies toward fragmentation in Europe, the history of the Barbareum stands as a powerful example of how education and shared formation can foster deeper unity across cultural and ecclesial boundaries. The principles upon which it was founded—intellectual excellence, spiritual depth, and inter-ecclesial cooperation—remain as relevant now as they were 250 years ago.

Program

Tuesday, May 20

- 17:30 Guided tour of St. Barbara Church
18:00 Vespers at St. Barbara Church

Wednesday, May 21

Morning (09:00–12:00) – Episcopal Palace

PART 1: ORIENTATION AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 9:00 Welcome and Opening Remarks (GV Yurii Kolasa)
9:05 Greeting: H.E. Christoph Cardinal Schönborn
9:15 Keynote *Prof. Dr. Thomas Nemeth*
9:45 The Situation of the Greek Catholic Churches in the Habsburg Monarchy in the 18th Century *PD Dr. Andrii Mykhaleyko*
10:15 Coffee Break
10:45 Josephinism and Its Reforms in Education and Priestly Formation under Maria Theresia *Dr. Eldina Lovaš*
11:15 The Roman “Central Seminary” Pontifical Greek College of St. Athanasius as a Predecessor of the Barbareum *Dr. Maciej Pawlik OSB*
11:45 Q&A
12:30 Lunch

Afternoon (14:00 – 17:00) – Episcopal Palace

PART 2: THE BARBAREUM IN THE CONTEXT OF GREEK CATHOLIC PRIEST FORMATION

- 14:00 An Overview of Seminary Life at the Greek Catholic Barbareum from its Founding in 1775 to Its Closure in 1784 *Dr. Robert Rapljenovic*

The Role of the Barbareum in the Education of Greek Catholic Clergy in Different Countries

- 14:20 Slovakia *Rector Peter Lach*
14:40 Ukraine *Rector Ihor Boyko / Rector Petro Beresh*
15:00 Coffee Break
15:20 Croatia *Dr. Janko Schandor*
15:40 Hungary *Rector András Dobos*
16:00 Romania *Rector Gabriel Buboş*
16:20 Q&A

Thursday, May 22

Morning (09:00 – 12:30) – Episcopal Palace

PART 3: TODAY & TOMORROW

- 9:00 The Current Situation of the Greek Catholic Priest Formation *Dr. Daniel Galadza*
9:30 The Greek Catholic Parish of St. Barbara *Dr. Taras Chagala*
10:45 Coffee Break
10:15 The Significance of the Barbareum in shaping a Common Identity of the Greek Catholic Churches *H. E. Cyril Vasil*
10:45 Q&A
11:00 Panel Discussion: “The Future of a Common Identity of the Greek Catholic Churches in Europe”
12:00 Closing Remarks and Farewell
12:30 Lunch

Speakers:

Dr. Daniel Galadza (*Professor of the Byzantine Liturgy at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome*).

Dr. Taras Chagala (*Parish priest of the Church of St. Barbara in Vienna*).

Dr. Eldina Lovaš (*Croatian Historical Institute in Zagreb*).

Dr. Andriy Mykhaleyko (*Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt*).

Prof. Dr. Thomas Mark Németh (*University of Vienna*).

Dr. Maciej Pawlik OSB (*Pontifical Greek College of St. Athanasius in Rome*).

Dr. Robert Rapljenovic (*Collegium Orientale Eichstätt*).

Dr. Janko Schandor (*University of Augsburg*).

H. E. Cyril Vasil (*Eparchial Bishop of the Eparchy of Košice, Slovakia; secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches 2009–2020*).

Invited Bishops:

H. E. Christoph Cardinal Schönborn OP (*Ordinary for the Faithful of the Eastern Catholic Churches in Austria*).

H. E. Pedro López Quintana (*Apostolic Nuncio to Austria*).

H. E. Virgil Bercea (*Eparchial Bishop of the Eparchy of Oradea Mare, Romania*).

H. E. Bohdan Danylo (*Eparchial Bishop of the Eparchy of Saint Josaphat in Parma; chairman of the Patriarchal Commission for Clergy, USA/Ukraine*).

H. E. Fülöp Kocsis (*Archbishop of Hajdúdorog and Metropolitan of the Hungarian Greek Catholic Church, Hungary*).

H. E. Milan Stipić (*Eparchial Bishop of the Eparchy of Križevci, Croatia*).

H. E. Cyril Vasil (*Eparchial Bishop of the Eparchy of Košice, Slovakia; secretary of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches 2009–2020*).

Invited Rectors:

Myron Bendyk (Rector of the Drohobych Theological Seminary of the Blessed Martyrs Severyn, Vitaliy and Yakym, Ukraine).

Petro Beresh (Rector of the Uzhhorod Theological Seminary, Ukraine).

Julian Bilyi (Rector of the Ukrainian Catholic Seminary of the Holy Spirit in Edmonton).

Ihor Boyko (Rector of the Lviv Theological Seminary of Holy Spirit, Ukraine).

Gabriel Buboij (Rector of the Romanian Pontifical College in Rome).

Luis Casiano (Rector of the Pontifical College of St. Josaphat in Rome).

Anton Cioba (Rector of the Oradea Greek-Catholic Seminary, Romania).

András Dobos (Rector of the Nyíregyháza Greek Catholic Seminary, Hungary).

Bernhard Dolna (Rector of the ITI Catholic University in Trumau).

Marius-Grigore Furtună (Rector of the Saint John the Evangelist Eparchial Seminary of Cluj-Napoca, Romania).

Robert Hitchens (Rector of the St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Seminary in Washington).

Nazariy Kashchak (Rector of the Blessed Omelyan Kovch Seminary in Buenos Aires).

Peter Lach (Rector of the Prešov Greek-Catholic Seminary of Pavol Peter Gojdič, Slovakia).

Martin Leitner (Rector of Seminary Leopoldinum in Heiligenkreuz).

Ireneu Letenski (Rector of the Basilian Seminary in Curitiba, Brazil).

Mykhailo Artemiy Novitskyi (Rector of the Basilian Institute of Philosophical and Theological Studies of Joseph Velamin-Rutski in Briukhovychi, Ukraine).

Andriy Onuferko (Chairman of the Subcommittee on Support and Continuing Formation of the Priesthood of the Patriarchal Commission on Clergy).

Bohdan Panchak (Rector of the Metropolitan Greek Catholic Seminary in Lublin, Poland).

Maciej Pawlik OSB (Rector of the Pontifical Greek College of St. Athanasius in Rome).

Oleksandr Petrynko (Rector of the Collegium Orientale Eichstätt).

Taras Putko (Rector of the Ivano-Frankivsk Theological Seminary of St. Josaphat, Ukraine).

Bohdan Prakh (Vice President of the Ukrainian Catholic University, Ukraine).

Ivan Rymar (Rector of the Ternopil Higher Theological Seminary of Patriarch Josyf Slipyj, Ukraine).

Andreas Schermann (Rector of Collegium Canisianum in Innsbruck).

Ciprian Suciu (Rector of the Blaj Greek-Catholic Seminary of Annunciation, Romania).

Oleh Turii (Vice Rector for External Affairs and Director of Church History Institute of the Ukrainian Catholic University, Ukraine).

Bohdan Tymchyshyn (Rector of the Saint Basil Ukrainian Catholic Seminary in Stamford, USA).

Petro Zhuk (Rector of the Kyiv Theological Seminary of the Three Holy Hierarchs).



ORDINARIAT *für die Gläubigen*
der *katholischen* OSTKIRCHEN

IMPRESSUM

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