



PONTIFICIA
UNIVERSITA
GREGORIANA
COLLEGIUM
MAXIMUM

Cardinal Bea Centre
for Judaic Studies



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Idolatry: How a God Becomes an Idol

10-12

MARCH
2026



PONTIFICAL GREGORIAN UNIVERSITY
Piazza della Pilotta 4, Rome

Sponsored by the Gregorian University Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropies



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Idolatry: How a God Becomes an Idol

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DAY 1: 10.03.2026 (TUESDAY) • AULA PAULINA, PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL INSTITUTE

SESSION 1: 9:00 - 10:30

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Chair: Paola Mollo

In Heaven as it is on Earth: The Politics of Divine Promotion
Mark Avila, Pontifical Biblical Institute of PUG, Italy

Deuteronomic Critique of Other Gods and Images: The Language and Ideology of Polemic
Juha Pakkala, University of Helsinki, Finland

SHORT BREAK

SESSION 2: 11:00 - 12:30

Chair: Paola Mollo

Competing Gods in the Levant
Peter Dubovský, Pontifical Biblical Institute of PUG, Italy

Varieties of Idolatry in the Book of Isaiah
Hugh G.M. Williamson, University of Oxford, UK

BREAK

SESSION 3: 15:00 - 18:00

Chair: Donna Orsuto

Image and Idolatry in the Priestly Literature
Nathan MacDonald, University of Cambridge, UK

Idolatry in the Book of Chronicles
Francisco Martins, Pontifical Biblical Institute of PUG, Italy

Materials of Idolatry and Deity in the Book of Daniel
Jennie Grillo, University of Notre Dame, USA



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DAY 2: 11.03.2026 (WEDNESDAY) • AULA MAGNA, COLLEGIUM MAXIMUM

SESSION 1: 9:00 - 10:30

Chair: Joseph Jijimon Puthuveettikalam

Εἶδωλον Before Idolatry: Notes on the History of the Word
Roberto Nicolai, Sapienza Università di Roma, Italy

Idolatry in the Dead Sea Scrolls
Noam Mizrahi, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

SHORT BREAK

SESSION 2: 11:00 - 12:30

Chair: Joseph Jijimon Puthuveettikalam

Abraham and the Rejection of Idolatry in Philo of Alexandria and Late Judaism
Massimo Gargiulo, Collegium Maximum of PUG, Italy

Idols, Private Worship, and Wisdom in Joseph and Aseneth
Daniela Scialabba, Pontifical Biblical Institute of PUG, Italy



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DAY 3: 12.03.2026 (THURSDAY) • AULA PAULINA, PONTIFICAL BIBLICAL INSTITUTE

SESSION 1: 9:00 - 10:30

Chair: Aaron Pidel

Images and Sacrifice, Proximity and Pollution: Paul and the Problem of Foreign Gods
Paula Fredriksen, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Boston University, USA

Misrecognition and Misplaced Ultimacy: Idolatry and False Worship in the Gospel of John
Susanne Luther, University of Göttingen, Germany

SHORT BREAK

SESSION 2: 11:00 - 12:30

Chair: Aaron Pidel

Early Rabbinic Literature and the Art of Idolatry Management
Stephanie Binder, Bar-Ilan University, Israel

Idololatria : The Word and the Concept, in its Various Components, according to Tertullian of Carthage
Paul Mattei, Université Lumière-Lyon II, France

BREAK

SESSION 3: 15:00 - 16:30

Chair: Jean-Pierre Sonnet

Zarathushtra and the Idols
Samra Azarnouche, École Pratique des Hautes Études, France

No Image, Many Images: Anthropomorphism as the Rabbinic Antidote to Idolatry
Christine Hayes, Yale University, USA

SHORT BREAK

SESSION 4: 17:00 - 18:30

Chair: Jean-Pierre Sonnet

The Fall of Idols: A Syriac Interpretation of Idolatry by Jacob of Serugh (450-521)
Muriel Debié, École Pratique des Hautes Études, France

Blind, Deaf, Dumb, Numb: Theological Insights into Idols, Idolaters, and Idolatry
Nicolas Steeves, Collegium Maximum of PUG, Italy