

Questions and Reflections for Discussion

to be used with Volume 2, Worship, of the four volume series
The Orthodox Faith by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

Introduction

When Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko of blessed memory was in the process of revising his series *The Orthodox Faith*, he requested the Department of Christian of the Orthodox Church in America, which had originally published the series, to create questions to accompany the texts of each volume. The following questions are the fulfillment of his request for the Worship volume of the series.

There are questions for each chapter of this volume, based on the text. They can be used to review or further consider the material in the chapter. A page number follows each question to show the part of the text it's based on.

A separate document gives numbered answers. We would suggest that a discussion leader, after the group has read a chapter, give each participant a copy of the questions for that chapter. The group can then answer them together, as a way of reinforcing and reviewing what they have read.

Another way of using the questions is to give them to participants before they read the text, and then have them find the answers together as they read. The group leader can check the answers with the answer document, though most should be easy to find within the text.

A reader going through the book on his or her own can use the questions and answers in whatever way is most helpful.

Some of the answers in the answer document also offer points for reflection. Father Thomas always liked to reflect further on things as he taught, and we hope that those who use the books will want to do likewise. Most of all we hope that people will benefit from this revised edition of Father Thomas' valuable gift to the Church, his series *The Orthodox Faith*.

Department of Christian Education
Orthodox Church in America

Chapter 1: The Church Building

1. What four-word phrase is the fundamental experience of Orthodox Christianity? (p. 16)
2. How does the dome or vaulted ceiling of an Orthodox church reflect the words of Ephesians 1: 10, which tell us that “Christ unites all things in himself, things in heaven and things on earth”? (pp. 16-17)
3. The interior of an Orthodox church is patterned after the image of God’s Kingdom in what book of the Bible? (p. 17)
4. What are two ways of referring to the altar area in the church? What does that area stand for? (p. 17)
5. What practice of the early Church is the basis for having relics in the antimension or the altar? (pp. 18-19)
6. Why are icons “spiritually necessary” based on what God has done for us? (p. 20)
7. What are the “two comings” of Jesus Christ? (p. 20)
8. How is the Annunciation related to the four Gospel writers? (p. 20)
9. How did the capture of the Christian Empire by the Ottoman Turks in the 15th century affect the liturgical dress of bishops? (p. 24)
10. While serving the Divine Liturgy, an Orthodox bishop blesses the faithful with two candelabra, one with 3 candles and the other with 2. What do these 2 candelabra stand for? (p. 25)
11. Why does the Orthodox Church consider liturgical vesting essential to normal liturgical worship? (p. 26)
12. Is the use of incense based on anything in the Bible? (p. 27)

Chapter 2: The Sacraments

1. Why is the specific numbering of sacraments as 7 somewhat misleading? (p. 30)
2. How is baptism connected to repentance? (pp. 32-33)
3. Why is it important for a godparent to be a member of the Church? (p. 33)

4. How is the sacrament of chrismation related to Pentecost? Why, in Orthodox practice, is it always connected with baptism? (p. 34)
5. How is tonsuring a sign of offering oneself to God? (p. 35)
6. When a person receives holy illumination (baptism and chrismation), another sacrament fulfills that reception. What sacrament is it? (p. 36)
7. The original Passover meal commemorated the freeing of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. How does Christ, as the Passover Lamb, transform this meal? (p. 38)
8. What does the word eucharist mean, and why does the Church use it? (p. 39)
9. How do the words logical and rational apply to the holy eucharist? (p. 41)
10. Grave sins—though not all sins—necessitate the act of sacramental penance. For what two reasons should all Christians make use of this sacrament periodically? (p. 42)
11. What are three elements of the act of formal penance? (p. 42)
12. What is the express purpose of the sacrament of holy unction? (p.44)
13. Is it misleading to call the sacrament of holy unction “last rites”? (p. 45)
14. Why are the words “till death do us part” not in the Orthodox marriage service? (pp. 45-46)
15. On what other sacrament is the Orthodox sacrament of marriage patterned? (p. 46)
16. What does it mean to say that the Orthodox sacrament of marriage is not a juridical contract? (p. 41)
17. In what way does the Orthodox Church recognize that some marital unions don’t fulfill the ideal conditions of marriage as taught by Christ? (p. 47)
18. How is love “overflowing itself” related to the procreation of children? (p. 48)
19. Can a childless couple live a truly Christian life together? (p. 48)
20. What is the function of bishops, priests and deacons in the Church? (p. 49)
21. What is the basis of the name Holy Orders for the sacramental ministry of the Church? (p. 50)

22. What does the title Metropolitan mean? What unique powers, if any, does a Metropolitan have? (p. 51)
23. Why does Fr. Hopko write that the funeral vigil, called morbid and gloomy by some, is necessary for our understanding of life and death? (p. 55)
24. What is the meaning of the funeral song “Eternal Memory”? (p. 56)
25. Why should the funeral vigil lead into, and be fulfilled by, the Divine Liturgy? (pp. 56-7)
26. What is the only intention and purpose of the monastic vocation? (p. 58)
27. What is cenobitic monasticism? (pp. 59-60)
28. What is another term for a monk or nun who lives as a recluse or hermit? (p. 60)

Chapter 3: Daily Cycles of Prayer

1. Why is prayer, in the Orthodox Church, always Trinitarian? (p. 62)
2. How are prayers to saints different from prayers to the Holy Trinity? (p. 62)
3. Is it ever appropriate to question God? (p. 62)
4. What could make it “spiritually dangerous” to pray to God? (p. 63)
5. For what reasons do we go to church? (p. 64)
6. What does Genesis 1: 5 tell us constitutes “one day”? (p. 64)
7. What is the Vespereal hymn *O Gladsome Light* telling us about Jesus Christ? (p. 66)
8. How are we “proclaiming our own vision of Christ” when we sing the words of St. Simeon in Luke 1: 29-32? (p. 66)
9. What themes are always central to Matins, the morning service? (p. 67)
10. The services of Hours (1st, 3rd, 6th, 9th) are composed mostly of psalms. To what events are these psalms generally related? (p. 68)
11. What is the “after-dinner” service of the Church? (p. 68)
12. When is the Nocturne service done in most parishes? (p.69)

Chapter 4: The Church Year

1. What is the “center” of the annual cycle of Orthodox worship? (p. 72)
2. What feast day concludes fifty days of paschal celebration following Easter? (p. 72)
3. The services for each day of the week, with the 8 tones or melodies sung in a revolving pattern through the year, are in what book? (pp. 72-73)
4. What is the name of the book containing the services for each day of the month? (p. 73)
5. In what 2 ways is the feast of Christmas patterned after Easter? (p. 75)
6. What Sunday is the first sign of the approach of Great Lent? (p. 75)
7. What 2 actions does the Sunday of the Prodigal Son call us to take? (p. 76)
8. Meatfare Sunday, the last day before Easter for eating meat, is also called the Sunday of the Last Judgment. How does the day’s reading, Matthew 25: 31-46, reflect this? (p. 76)
9. What is the Biblical promise of Cheesefare Sunday, or Forgiveness Sunday, on the eve of Great Lent? (p. 77)
10. How do the very first lines of the Church’s Lenten hymns set the tone for Great Lent? (p. 77)
11. Is repentance different from remorse? (p. 78)
12. Why is the Divine Liturgy not celebrated on weekdays of Great Lent? (p. 79)
13. Why do the royal gates to the altar area stay closed during Lenten weekday services (p. 80)
14. Why is Saturday the appropriate day for remembering the dead in prayer? (p. 81)
15. What 3 things does the final prayer of the Presanctified Liturgy ask God to help us do? (p. 83)
16. To what possibility did St. Gregory Palamas (2nd Sunday of Great Lent, bear witness? (p. 84)
17. How does Ephesians 6: 12 reflect the “violent effort” that Saint John of the Ladder (4th Sunday) encourages us to make if we hope to achieve salvation? (p. 84)

18. How does the phrase “it is never too late” relate to the life of St. Mary of Egypt? (p. 84)
19. On what one day in the Church year is the resurrectional service of Sunday celebrated on a day other than Sunday? (p. 85)
20. How does the *Kontakion* of Palm Sunday remind us that “he who comes to recall Adam” is both divine and human? (p. 87)
21. How are a fallen woman and the apostle Judas contrasted in the Wednesday service of Holy Week? (p. 88)
22. How does the Passover Meal show us both Christ’s mission and God’s purpose in creating the world? (p. 91)
23. How is Psalm 119, read during the Matins of Holy Saturday, a “verbal icon” of Jesus? (p. 94)
24. Why would it be misleading to call the services of Holy Saturday “re-enactments” of Christ’s death and burial? (p. 97)
25. The tomb of Christ stands in the center of the church during the Divine Liturgy of Holy Saturday. Why is it called the “fountain of our resurrection”? (p. 99)
26. How does the Easter night procession recall the original baptismal procession? (p. 100)
27. Why are the Easter Matins and Divine Liturgy celebrated in the “first dark hours of the first day of the week”? (p. 104)
28. What is the Eighth Day? (p. 105)
29. Why do many consider John’s Gospel to have been written for the newly-baptized? (p. 106)
30. What does the time span of 40 days signify? (p. 109)
31. Why is Pentecost also called Trinity Sunday? (p. 112)
32. What does it mean to say “Pentecost has happened to us”? (p. 113)
33. Why did the Church begin celebrating Christmas, formally called the Nativity in the Flesh of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ, on December 25th? (p. 117)
34. What “epiphany” or shining forth comes to us in the feast of Epiphany? (pp. 118-119)

35. The Great Blessing of Water takes place at Epiphany. What does the water, placed in the center of the church, stand for? (p. 120)
36. In the Vespers service for the feast of the Meeting (or Presentation or Reception) of the Lord we hear that Simeon receives as a baby the one whom Moses also encountered, but in a different way. How did Moses encounter him? (p. 124)
37. Why does Christ show himself transfigured before his crucifixion? (p. 127)
38. Why is it significant that Moses and Elijah are present at the Transfiguration? (p. 128)
39. How does the summer celebration of the feast of Transfiguration lend itself to the theme of transfiguration? (pp. 128-129)
40. Why is the feast of the Annunciation celebrated on March 25th? (p. 129)
41. Why are Joachim and Anna, the parents of the Mary the Theotokos, an important part of the feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos? (p. 132)
42. How is Psalm 45, understood as a prophecy about Mary the Theotokos, related to her own words in Luke 1: 47-50? (p. 134-135)
43. What does Mary's entrance into the Temple change about the Temple itself? (p. 136)
44. Why is Mary called the "Image of the Church" and how is this related to her Dormition? (p. 138)
45. The day of the Elevation of the Cross no longer has "political" meaning as it did in early Christian empires. What does it say in our own day about allegiance? (pp. 140-141)
46. What is necessary on the part of the Christian people for a canonization to take place or a liturgical festival to be established? (p. 142)

Chapter 5: The Divine Liturgy

1. How do the words liturgy and church fit together? (p. 146)
2. What is the significance of the phrase "always everyone, always together" as it relates to the Divine Liturgy? (p. 147)
3. Why is the Divine Liturgy never mournful or penitential? (p. 148)

4. How are the 2 parts of the Divine Liturgy (the gathering or synaxis and the eucharistic sacrifice) each based in the Old Testament? (p. 148)
5. How are these 2 parts of the Divine Liturgy carried on in the New Testament Church? (pp. 148-149)
6. What do the words *prothesis* and *proskomedia* mean? (p. 150)
7. Why is the large cube of bread cut by the priest from the loaf (*prosphora*) called the Lamb? (p. 150)
8. Who are the first two people the priest remembers by placing pieces of bread on the *diskos* next to the Lamb? (p. 151)
9. How is the exclamation “Blessed is the Kingdom” the key to the celebration of the Divine Liturgy? (pp. 152-153)
10. What does it mean to bless the Kingdom of God? (p. 153)
11. What prayer is the all-embracing prayer of the Church? (p. 153)
12. The first two antiphons (verses from the Psalms) are followed in the Divine Liturgy by the hymn “Only Begotten Son.” Who wrote it? (p. 155)
13. During the third antiphon, we as the gathered Church follow Jesus Christ, in the person of the priest, to the altar. What does this symbolize? (p. 156)
14. Where is the priest when he blesses the people with the Peace of Christ? (p. 157)
15. What is the significance of the chanting of *Alleluia* and the general censuring before the Gospel reading? (p. 158)
16. How is the Litany of Fervent Supplication different from the Great Litany? (p. 159)
17. What group of people, in earlier centuries, would normally be dismissed from the Divine Liturgy after the Litany of Fervent Supplication? (p. 160)
18. In the Great Entrance, what do the gifts of bread and wine stand for? (p. 161)
19. What are the faithful called to do in the offertory, or Great Entrance? (p. 162)
20. In order for the Divine Liturgy to proceed following the Great Entrance, what two conditions must be fulfilled by the faithful? (pp. 163-164)

21. Why is the Nicene Creed said in the first person, unlike the other prayers in the Divine Liturgy? (p. 164)
22. What is the meaning of the word *anaphora*? (p. 165)
23. How does Fr. Thomas explain the meaning of the phrase “mercy of peace” which is part of the *anaphora* prayers? (p.166)
24. What is the origin of human trouble, corruption and death? How can it be overcome? (p. 168)
25. As the priest says the words of the Eucharistic Prayer, he lifts the gifts of bread and wine toward heaven. What does this elevation signify? (p. 170)
26. What is the meaning of the word *epiklesis*? (p. 171)
27. What does the invocation of the Holy Spirit affirm? (p. 171)
28. What is the significance of the phrase “and all mankind” in the series of remembrances? (p. 173)
29. Why did the early Church teach people the Lord’s Prayer only after their baptism and chrismation? (pp. 174-175)
30. What is the significance of the hot water put in the chalice for Holy Communion? (p. 175)
31. What is presupposed by the prayers, hymns and actions of the Divine Liturgy? (p. 179)
32. What is the meaning of the word *antidoron*? Why is it called this? (p. 180)
33. What are the faithful called to do as they “go forth in peace into the world” at the end of the Divine Liturgy? (p. 180)