

Real Age

There is a site on the Internet called, “real age.” After completing a 45-minute questionnaire, the site calculates your real age. For instance, someone who exercises eats right and has a balanced social life, even though they may be forty-two years old, their “real age” might be thirty-two. In keeping with the times I thought a “real age” quiz ought to be developed for “spiritual age.”

In the traditions of the Church, three elements are identified in spiritual development, Purification, Illumination, and Sanctification. The “levels” are fluid and flow dynamically. We are constantly seeking and participating at each level and at the same time progressing. Such is the case with John Climacus’ book the “Ladder of Divine Ascent.” In Fr. John Chryssavgis’ examination of Climacus’ work he says: “Perhaps the way of interpreting the ladder in John’s sense would be to say that one can reach the top in ascent, even while still working one’s way up from lower down and, by the same token, still be on the lower rungs and yet, reached the top.” (Divine Ascent) The quiz ought to gauge the extent to which we are engaging in spiritual warfare.

This “spiritual age” quiz will only take a few minutes. Grab a pencil and begin.

1. During a day, I spend:

- a. 5 minutes in prayer
- b. 15 minutes in prayer
- c. 30 minutes in prayer
- d. I don’t pray.

2. When filling out a yearly Stewardship Commitment Pledge:

- a. Gave what I did last year.
- b. I increased my pledge from last year.
- c. Due to change in my financial situation I decreased my pledge.
- d. I haven’t returned my Pledge Card.

3. The Akathist Hymn is:

- a. Dedicated to Christ
- b. Dedicated to the Theotokos
- c. It means not to sit down.
- d. Both B & C

4. During the past 2 years, I have: (Check all that apply)

- a. Attended one Vespers service
- b. The Sacrament of Confession
- c. A week day service
- d. None of the above.

5. Over the past 2 years I have read: (Check all that apply)

- a. One book of the bible
- b. One book on the Orthodox Faith
- c. No religious books
- d. A Novel

6. Over the past year, I have missed church on Sunday:

- a. One time
- b. Once a month
- c. Twice a month
- d. I go once a month
- e. I go every few months

7. Over the past 2 years, I have: (Check all that apply)

- a. Visited someone in the hospital
- b. Visited a Street Shelter
- c. Volunteered
- d. Volunteered at church

8. Matins is:

- a. A vestment
- b. A service
- c. A service before the Liturgy
- d. A service after the Liturgy

9. Orthodox Christians are to fast from meat during Lent for:

- a. 40 days
- b. Just on Fridays
- c. On Wednesdays & Fridays
- d. Only if you are receiving Communion.

10. Memorial Services are not supposed to take place on: (Check all that apply)

- a. Saturdays
- b. Sundays
- c. Feasts of Christ
- d. Feasts of the Theotokos
- e. From Sat. of Lazarus through the Sunday of Thomas

11. I am willing to suffer for Christ:

- a. Yes
- b. No

One could rate each answer, add the results and give a grade. The most important question is the last. The ten preceding questions are about actions and knowledge, which are indicative, to a degree, of where one is spiritually. Our conscience however, is the best critic. A look at the heart is always the best test of how one is doing. One's willingness to suffer for Christ is really the only test of spiritual maturity.

To suffer for Christ means to bow our wills to His and to submit our thoughts and actions to the scrutiny of Holy Scripture and the Church Tradition. Knowledge of the Church Tradition, the services, their meaning and purpose is indicative of one's willingness to submit to Christ. To give our life as a living sacrifice to Christ is to offer every aspect, ambition, thought and deed as a form of worshipping God.

Use this quiz as a beginning for change. It's not intended to make a smarter Orthodox Christian but to make a more active one, who is experiencing the Church as the greatest force that can renew, inspire and lead us to salvation.

In Christ,
+ Fr. Andrew