

# ASSUMPTION

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## G R E E K O R T H O D O X C H U R C H

### CLASS QUESTIONS

#### CH 1: The Life of the World

1. Discuss the concept of hunger as a spiritual reality.
2. Schmemmann calls humans, "*homo adorans*." What does this tell us about life? And the destiny of all creation?
3. How does the author explain the fall and secularism?
4. "In Christ, life- life in all its totality- was returned to man..." Discuss the implications of this statement.

#### CH 2: The Eucharist

1. Schmemmann defines the Eucharist as the "sacrament of joy". Explain.
2. Define and discuss how the author explains the concept of "*leitourgia*." How are Christians to understand this reality?
3. Define and discuss how the author explains the concept of "*ecclesia*." How are Christians to understand this reality?
4. Explain how the liturgy is "journey," movement," and "passage."
5. Discuss symbols in Orthodox worship. How does this differ from different 'expressions' of Christianity?

6. How does the eucharistic life restore man?

### **CH 3: The Time of Mission**

1. Discuss how the Church understands the meaning of the "Lord's Day" as the "eighth day" and the "first day" of the *Kingdom*.

2. What is the gift given by the Church in understanding the transformation of "time" which takes place in the celebration of the Eucharist?

3. Discuss how all time has been transformed into "remembrance" and "expectation" because of the Lord's Day.

4. Discuss how the meaning of the gift of joy as it relates to the gift of genuine feast.

5. Discuss Pascha night and the power and influence it has in your life.

6. Discuss the 4<sup>th</sup> theme of vespers as the "end" as it related to our understanding of death.

### **CH 4: Of Water and the Spirit**

1. Discuss Schmemmann's concerns about baptism being understood only as an "individual act."

2. "The first act of the Christian life is a renunciation, a challenge." In regards to baptism, what does the author mean here?

3. Explain the role of water in this sacrament.

4. How does chrismation help man to be "fully oneself"?
5. Explain the relationship between repentance and baptism.

### **CH 5: The Mystery of Love**

1. The end and fulfillment of all life, of all love is to accept Christ, to give Him life in ourselves (pg.87). Discuss Mary's response to God of total obedience in love (pg 84-85) makes which fulfills her vocation as the temple of the Holy Spirit and how this relates to our own personal calling or vocation.
2. The first meaning of the marriage crowns (crown them with glory and honor) is that they express the beginning of a small kingdom which is like the true Kingdom. Read Fr. Schmemmann's "icon" of stormy vicissitudes marriage of the old and poor couple sitting together (pg. 90) and how this reflects the heavenly beauty of marriage.
3. Discuss how the second meaning of crown them with glory and honor as martyrdom (pg. 90), the cross in marriage. How is a marriage which does not 'die to itself' and its 'self-sufficiency' is not a Christian marriage?
4. The third meaning of the crowning is that of being crowned victorious in heaven. How is marriage to be understood as a growth into the perfected love of which God alone is the fullness (pg. 91)?

### **CH 6: Trampling Down Death by Death**

1. Schmemmann says we live in a "death-denying culture." How does he explain this?
2. According to the author, what is relationship between secularism and religion?
3. What are the approaches of 'religion' and 'secularism' to death?

4. What is the Christian perspective on death? How is it different than the aforementioned?

5. How ought Christians to view death? What does it mean that, "Christ is Life"?

### **CH 7: And Ye Are Witnesses of These Things**

1. How does the author understand and explain the "Church" as "mission"? Is his explanation congruent with your own? Discuss.

2. Discuss the dangers of "Secularization" addressed in this chapter. What does Schmemmann mean, when he says it is "a *tragedy* and a *sin*"?

3. How is the "religious" approach dangerous? Where does it fall short?

4. What then, is our mission? And how is "mission" a sacrament?