

# ORTHODOX INSIGHTS

## Volume II



Christ Teaching in the Synagogue (Seventeenth-Century Russian Icon)

Archbishop Chrysostomos, Bishop Auxentios,  
and Archimandrite Akakios,  
with contributions from  
† Protopresbyter Georges Florovsky

CENTER FOR TRADITIONALIST ORTHODOX STUDIES

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## Volume II

A Collection of Short Questions and  
Answers on Orthodox Theological,  
Pastoral, and Ecclesiastical Concerns

by

Archbishop Chrysostomos  
Bishop Auxentios  
and  
Archimandrite Akakios

with contributions from  
† Protopresbyter Georges Florovsky

Edited by Hieromonk Gregory Agiogregorites



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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND CONTRIBUTOR

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† *Protopresbyter Georges Florovsky* (†1979), was born in Odessa, Ukraine, in 1893. A polymath, he studied biology, chemistry, mathematics, psychology, and physiology at the University of Odessa. His first publication, in biology, was presented to the Imperial Academy of Sciences by Ivan Pavlov. Considered the dean of Orthodox theology in the twentieth century, he lectured at Columbia University, Union Theological Seminary, Boston University, the University of Oregon, and the University of Washington. In 1956, he was appointed Professor of Eastern Church History at Harvard University and, upon retirement in 1964, was appointed Visiting Professor of Religion and Slavic Studies at Princeton University, where he died in 1979. Father Florovsky was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the Royal Academy of Athens. His *Collected Works*, first published by Nordland Publishers, run to fourteen volumes.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank Alexis Lukianov, a pious and faithful Orthodox Christian, for suggesting the concept and title for this series.

## INTRODUCTION

This is the second in a two-volume series of brief questions and answers, sermons, and selections from articles concerning liturgical matters in the Orthodox Church (Volume I) and about Orthodox theological, pastoral, and ecclesiastical concerns (Volume II). All of the materials used have appeared in various publications of the Center for Traditionalist Orthodox Studies, primarily in the pages of the triannual journal, *Orthodox Tradition*, which is at present in its twenty-sixth year of publication. The majority of the questions and answers in these volumes, submitted by readers, have been drawn from regular columns that appeared in the journal: "Liturgical Notes," "Facts About the Faith," and "Questions and Answers." Both volumes are directed primarily to the Orthodox reader and presume some basic familiarity with the Eastern Orthodox Church. Nonetheless, they contain information and address subjects that will also be of interest to non-Orthodox readers and to those interested in gaining a deeper understanding of Eastern Orthodoxy.

The diverse inquiries presented in this particular volume were, for the greater part, submitted between 1987 and 1996 by clergy and laity to the "Facts About the Faith" and "Questions and Answers" columns in *Orthodox Tradition*. They concern a great variety of matters touching on Orthodox theology, pastoral issues, and Church customs, practices, and polity in general. The answers to these questions—at times slightly amended or expanded in this volume—are those of the authors designated on the title page, as well as answers gleaned from the counsel, advice, and lectures of the late and renowned Russian Orthodox theologian, Father Georges Florovsky, whom I and another author of this volume, Bishop Auxentios, knew at Princeton University, where I was a doctoral student and Preceptor and His Grace was Father's student.

During my first year at Princeton, Father Florovsky was my confessor and a spiritual advisor. From this relationship, and from a very curious rôle that I played as an *intermediary*—an amanuensis of sorts—in written exchanges, over a period of several years, between Father Georges and Hieromonk Seraphim (†1982) of the St. Herman of Alaska Monastery in Platina, California, I gleaned much of the information that helped form my responses to questions later posed by readers of *Orthodox Tradition* and contained in this volume. I also participated in several discussion groups and delivered a paper under Father Georges' sponsorship, which activities gave me further access to his wisdom and insight. Bishop Auxentios likewise benefited from Father Florovsky's scholarship in the



classroom and from his direction as a member of His Grace's senior thesis committee.

It was, indeed, Father Georges who first recommended the question-and-answer format to me as an effective tool in teaching Orthodox precepts and for clarifying many of the vexing issues facing Orthodox believers today—an idea strongly reinforced by the gifted Orthodox writer, Dr. Constantine Cavarnos. Florovsky also deserves credit for encouraging me to publish outside my areas of academic interest (social and clinical psychology) and not only to explore the fascinating field of Patristic psychology, but to write about Orthodox theological matters in general. This he advised, despite the fact that—like him—I had no formal training in theology, save by way of my work in Byzantine historical theology. It was thus his endorsement that facilitated the publication, after his death, of *Scripture and Tradition: A Comparative Study of the Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant Views*, co-authored with Bishop Auxentios, and the first volume of *Contemporary Eastern Orthodox Thought: The Traditionalist Voice*, written together with His Grace and Archimandrite Akakios, by Nordland Publishers, the original publisher of Florovsky's *Collected Works*.

It was also not until after Father Georges' death that *Orthodox Tradition* was first published; however, his vision of the format of the columns from which this volume is taken, as well as his theological insights and brilliance (however *inadequately* we may express and convey them), can be found throughout our work. In instances where Father Georges is specifically the source of a certain reply, this will be indicated within the context of our comments, without always attributing a complete answer to him. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that we have in some instances quoted directly from materials and discussions that I collected in my work with Florovsky, or from classroom notes or anecdotes from classroom exchanges recorded or recalled by Bishop Auxentios.

The questions and comments in this volume are, finally, not arranged according to subject. Though the subject index will no doubt prove helpful in searching for specific topics, the materials are too diverse for a thematic scheme. Some of the material is also dated, more specifically applicable to Orthodox Christians, or undeniably and ineluctably controversial in nature. In these latter two instances, we have not set out purposely to exclude—let alone provoke the ire of—anyone. Our goal has been to address sometimes difficult and irksome issues with charity and candor. If we have, however unintentionally, failed in this, we ask forgiveness.

*Archbishop Chrysostomos*

## ON WORSHIP

(*From a sermon by Archbishop Chrysostomos of Etna, Second Sunday of Lent, 1998.*) Liturgically, we have come to think of Orthodoxy as a religion focused on the ritualistic worship of God. In reality, however, we do not simply worship God in our Church; rather, we commune with God directly, through the convergence of Heaven and the earth in the symbols of worship. Our worship is not mere veneration, but entails our *participation* in the timeless, eternal truth of Christ. Indeed, the culminating point of worship is the Divine Eucharist, in which we are made one with Christ. How far this is from our present-day theatrical worship: pews, lights, loud proclamations, emotion-filled, boisterous singing, and all of the other things that go along with the theatre. Indeed, appealing—and falsely so—to the past, some Orthodox have even come to the perversion of congregational singing, thinking that the primitive services of the Early Church (where there were also Ordained chanters, as many forget) can somehow replace the mature system of worship that we have inherited from the mature Church. We see this, too, in personal intimacy—excessive and emotional embracing, kissing, and so on—which are inappropriate to the Christian and which come from passions and not from sobriety.

The purpose of worship, of hearing the very voice of God in silence and with our minds and eyes darkened to the world, focused on the windows into the other world that are our Icons, our senses saturated by incense, our egos humbly subdued in pious standing and prayer—this has been thwarted. Today, having adopted Western ideas of worship, we scream and sing at God, making such a din that we do not hear Him speaking to us. St. John Chrysostomos tells us that chanting, for example, is a double form of prayer. And since, in prayer, we hear God, how far our chanting and singing are from an act of listening. How far, indeed, we are, when we seek so-called “active” participation in services, from the experience of that small inner voice by which God speaks to our hearts. Our participation should be in silence, submission, and awe before the splendor of God. And our prayers and chants should not be pronouncements before God, but supplications for God to speak to us and to be with us. Thus, if we listened to the prayers that accompany the hymn that we just sang before the Small Entrance with the Gospel, we will have heard sup-

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*From the Introduction*

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