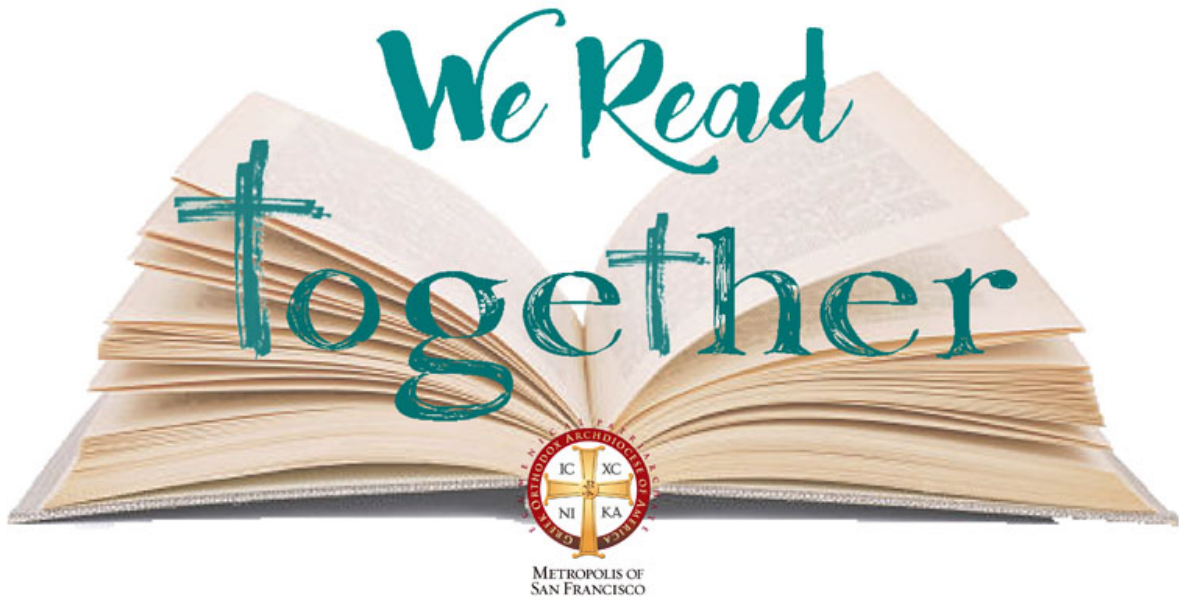


The Missions and Evangelism & Christian Education Ministries
of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco
Present



An online synchronous (live) book study

May 2018

For the Life of the World

by Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann

“A Study Guide for Reading”

prepared by Dr. Paraskevè (Eve) Tibbs

DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

Discussions will take place on four consecutive Thursdays,
7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Pacific Standard Time via Zoom video conferencing.

Meeting Link: <https://goarch.zoom.us/j/881663826>

May 3rd

Introduction: Who was Fr. Alexander Schmemmann?
Chapter 1: For the Life of the World

May 10thL

Chapter 2: The Eucharist

May 17th

Chapter 3: The Time of Mission

May 24th

Chapter 4: Of Water and the Spirit

May 3rd

Chapter 1: For the Life of the World

Summary and Questions

May 3 – Chapter 1: The Life of the World	
<p>Chapter 1 begins with a quotation from German materialistic philosopher, Ludwig Feuerbach. Even if you are not familiar with his ideas, “materialistic” is the hint that he believed there was nothing more than our physicality. This is why Feuerbach stated “Man is what he eats.” We are purely biological, in this view.</p> <p><i>How does Fr. Schmemmann interpret this differently?</i></p> <p>Fr. Schmemmann states that “food” should be considered as the central theme of the Bible.</p> <p><i>What biblical support does Fr. Schmemmann offer for this position?</i></p>	p. 11
<p>On page 12, Fr. Schmemmann discusses the different ways to speak of “religious life.”</p> <p><i>Is it the mission of the Church to help people become more “spiritual” in order to withstand the “secular?”</i></p> <p><i>Or... is it our goal to be activists for the betterment of this world?</i></p> <p><i>Should we “do more” and “pray less?” Should we “pray more” and “do less?”</i></p> <p>Consider Fr. Schmemmann’s discussion of the problem with both of these poles.</p>	p. 12-13
<p>Ultimately, Fr. Schmemmann cautions us that the “real life” of the world, “remains hopelessly beyond our religious grasp.</p> <p><i>What does he mean by this?</i></p>	p. 13
<p>On page 14, Fr. Schmemmann begins his main thesis, which is that the “poles” by which we typically think of “religion” (spiritual vs material, sacred vs profane, supernatural vs natural) are not actually in opposition to one another, and</p>	p. 14-15

May 3 – Chapter 1: The Life of the World	
<p>“nowhere in the Bible do we find the dichotomies which for us are the self-evident framework of all approaches to religion.”</p> <p><i>How does Fr. Schmemmann argue that food is not something “material” as opposed to “spiritual?”</i></p> <p><i>On page 14, Fr. Schmemmann states that “Man is a hungry being.” For what is man hungry?</i></p> <p><i>How are humans different from all other things that must eat in order to live?</i></p>	
<p><i>How does Fr. Schmemmann interpret the Genesis passage about Adam naming the animals?</i></p>	p. 15
<p><i>What does Fr. Schmemmann offer as “the first, the basic definition of man” in this world that has been created as “matter?”</i></p>	p. 15
<p><i>What does Fr. Schmemmann mean by referring to creation as a “cosmic sacrament?”</i></p>	p. 15
<p>In section 3, Fr. Schmemmann connects “the biblical story of the Fall” to food.</p> <p><i>How does Fr. Schmemmann describe “the fruit of that one tree?”</i></p> <p><i>What is the “original sin” that “blights the world?”</i></p>	p. 16
<p>The first two paragraphs of page 17 are especially profound. For example, consider how breathing is communion with God, or that air, or food, on their own, cannot bring life “by themselves they can produce only the appearance of life.”</p> <p><i>What happens when we see the world as an end in itself?</i></p>	p. 17

May 3 – Chapter 1: The Life of the World	
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>What has happened to man in this view of the world (when he does not treat the entire world as “sacramental”?)</i></p>	
<p>On pages 17 and 18, Fr. Schmemmann describes the biblical vision of the Garden, which was to have been eucharistic – “an offering of the world in thanksgiving to God.” But something happened. Most commentators suggest that Adam “disobeyed” God. But Fr. Schmemmann says this was the least of Adam’s problems.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How does Fr. Schmemmann describe the magnitude of what happened in the Garden of Eden, according to the Scripture?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What was the “real fall” of humanity?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What was supposed to happen that did not happen? How was man supposed to “transform” the created world?</i></p>	p. 18
<p>At the top of page 19, Fr. Schmemmann offers that Christ’s coming was not a “rescue operation.” It was what God “had undertaken from the beginning.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why did God plan to send the “Light” that was his Son?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Where was this Light before He came?</i></p>	p. 19
<p>As Fr. Schmemmann points out at the bottom of page 19, “nowhere in the New Testament, in fact, is Christianity presented as a cult or as a religion.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Where does he suggest “religion” is needed?</i></p>	p. 19
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why did the Christian Church need no “temple” (as did Israel)?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How was Christ’s coming “the end of ‘religion’”?</i></p>	p. 20

May 3 – Chapter 1: The Life of the World	
<p>Fr. Schmemmann’s conclusion to this chapter challenges the commonly-held idea that the Orthodox Church is “sacramental” and “liturgical”, so therefore it is “more or less indifferent to mission.</p> <p><i>Why does he say that this view of the Orthodox Church is wrong?</i></p>	

May 10th

Chapter 2: The Eucharist

Summary and Questions

May 10 – Chapter 2: The Eucharist	
<p>Chapter 2 begins with a profound statement that in the rejection of Christ, Who was “the perfect expression of life as God intended it” the world itself died.</p> <p><i>What are the ramifications of this death of the world as Fr. Schmemmann describes it?</i></p> <p><i>How does Fr. Schmemmann relate John 1:10 to this idea? (“He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not”)</i></p>	p. 23
<p>Fr. Schmemmann wrote that the reality of Christianity is that Christians are the witnesses of this “end” which is the “end of all natural joy.” But Christians have often enjoyed life as if “nothing had happened.”</p> <p><i>What does he mean here?</i></p>	p. 24
<p>In Section 2, a paradox immediately becomes apparent. Christianity is the “proclamation of the only possible joy on earth.”</p> <p><i>How can it be both “end of natural joy” and the “only possible joy on earth” at the same time?</i></p>	p. 24
<p>Fr. Schmemmann continues in Section 2, that technical discussions about the mission or methods of Church cannot be discussed except in the context of this “‘great joy’ from which everything else in Christianity developed and acquired its meaning.”</p> <p><i>How does this view (or how <u>should</u> this view) play out in parish life?</i></p>	p. 24

May 10 – Chapter 2: The Eucharist	
<i>What does Fr. Schmemmann describe as the “fulfillment of joy”?</i>	p. 25
<p>Fr. Schmemmann now takes up a definition of “liturgy” and believes that “liturgical” has been relegated to what he calls “cultic” categories. (He is not using the term “cult” as we think of dangerous religious cults today)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What is the problem with “cultic” categories as opposed to “profane” areas of life?</i></p>	p. 25
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>What is the original meaning of the Greek word “leitourgia”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>If one aspect of leitourgia is that the “whole is greater than the sum of its parts” how does this relate to Fr. Schmemmann’s identification of the “Church itself” as a leitourgia?</i></p>	p. 25
<p>The Eucharist is a “sacrament”, but Fr. Schmemmann wants to convey a far broader understanding that something that can be categorized as “sacred” vs “profane.” He writes that there are questions to which we cannot always give answers, but often the questions are asked from an incorrect perspective.</p> <p>The Orthodox Church lives in the midst of the seeming paradoxes, but they are not really paradoxes at all. He says that this is the point of this chapter. We need to look at the reality that is broader than the limits others have put on Christianity and Christian concepts.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why does he make the statement that the first condition is to “forget about any specific ‘liturgical piety?’”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>If the Church is the witness of the death of the natural world (in the Cross) how does the Church enter “into the Joy of the Lord?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How can the Church “becomes what it is?”</i></p>	p. 26

May 10 – Chapter 2: The Eucharist		
<p>Section 3 begins with a discussion of the Orthodox Eucharist, using terms such as “journey or procession” into the “dimension of the Kingdom.”</p> <p><i>Why does Fr. Schmemmann prefer the term “dimension?” How does this relate to the Orthodox Eucharist?</i></p> <p><i>When does the sacramental “journey” begin?</i></p>	p. 26-27	
<p>Fr. Schmemmann wrote that the purpose of this ‘coming together’ is not to add a religious dimension to the natural community, to make it “better” or “more Christian.”</p> <p><i>What is the purpose of the eucharistic gathering?</i></p>	p. 27	
<p>Fr. Schmemmann has already identified a number of contrasts, that seem to separate the world into mutually-exclusive categories, such as religious vs profane. At the bottom of p. 27, he writes that , “the liturgy begins as a real separation from the world.” While we want to make Christianity understandable, we should not forget that Jesus Christ is “not of this world.” Fr. Schmemmann offers several biblical examples of Christ not immediately being recognized after his Resurrection.</p> <p><i>In these post-Resurrectional stories, how was Christ actually “recognized” if He was no longer a “part” of this world?</i></p> <p><i>What was the “condition” of the early Christian mission to the world?</i></p> <p><i>Why does he suggest some Christians “never get anywhere?”</i></p>	p. 28	
<p>In Section 4, Fr. Schmemmann begins with the important beginning of the Orthodox Liturgy that is familiar to anyone who arrives to Liturgy on time: “Blessed is the Kingdom of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.”</p> <p><i>Why is this doxology so important?</i></p>	p. 29	

May 10 – Chapter 2: The Eucharist	
<p><i>What does it declare?</i></p> <p><i>What is our response to its declaration?</i></p>	
<p>At the bottom of p. 29, Fr. Schmemmann points out an important difference between the Orthodox Eucharistic Liturgy, and the medieval (and western) emphasis on the Cross.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What elements of liturgy participate in the “expectation of joy”?</i></p>	p. 29
<p>Fr. Schmemmann declares that many of the visible actions and elements of liturgy (vestments, censuring, ritual, beauty) are not “necessary.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why are they not necessary, but why must they remain?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What are the references to garments, later on the page? Why are we “like Moses”?</i></p>	p. 30
<p>In section 5, Fr. Schememann describes the “entrance” – the coming of the celebrant Priest to the altar. Here, he begins the complex discussion about the Orthodox understanding of “symbol” by stating that this “entrance” is not a symbol at all. The Church is actually moving from old into new, from “this world” into the “world to come”. He also states lower on page 31 that this “entrance” is not a “grace” that comes down.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>If not grace that comes down, what is it instead?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What are the angels eternally singing, in which the Church joins?</i></p>	p. 31
<p>Fr. Schmemmann declares that “Holy” is the real name of God – the living God of faith, not the God of scholars and philosophers. He makes a further distinction between knowledge <i>about</i> God, and knowledge <i>of</i> God.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What is the difference between knowledge about God and knowledge of God?</i></p>	p. 32
<p>In Section 6, Fr. Schememann discusses the physical stance of the celebrant. Now, the priest faces the people.</p>	p. 32

May 10 – Chapter 2: The Eucharist	
<p><i>What has changed?</i></p> <p><i>Whom is the priest now re-presenting?</i></p> <p><i>(Did you catch the difference between represent, e.g., as symbol versus “re-present” as making something actually present?)</i></p>	
<p>On page 33, Fr. Schmemmann discusses the problems with separating worship into “Word” and “Sacrament” – the two are inseparable from one another.</p> <p><i>What is the role of the reading and preaching of the Gospel in the Orthodox Church?</i></p>	p. 33
<p>In Section 7, there is discussion of a further understanding of the Eucharist, which Fr. Schmemmann views as incorrect. It is that Eucharist should include discussions about “conditions of validity” or formulas, or the moments when, for example, the elements of bread and wine actually change into the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ. These things are discussed in a “certain” theology, he says, and “eucharist” becomes a “moment”, rather than an all-embracing reality. All of life, he says, is “eucharist” – not just a moment.</p> <p><i>Reviewing page 34, what is our “eucharistic function” as human beings?</i></p> <p><i>Who are the intended “celebrants” of the sacrament of life?</i></p>	p. 34
<p>Fr. Schmemmann again draws in concepts from Chapter 1, in referencing Adam, and the “movement that Adam failed to perform.”</p> <p><i>What was Adam’s main failure, in Fr. Schmemmann’s view?</i></p> <p><i>How is this related to the Eucharist?</i></p>	p. 35
<p>Near the end of p. 35, Fr. Schmemmann provides a definition of the Church as “all those who have been accepted into the eucharistic life of Christ.”</p>	p. 35

May 10 – Chapter 2: The Eucharist	
<i>What is it that Fr. Schmemmann says we are to bring to this “all-embracing Eucharist of Christ?”</i>	
<p>Consider Fr. Schmemmann’s statement: “Remembrance is an act of <i>love</i>” and from the Liturgy: “May the Lord God remember us in His Kingdom”</p> <p><i>What is the relationship of love to remembrance?</i></p>	p. 36
<p>Sections 8 and 9 discuss specific movements of the Eucharistic Liturgy. The “anaphora”, for example, is the “lifting up” of our offering and of ourselves.</p> <p><i>How are the two (offering and ourselves) connected in the Eucharist?</i></p> <p><i>In terms of theology, where are we at this point in the Eucharistic rite? (In other words, what have we entered?)</i></p>	p. 36-37
<p>Continue reading his beautiful words describing the Eucharistic Liturgy in section 10. On the bottom of p. 38 and continuing, Fr . Schmemmann alerts the reader to another theological controversy regarding the words of institution and the invocation of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p><i>How has this “theology” taken away the eucharistic spirit from the understanding of sacrament?</i></p>	p. 38-39
<p>In section 11, Fr. Schmemann is describing the ultimate glory of the Eucharist: “This is the ultimate purpose of all that exists, the <i>end</i>, the goal and the fulfillment, because this is the <i>beginning</i>, the principle of Creation.</p> <p><i>Why is there “nothing else to remember, nothing else to be thankful for...”?</i></p>	p. 40
<p>Continue reading through Sections 12 and 13, in which Fr. Schmemann builds the case that the whole liturgy is sacramental, not just the Eucharist.</p> <p>Another seeming paradox emerges:</p>	p. 41-42

May 10 – Chapter 2: The Eucharist	
<i>How can we ascend “out of this world” in order to become partakers of the world to come, yet remain in the same world God has created and given to us?</i>	
<p>Consider section 13:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What did Jesus Christ do (that Adam did not do?)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How is Christ “absolutely eucharistic”?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Is this “supernatural”?</i></p>	p. 43
<p>Consider section 14:</p> <p>Fr. Schmemmann again strives to correct theology that has gone off-course. The wine and bread become the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, not through the words of invocation, recited by the officiant, but by the descent of the Holy Spirit.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How would these two views lead to different theological views of the Eucharist?</i></p>	p. 44
<p>At the beginning of Section 15, Fr. Schmemmann stated that “Communion is not a ‘mystical experience.’”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What does he mean by this?</i></p>	p. 44
<p>On p. 45, Fr. Schmemmann wrote “No one has been ‘worthy’ to receive communion, no one has been <i>prepared</i> for it,” yet we often talk about being prepared to receive Holy Communion.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What does he mean here?</i></p>	p. 45
<p>In section 16, he discusses our “<i>return into the world.</i>” From what you’ve read here, and in Fr. Schmemmann’s discussion in these two chapters about our created purpose, and the mission of Church, do we ever really “return” into the world as a separate reality?</p>	p. 45-46

May 17th

Chapter 3: The Time of Mission

Summary and Questions

May 17 – Chapter 3: The Time of Mission	
<p>One of Fr. Schmemmann’s many important themes is that of time. He begins Chapter 3, “The Time of Mission” where he left off in Chapter 2, “The Eucharist” as we leave the church. Time, he writes, is the “first ‘object’ of our Christian faith and action.” Time brings us both optimism (possibilities, growth, future) and pessimism (death and annihilation. Time is the only reality of life, yet “it constantly dissolves in a past which no longer is.” Here again, the Church offers us not a solution, but a “gift.”</p>	p. 47
<p>In section 2, Fr. Schmemmann reminds us of what has been forgotten – that all time becomes meaningful only in Christ.</p> <p><i>What does Fr. Schmemann point out was a major preoccupation of Christians in the past that has been forgotten in our day?</i></p>	p. 48
<p>Consider his discussion at the bottom of page 48 of the “spiritual pursuits” of Christians to live “out of time” because the Kingdom is “beyond time.”</p> <p><i>Is Fr. Schmemann reacting positively to this trend?</i></p>	p. 48-49
<p>The rhetorical question at the top of page 50 gives us insight to what is coming.</p> <p><i>Did Christ “enter time” so that we can commemorate it in fine celebrations and symbols “that have no power to give time a real meaning?”</i></p>	p. 50
<p><i>Why has Sunday been “fixed” as the new Christian Sabbath?</i></p> <p><i>Why is the “Lord’s Day” the eighth day of the week?</i></p> <p><i>Therefore, and most importantly here, why can Christianity not merely be a “spiritual and eschatological [future-oriented] faith?”</i></p>	p. 50-51

May 17 – Chapter 3: The Time of Mission	
<p>Fr. Schmemmann wrote that after Christ’s coming, “the week was no longer a sequence of ‘profane’ days with rest on the sacred day at their end.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Because of the transformation of that one day--the Lord’s Day--what has happened to all the other days?</i></p>	p. 52
<p>In Section 4, Fr. Schmemmann moves from day to the Christian year, the “second dimension of the Christian experience of time.” He will discuss the “crisis” in how Christians view the “feasts” of the Church and Christian “joy.”</p>	p. 52-53
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>How have the “sequence of liturgical commemorations and celebrations” ceased to be a generator of power?</i></p>	p. 52-54
<p>In Section 5, Fr. Schmemmann describes the meaning of the feasts, of joy, of remembrance, and ultimately, of time. His main point is that the feasts are not memorials of the past, but the past becomes present in them. Through the feasts, all time is redeemed and has meaning that time otherwise could never have.</p> <p>On the bottom of page 55, Fr. Schmemmann wrote that each Sunday in the Orthodox Church is the Day of Resurrection, and each Eucharist is Pascha.</p>	p. 55-57
<p>On page 57, he writes that Easter (Pascha) is not a commemoration of an event at all.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What is Pascha? How does Pascha give meaning to time? To life?</i></p>	p. 57
<p>Pascha is the “sacrament of time” because it “transforms the night into night ‘brighter than day’”. Pascha is what transforms the year into a Christian year. After Pascha, the year begins again.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>For how long do we experience time as feast?”</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why do we number all Sundays of the year beginning at Pascha?</i></p>	p. 58-59

May 17 – Chapter 3: The Time of Mission	
<p>In Section 6, he begins to discuss the relationship of the year and week to the daily cycle. The daily cycle of prayer is not to be merely a prayer break, but a “truly <i>liturgical act</i>.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>When does the liturgical day begin?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What is the biblical significance?</i></p>	p. 59
<p>After a discussion of the daily cycle and Vespers, at the bottom of p. 60, Fr. Schmemmann noted that the evening service of Vespers is not an “epilogue” of the day.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>With what theme does the Vespers service begin?</i></p>	p. 60
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>What is the second great theme of Vespers?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What is the third theme of Vespers?</i></p>	p. 61
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>What is the final theme of Vespers?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How is Simeon, the God-receiver, related to the last theme of Vespers?</i></p>	p. 62
<p>In Section 7, Fr. Schmemmann discusses Matins, the morning service. Unlike Vespers, which begins with the theme of creation, Matins begins with the Fall.</p> <p>At the bottom of page 63, Fr. Schmemmann wrote that the Church announces every morning that God is the Lord.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What does the Church do next?</i></p>	p. 63
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>How does the Church organize life around God?</i></p>	p. 63-64
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>What does Fr. Schmemmann assert are the two “complementary, yet absolutely essential dimensions of time”?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What does Fr. Schmemmann mean by “double experience”?</i></p>	p. 64

May 17 - Chapter 3: The Time of Mission

“Behold, I make all things new. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” (Rev. 21:5-6)

p. 65

How does this quotation from Revelation sum up this chapter?

May 24th

Chapter 4: Of Water and the Spirit

Summary and Questions

May 24 – Chapter 4: Of Water and the Spirit	
<p>Chapter 4 necessarily requires the foundation of the preceding three chapters. As Fr. Schmemmann wrote: “All that we have said about time and its transformation and renewal has simply no meaning if there is no new man to perform the sacrament of time.”</p> <p><i>What is the “sacrament of time” to which Fr. Schmemmann refers?</i></p>	p. 67
<p>Baptism has been “understood as the means to assure the individual salvation of man’s soul.”</p> <p><i>What does Fr. Schmemmann consider to be the result of this individualistic understanding of baptism?</i></p> <p><i>Does Fr. Schmemmann believe that “validity” of baptism should be an important concern? Why or why not?</i></p>	p. 67
<p>At the top of page 68, Fr. Schmemmann discussed ecclesiology (the doctrine of the church): “it is ... in and through baptism that we find the first and fundamental meaning of the Church.”</p> <p><i>How does baptism relate to “matter”?</i></p> <p><i>To Pascha?</i></p> <p><i>To the Eucharist?</i></p>	p. 68

May 24 – Chapter 4: Of Water and the Spirit	
<p>Fr. Schmemmann begins Section 2 with the contrast of the lengthy preparation for baptism by adult catechumens, vs the current “virtually universal” practice of infant baptism, in which no preparation is required by the catechumen. The entire first part of the Liturgy, called the “Liturgy of the Catechumens” is a reminder of the fact that “a great part of the church’s life was devoted to the preparation for baptism of the catechumens, those who already believed in Christ and were now on their way to the fulfillment of that faith in baptism.”</p>	p. 69
<p>In a powerful description and definition of evil, Fr. Schmemmann asserts that “the user of electricity may be ‘demonic.’”</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>What does Fr. Schmemmann mean by this statement?</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Is evil the “absence of “good?”</i></p>	p. 69-70
<p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>What is the meaning of the exorcism that precedes baptism in the Orthodox Church?</i></p>	p. 70-71
<p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>What is the first act of the Christian life?</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Why is it important to continue to use the military language of “fight” when the Church itself should “convey the idea of softness, comfort, peace?”</i></p>	p. 71
<p>At the bottom of p. 71, Fr. Schmemmann moves to a discussion of the Confession of Faith by the catechumen.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>How does Fr. Schmemmann describe the steps of the “beginning of the Christian life...the life in the Church?”</i></p>	p. 71-72
<p>The use of matter in the sacraments or Holy Mysteries of the Orthodox Church are essential.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Why is matter, in general, important?</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Why is water especially significant?</i></p>	p. 72

May 24 – Chapter 4: Of Water and the Spirit	
<p>Fr. Schmemmann discusses creation in the book of Genesis, emphasizing the liberation of the dry land from the water. In this way, he writes, creation is a transformation of water into life. Therefore, the baptismal rite acquires “truly cosmic and redemptive significance.”</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What does the blessing of the baptismal waters signify?</i></p>	p. 72-73
<p>To repeat an important theme from Chapter 1, Fr. Schmemmann reminds us that “We bless and sanctify things when we offer them to God in a eucharistic movement of our whole being.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>How is baptism described by Fr. Schmemmann as eucharistic?</i></p>	p. 73
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Since water is “the image and presence of the world”, how is it also the “image and presence of Christ?”</i></p>	p. 74
<p>Another seeming paradox appears at the top of page 74.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Baptism is described as “the gift of the ‘newness of life’” but it is also the “likeness of death.” Why is this so?</i></p>	p. 74
<p>The newly baptized person is immediately clothed in a white garment.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What is the meaning of this?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Is the white garment a symbol?</i></p>	p. 75
<p>Section 4 begins with the “second sacrament of initiation” – that of Chrismation (or confirmation) Fr. Schmemmann thinks it is not really a separate sacrament, but the “fulfillment of baptism” or “its “confirmation” by the Holy Spirit.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What is the analogy Fr. Schmemmann offers to distinguish Chrismation from Baptism?</i></p>	p. 75

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<i>If Baptism is the sharing in Christ's death and Resurrection, in what event does Chrismation share?</i>	p. 75
<p>Again, we return to an important theme from Chapter 1.</p> <p><i>If every human was meant to be “priest” – offering creation and self back to God in eucharistic thanksgiving – when does the “ordination” to this priesthood take place?</i></p>	p. 75
<p>At the bottom of p. 75, Fr. Schmemmann wrote: “The whole man is now made the temple of God, and his whole life is from now on a <i>liturgy</i>.” And then he rails against the “pseudo-Christian opposition of the ‘spiritual’ and the ‘material.’”</p> <p><i>Why is this point of view consistent with Orthodox Baptism and Chrismation?</i></p> <p><i>Why is nothing “neutral?”</i></p>	p. 76
<p><i>Does a baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christian person retain his or her personality after this ordination?</i></p> <p><i>Why could piety possibly be a “very dangerous thing?”</i></p>	p. 76
<p>In Section 5, Fr. Schmemmann brings together all the sacraments under the “natural fulfillment” which is the “Pascha of the Kingdom.” “Baptism opens the doors of the Kingdom and the Holy Spirit leads us into its joy and peace, and this means into the eucharistic fulfillment.” Because of this truth, baptism and confirmation are immediately followed by a procession around the baptismal font.</p> <p><i>What was the origin of this procession? What does it mean?</i></p>	p. 77
<p>Finally, in Section 6, Fr. Schmemmann contrasts the Orthodox idea of “penance” with that of other views, especially views that assign to baptism the “sheer</p>	p. 79

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<p>'juridical' power to absolve sins." Although Fr. Schmemmann affirms that the sacrament of forgiveness is Baptism, it is not because it operates a juridical removal of sins.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why does Fr. Schmemmann assert that Baptism is the sacrament of forgiveness?</i></p>	
<p>Finally, there is presented a contrast between Christians who believe they are already saved, and are therefore filled with a self-satisfaction, versus those who experience "the one true sadness of 'not being a saint'.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Why does Fr. Schmemmann write that "moral" Christians are missing something very important? What are they missing?</i></p>	p. 79-80
<p>"The feast is impossible without the fast." The Church is the gift of the Kingdom, but this very gift "makes obvious our absence from the Kingdom, our alienation from God."</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>What brings us "again and again into the joy of the Paschal banquet?"</i></p>	p. 79
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>If the sacrament of penance is not "a sacred and juridical 'power' given by God to men," what is it?</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>If the sacrament of penance is "not a repetition of baptism," what is it?</i></p>	p. 79