

A Faith for the Future
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This has been a question asked since the beginning of Christianity when the first church was founded by the apostles. This was evidenced by the trails, tribulations, and persecutions that the Church suffered at the hands of those who questioned its relevancy.

In every generation there are seers who predict the death of religion, but the very fact that it is still the topic of conversation and discussion almost 2,000 years later, is the best proof of religious vitality.

We are living in an age of religious revolution. It seems that the Churches are beginning to realize that they have to make themselves more adaptable to modern times, if they are to avoid having their priests, seminaries, and nuns leave the Holy Order.

The Western rite churches have already made some changes trying to eliminate medieval attitudes and practices that have little meaning for modern man. Their people are no longer content just to pray, pay and obey. Their priests and bishops want a voice in their religious affairs. Matters of contraception, celibacy, and mixed marriages are problems still facing them today. The laity are finding themselves as participants in the Liturgy in their own language and are now active in parish and diocesan councils. Liturgical changes of various kinds including new marriage and baptismal rites are now in effect. They are now encouraged to see non-Catholic Christians as brothers instead of heretics.

While the Western rite churches are doctrinally distressed, the Orthodox Churches seem spiritually stricken with apathy and complacency. But it is not the Church that is irrelevant, but rather, it is the people of the Church who make it irrelevant to themselves. Our Churches have become social lodges where many times the priests are harassed by the people of the parishes when they try to enforce Orthodox tradition. Too much is often expected of the priests, nevertheless they perform their duties without complaining.

In this fast moving world, we have made Christ's Church almost a business-oriented organization and have forgotten the meaning of charity, love, brotherhood. If the Church is to become more relevant to us, we must become less involved in our involvements and place less emphasis on materialism. We must turn away from our sins and be reconverted to Christ and the Gospel for our salvation. We must also take full part in the life of the Church using our time and our money generously to help support the work of the Church.

I believe the Church will always be relevant. The Orthodox Church edifice is the dwelling place of God and the Holy Spirit and is the body of Christ. It is through the Church we are able to experience Christ through the Eucharist, the life-giving body and blood of Christ. All those who share, with faith, this divine act, not only are able to live with new righteousness benefiting their souls, but become brothers to each other.

Life in the Church is life in the truth which possesses fullness and purity. To the Orthodox Church is committed the deposit of faith, the truth of the divine revelation, which is the same today as it was in the first century and is not susceptible to change. It is inflexible and will not suffer compromise. We must be careful to guard and preserve this Faith.

Because human nature is weak and fallible, we need the strength and ideals of the Church to help us escape the evil in the world and to avoid its temptations. We need it for our salvation if we are to have everlasting life.

Now is the time to wake out of our sleep and shed the yolk of apathy and complacency. It is the time to propagate our Faith and let the light of Orthodoxy shine in the world. Getting to know the heart of Orthodoxy can be found in its rites, but it may be difficult to obtain this spiritual development. The Christian people who are seeking Orthodoxy will find it, for it is said, "Seek and ye shall find."