

## The Orthodox Church Today: A Survey

**A national study of parish members in the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA) and Orthodox Church in America (OCA).**

### Composition of Survey Participants

- GOA - respondents from the parishes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (GOA)
- OCA - respondents from the parishes of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA)
- Indp – control group of respondents from both GOA and OCA parishes, who volunteered to participate in the survey independently (the other respondents were recruited by the parish clergy) by responding to announcements on the OCA and GOA denominational web-sites.

	GOA	OCA	Indp (*)	Total
Number of respondents	442	494	66	936
<b>% in whole sample</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>53%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>100%</b>

(\*) **Note:** the responses of “independent respondents” are also included into whole samples for GOA and OCA. Therefore the sum total on the last row exceeds 100%.

### I. Personal Backgrounds of Survey Participants

**Position in a parish:** What is your position in this parish? (%)

	Parish council member	Sunday school teacher/director	Church choir member/director	Regular member, not in a leadership position currently
GOA, %	19	16	13	61
OCA, %	30	14	29	49
Indp, %	20	26	33	47
<b>Total, %</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>55</b>

**Note:** the respondents can make multiple choices in this question (e.g. they could be simultaneously parish Council members, choir members and Sunday school teachers). Therefore the sum total on each row exceeds 100%.

**Gender:** What is your gender? (%)

	Male	Female
GOA, %	52	48
OCA, %	50	50
Indp, %	54	46
<b>Total, %</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>49</b>

**Age:** What is your age? (%)

	Younger than 45	45-64	65 and older	<b>Average age, years</b>
GOA, %	31	43	26	<b>53</b>
OCA, %	34	45	21	<b>51</b>
Indp, %	32	44	24	<b>53</b>
<b>Total, %</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>52</b>

**Duration of attendance in a parish:** Approximately, how many years have you attended this parish? (%)

	2 years or less	3-10	11-20	More than 20 years	Average duration of membership in a parish, years
GOA, %	9	31	20	40	22
OCA, %	13	40	15	33	18
Indp, %	14	34	15	37	21
Total, %	11	36	17	36	20

**Regularity of attendance:** Approximately, how frequently do you typically go to the church? (%)

	Several times a week	About once a week	2-3 times a month	Once a month or less
GOA, %	27	57	13	3
OCA, %	41	55	3	1
Indp, %	30	62	6	2
Total, %	34	56	8	2

**Place of birth:** Where you were born? (%)

	North America: USA + Canada	Eastern Europe (incl. former USSR)	Western Europe	Greece and Middle East	Other
GOA, %	86	2	1	10	1
OCA, %	92	4	3	1	0
Indp, %	95	0	0	5	0
Total, %	89	3	2	5	1

**Mother language:** What was your first "mother" language that you spoke at home as a child? (%)

	English	Any other than English language
GOA, %	58	42
OCA, %	85	15
Indp, %	77	23
Total, %	72	28

**Education:** What is the highest level of your education? (%)

	High school or less	Some college or technical school	College graduate: Bachelor's Degree	Master's degree	Doctoral degree
GOA, %	8	22	37	24	9
OCA, %	10	23	36	24	7
Indp, %	3	8	42	35	12
Total, %	9	22	37	24	8

**Religious upbringing:** When you were a child, was the Church a part of regular life in your family? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
Yes, my parents were active in church and we attended church regularly	70	67	69	68
We attended church occasionally, when our family life and other circumstances allowed	23	22	16	23
My parents were not interested in church, and it was not part of my family life when I was a child	7	11	15	9

**Religious upbringing:** What was your Church affiliation before you became an Orthodox Christian? (%)

	<b>I have always been Orthodox Christian</b>	<b>I am a convert, including:</b>	Former Catholics	Former Liberal Protest.	Former Moderate Protestant	Former Evangelical Protestant	Former Agnostics
GOA, %	<b>71</b>	<b>29</b>	12	2	8	6	1
OCA, %	<b>49</b>	<b>51</b>	14	5	14	14	4
Indp, %	<b>58</b>	<b>42</b>	10	9	12	8	3
Total, %	<b>59</b>	<b>41</b>	14	3	11	10	3

**Theological stance:** When you think about *your theological position and approach to church life*, which word best describes where you stand? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
I am Conservative. Orthodox Church <u>should avoid</u> changes in its life and theology	28	28	21	28
I am Traditional. Any changes in the Orthodox Church <u>should be evolutionary</u>	42	40	46	41
I am Moderate. I am willing <u>to accept</u> new developments and changes in Church life depending on local circumstances	26	28	29	27
I am Liberal. I am willing <u>to initiate and promote</u> new developments and changes in Church life	4	4	4	4

**Relation to outside-of-Church community:** Do you have close friends outside of the Orthodox Church? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
Not really, other than business, I have few personal social contacts with people who are Non-Orthodox	4	3	3	3
I have some friends who are Non-Orthodox, but most of my friends are Orthodox Christians. Basically, I prefer to have friends who are also Orthodox Christians	22	18	21	20
I probably have equal numbers of friends who are Orthodox and Non-Orthodox	43	39	47	41
Most of my personal friends are not Orthodox Christians	22	23	21	28
I don't care much about the religion of my friends	9	7	8	8

**II. The Local Context: the Characteristics of the Parishes**

**The size of the parishes:** the total number of persons – adults and children - who are “*present in the church on a typical Sunday*”: (%)

	Less than 100 persons	100-299 persons	300-499 persons	500 and more persons	<b>Average number of persons in church on a typical Sunday</b>
GOA, %	22	48	24	6	<b>236</b>
OCA, %	58	38	3	1	<b>102</b>
Indp, %	38	50	10	2	<b>141</b>
Total, %	42	42	13	3	<b>163</b>

**Parish development:** Compared to the present, what do you think will happen to your parish in the next 5 years? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
It will grow	60	58	<b>41</b>	59
It will stay the same	32	26	31	29
It will decline	8	16	<b>28</b>	12

**Parish identity:** How well does each of the following statements describe your parish?  
(all respondents, % on each row add to 100%)

	Quite Well	Somewhat	Slightly or not at all
Our parish is open to social, ethnic and cultural diversity	<b>66</b>	26	8
Our parish is vibrant, active and alive	<b>58</b>	38	4
New people are easily incorporated into the life of our parish	<b>56</b>	38	6
Our parish expects people to think and to learn	<b>56</b>	36	8
All parishioners are given opportunity to participate in decision making	<b>56</b>	33	11
We have good programs and activities for children and youth	<b>53</b>	36	11
Our parish is like a close-knit family	<b>51</b>	44	5
We have well organized social activities and fellowship groups	<b>50</b>	40	10
Our parish has a strong ethnic heritage that we are trying to preserve	<b>40</b>	34	26
The local community is well informed about our parish	<b>28</b>	50	22
We do not have problem finding people to volunteer to work in the parish	<b>27</b>	50	23
We welcome changes and are always ready to try something new	<b>18</b>	60	22

**% of respondents saying that the following statements describe their parishes "QUITE WELL."**

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
Our parish is open to social, ethnic and cultural diversity	63	70	<b>51</b>	66
Our parish is vibrant, active and alive	64	52	<b>39</b>	58
New people are easily incorporated into the life of our parish	54	58	<b>45</b>	56
Our parish expects people to think and to learn	57	54	<b>37</b>	56
All parishioners are given opportunity to participate in decision making	52	59	<b>41</b>	56
We have good programs and activities for children and youth	67	41	<b>33</b>	53
Our parish is like a close-knit family	49	53	<b>33</b>	51
We have well organized social activities and fellowship groups	62	40	<b>36</b>	50
Our parish has a strong ethnic heritage that we are trying to preserve	59	22	<b>35</b>	40
The local community is well informed about our parish	39	19	<b>15</b>	28
We do not have problem finding people to volunteer to work in the parish	25	29	<b>9</b>	27
We welcome changes and are always ready to try something new	20	16	<b>14</b>	18

**Attractiveness of a parish.** Out of the following, please, choose THREE aspects of your parish life that you personally MOST value:

**% of the respondents who selected the following items among their THREE choices**

	GOA	OCA	Indp	Total
Liturgy, sharing in Holy Communion/Eucharist	89	93	88	91
Spiritual guidance and care provided by your priest	46	55	<b>39</b>	51
Sermons and homilies	29	36	33	33
Sunday school for children and teenagers	29	20	24	24
Practical care of parishioners for one another in times of needs	17	30	30	24
Religious education programs for adults	26	20	17	23
Parish's social activities and fellowship groups	20	16	20	18
Programs for children and youth other than Sunday school	22	8	14	15
Evangelism: reaching out to those who do not attend church	5	8	11	6
Family oriented programs such as family nights, premarital counseling, young family counseling, etc.	6	2	4	4

**Needs of a parish:** What is most needed for your parish to strengthen and to grow? (all respondents, % on each line add to 100%)

	<b>This is very urgent for us</b>	This will be helpful	We are basically satisfied with this aspect
More money	<b>34</b>	57	9
More volunteers and enthusiastic people	<b>30</b>	57	13
Clearer vision of parish future	<b>27</b>	49	35
More youth involvement	<b>26</b>	52	22
More agreement and unity among parishioners	<b>17</b>	48	35
More effective lay leadership	<b>16</b>	44	40
More active congregational participation in liturgy	<b>13</b>	44	43
Better organized religious education programs	<b>12</b>	43	45
Better organized social activities and fellowship groups	<b>11</b>	48	41
More effective pastoral leadership	<b>9</b>	20	71
More innovative approach to liturgical life	<b>8</b>	34	58

**Needs of a parish:** % of respondents saying that the following is **“very urgent for our parish”** in order to strengthen and to grow

	GOA	OCA	Indp	Total
More money	41	27	<b>52</b>	34
More volunteers and enthusiastic people	34	26	<b>42</b>	30
Clearer vision of parish future	29	24	<b>44</b>	27
More youth involvement	27	25	32	26
More agreement and unity among parishioners	21	14	21	17
More effective lay leadership	21	12	<b>35</b>	16
More active congregational participation in liturgy	15	12	20	13
Better organized religious education programs	14	11	<b>26</b>	12
Better organized social activities and fellowship groups	13	9	<b>21</b>	11
More effective pastoral leadership	10	8	<b>27</b>	9
More innovative approach to liturgical life	10	6	<b>20</b>	8

**Attitudes to Church life:** In general, how you would describe your parish's approaches to church life in comparison with "typical" Greek Orthodox or OCA parishes? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
We are more "modern" and tend to allow for more differences of opinion in application of Orthodox principles to everyday parish life	27	18	<b>12</b>	<b>22</b>
We are similar to "typical" Greek Orthodox parishes	56	59	66	57
We are more "traditional," and tend to be stricter in applying Orthodox principles to everyday parish life	17	23	22	21

**Financial commitment of parishioners:** How would you describe the strength of the financial commitment demonstrated by your fellow parishioners? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
Most of our parishioners willingly contribute generously to the parish	25	31	28	28
Many of our parishioners have limited finances, but nevertheless they contribute what they can to the parish	24	34	<b>17</b>	29
Some of our parishioners demonstrate a strong financial commitment to the parish, while others don't care at all	32	20	29	26
There is a small core group of parishioners who donate most of the parish contributions while most give very little	16	15	<b>26</b>	15
Unfortunately, very few of our parishioners consider parish needs among their personal priorities	3	0	0	2

### **III. Laity' vision for the Orthodox Church in the US**

What broad patterns in American society do you think will have the **MOST INFLUENCE** on the Orthodox Churches in the US in the foreseeable future? Please choose **UP TO THREE ANSWERS**.

**% of respondents who selected the following among their THREE choices**

	GOA	OCA	Indp	Total
More people living in "non-traditional" families	57	44	53	50
Rise in consumerism and materialism	42	46	<b>55</b>	<b>44</b>
New forms of religious participation: Internet churches, New Age religions, Mega-Churches	30	33	33	32
Increasing racial and ethnic diversity	36	27	36	32
More educated population	31	25	32	28
New and changing economic trends	22	25	18	23
Further growth of the Internet	15	22	17	19
Decline in civic involvement	17	16	24	17
War and terrorism	9	10	15	10

Of the following, which **ONE** best describes your opinion of the present and future directions for the Orthodox Church in the US (%):

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
We need to get back to the way we did things in the past	7	5	8	6
We are faithfully maintaining our historic traditions and we should continue to do so	48	41	<b>34</b>	<b>44</b>
The Orthodox Church in the US is currently in the process of numerous changes and I feel optimistic about this	28	29	25	29
I feel that we are too strongly "tied" to our past. We need rethink where we are now and decide about new directions	17	25	<b>34</b>	<b>21</b>

**What Needs to Be Openly Discussed in the Church:** Numerous issues relating to the Church life are being discussed today and may also have impact on your parish. In your opinion, how important would an open discussion be in the Church in the following areas? (% of all respondents, % on each row add to 100%)

	<b>Very important to be discussed</b>	Somewhat important to be discussed	Not important or don't want it to be discussed
Issue of youth and young adults leaving the Church	<b>80</b>	18	2
Relationship between mainstream American culture and traditions and requirements of the Orthodox Church	<b>58</b>	36	6
Representation of the local parish at decision making on the diocesan or national level	<b>45</b>	46	9
The issue of "ethnic" versus "American" parishes	<b>42</b>	46	12
Issue of interfaith (Orthodox – non-Christian) marriages	<b>41</b>	43	16
Issue of mixed (Orthodox – non-Orthodox) marriages	<b>37</b>	49	14
The relationship between American Orthodox Churches and the Mother Churches in the Old World	<b>35</b>	47	18
The process of selecting bishops	<b>29</b>	44	27
Recruiting priests from converts to Orthodoxy	<b>28</b>	51	21
Sharing ministry with laity	<b>27</b>	52	21
The lack of clear professional standards for priests	<b>25</b>	45	30
Family problems of Orthodox priests	<b>19</b>	47	34
Ordination of women	<b>10</b>	21	69

**What Needs to Be Openly Discussed in the Church:** Numerous issues relating to the Church life are being discussed today and may also have impact on your parish. In your opinion, how important would an open discussion be in the Church in the following areas?

**% of respondents who said that the following subjects are "VERY IMPORTANT TO BE OPENLY DISCUSSED" in the Church**

	GOA	OCA	Indp	Total
Issue of youth and young adults leaving the Church	84	77	82	80
Relationship between mainstream American culture And traditions and requirements of the Orthodox Church	63	54	61	58
Representation of the local parish at decision making on the diocesan or national level	46	44	42	45
The issue of "ethnic" versus "American" parishes	45	40	39	42
Issue of interfaith (Orthodox – non-Christian) marriages	<b>53</b>	<b>30</b>	44	41
Issue of mixed (Orthodox – non-Orthodox) marriages	<b>51</b>	<b>25</b>	44	37
The relationship between American Orthodox Churches and the Mother Churches in the Old World	39	31	<b>50</b>	<b>35</b>
The process of selecting bishops	25	34	30	29
Recruiting priests from converts to Orthodoxy	32	25	31	28
Sharing ministry with laity	<b>32</b>	<b>22</b>	36	27
The lack of clear professional standards for priests	28	23	32	25
Family problems of Orthodox priests	23	15	20	19
Ordination of women	13	8	9	10

**Problems facing the Church:** Below is the list of issues that some people consider problems in the Church. In your view, how much of a problem is each of the following? (% of all respondents, each row adds to 100%)

	Serious problem	Somewhat of a problem	Not a problem
That parents don't teach their children the faith the way they should	48	41	11
That youths and young adults are not as involved in the Church as much as they should be	45	42	13
That parishioners no longer live up to the obligations involved in practicing the Orthodox faith	36	50	14
That there is poor religious education in the local parishes	26	44	30
That clergy and laity are growing apart in their perceptions about Church life	17	45	38
That everyday Church life in many parishes is out of touch with reality and daily needs of parishioners	16	48	36
That lay people have little say in decision making in the Church	12	48	40
That preaching doesn't address the needs and issues of modern life	11	30	59
That the liturgy is hard to understand	10	24	66
That women are not involved enough in Church decision making	9	32	59
That lay people are not consulted enough in forming the Church's social and moral teaching	8	38	54

**Problems facing the Church:** Below is the list of issues that some people consider problems in the Church. In your view, how much of a problem is each of the following?

**% of respondents who said that the following is "SERIOUS PROBLEM" in the Church**

	GOA	OCA	Indp	Total
That parents don't teach their children the faith the way they should	52	45	<b>64</b>	<b>48</b>
That youths and young adults are not as involved in the Church as much as they should be	49	42	48	45
That parishioners no longer live up to the obligations involved in practicing the Orthodox faith	37	36	<b>46</b>	<b>36</b>
That there is poor religious education in the local parishes	26	26	<b>38</b>	<b>26</b>
That everyday Church life in many parishes is out of touch with reality and daily needs of parishioners	17	15	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>
That clergy and laity are growing apart in their perceptions about Church life	21	13	<b>41</b>	<b>17</b>
That lay people have little say in decision making in the Church	12	12	<b>28</b>	<b>12</b>
That preaching doesn't address the needs and issues of modern life	17	7	20	11
That the liturgy is hard to understand	16	4	9	10
That women are not involved enough in Church decision making	11	6	12	9
That lay people are not consulted enough in forming the Church's social and moral teaching	9	7	12	8

**Orthodox unity in America:** The subject of "Orthodox unity" in America has been discussed for a long time. What do you think about the current situation and possible future developments? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
I think that the question of Orthodox unity is unnecessarily overemphasized in our Church life and that there are many other issues which are more urgent and important for the future of Orthodoxy in America	13	8	8	10
I think that we are on the right path. Orthodox unity in US will be eventually achieved through the increasing co-operation among the various American Orthodox jurisdictions in the framework of SCOBA and through the other inter-Orthodox agencies and organizations – the way it goes now	48	37	36	42
I think that very little has been done so far to achieve this goal. We need more consistent efforts and should act much more intentionally.	32	47	39	40
Any other answer	7	8	17	8



#### IV. Laity' vision of the Orthodox Priesthood

If you had a son and he considered becoming a priest, would you encourage or rather discourage him? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
Definitely or rather encourage	77	77	78	77
Unsure	18	20	17	19
Definitely or rather discourage	5	3	5	4

Please, choose ONE of the following two statements (%):

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
In a rapidly changing world, it is essential that priests follow the inherited traditions and practices of the Church	60	65	61	63
In a rapidly changing world, it is essential that priests should be open to changes and adaptations of established Church traditions to contemporary realities	40	35	39	37

What do you think are **THREE MAIN roles** that your priest actually plays in your parish?

% of respondents who selected the following among their **THREE choices**

	GOA	OCA	Indp	Total
Leading worship and administering the sacraments	91	95	94	93
Teaching parishioners about Orthodox doctrine and traditions	58	51	54	54
Offering his guidance and being a spiritual model for parishioners	46	49	36	47
Visiting, counseling, helping parishioners	40	47	42	44
Providing a vision and goals for the parish's future	20	17	20	18
Administering the work of the parish	17	16	27	17
Reaching out to non-Orthodox people	9	12	6	11
Training parishioners for various Church ministries	3	4	4	4

Which of the following is the best description of **the style of leadership** of your priest (%)?

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
Our priest makes most of decisions, parishioners generally follow him	17	12	<b>28</b>	<b>15</b>
Our priest inspires parishioners to act by themselves, but acts alone if he believes that it is needed	51	55	44	53
Our priest acts mainly on goals that parishioners have settled, although he tries to influence their decisions	25	22	17	23
Parishioners come up with most of initiatives and make most of the decisions about parish's directions and programs	7	11	11	9

To what extent does your parish priest take into account the ideas of parishioners? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
To a great extent	54	63	<b>41</b>	<b>59</b>
To some extent	40	33	39	36
To a small extent or not at all	6	4	<b>20</b>	<b>5</b>

There are various areas of pastoral work and practical skills required from clergy. In your opinion, how experienced and confident is your parish priest with regard to each of the items listed below?

(% of all respondents, % on each row add to 100%)

	Our priest is confident and experienced in this area.	Our priest can increase his skills in this area, but this is not a major concern for us.	I think that for our priest this is one of the major challenges in his work.
Ability to refer to and to interpret Scripture easily	87	11	2
Ability to provide religious education for parishioners	82	14	4
Ability to relate social issues to Orthodox doctrine	81	16	3
Ability to give spiritual direction for parishioners	81	15	4
Ability to preach well	80	15	5
Ability to counsel and help parishioners with everyday life issues.	78	17	5
Knowledge of other religious traditions	75	22	3
Evangelism and working with converts	73	20	7
Working with youth	71	21	8
Family counseling	70	24	6
Ability to be a good parish administrator	69	24	7
Ability to celebrate liturgy in languages other than English	63	32	5
Ability to deal with a conflict in a parish	63	26	11
Promoting a clear vision and goals for parish's future	62	29	9
Ability to communicate in languages other than English	56	38	6
Social outreach into local community	52	33	15
Fundraising and financial skills	48	40	12

There are various areas of pastoral work and practical skills required from clergy. In your opinion, how experienced and confident is your parish priest with regard to each of the items listed below?

% of respondents reporting that **“Our priest is experienced and confident in this area.”**

	All respondents, %	GOA, %	OCA, %
Ability to refer to and to interpret Scripture easily	87	88	87
Ability to provide religious education for parishioners	82	83	81
Ability to relate social issues to Orthodox doctrine	81	81	80
Ability to give spiritual direction for parishioners	81	81	81
Ability to preach well	80	80	80
Ability to counsel and help parishioners with everyday life issues.	78	79	78
Knowledge of other religious traditions	75	76	75
Evangelism and working with converts	73	71	74
Working with youth	71	74	68
Family counseling	70	75	67
Ability to be a good parish administrator	69	70	68
Ability to celebrate liturgy in languages other than English	63	85	42
Ability to deal with a conflict in a parish	63	61	65
Promoting a clear vision and goals for parish’s future	62	65	60
Ability to communicate in languages other than English	56	75	39
Social outreach into local community	52	54	51
Fundraising and financial skills	48	52	45

% of respondents reporting that **“I think that for our priest this is one of the major challenges in his work.”**

	GOA	OCA	Indp	Total
Social outreach into local community	15	14	<b><u>36</u></b>	<b><u>15</u></b>
Fundraising and financial skills	12	12	<b><u>32</u></b>	<b><u>12</u></b>
Ability to deal with a conflict in a parish	12	10	<b><u>29</u></b>	<b><u>11</u></b>
Promoting a clear vision and goals for parish’s future	8	9	<b><u>21</u></b>	<b><u>9</u></b>
Working with youth	8	8	<b><u>21</u></b>	<b><u>8</u></b>
Ability to be a good parish administrator	7	6	<b><u>24</u></b>	<b><u>7</u></b>
Evangelism and working with converts	7	7	<b><u>21</u></b>	<b><u>7</u></b>
Family counseling	6	5	<b><u>16</u></b>	<b><u>6</u></b>
Ability to communicate in languages other than English	3	8	9	6
Ability to preach well	6	4	<b><u>20</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
Ability to counsel and help parishioners with everyday life issues.	6	4	<b><u>18</u></b>	<b><u>5</u></b>
Ability to celebrate liturgy in languages other than English	2	7	6	5
Ability to provide religious education for parishioners	4	3	<b><u>12</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>
Ability to give spiritual direction for parishioners	5	3	<b><u>17</u></b>	<b><u>4</u></b>
Ability to relate social issues to Orthodox doctrine	4	2	<b><u>14</u></b>	<b><u>3</u></b>
Knowledge of other religious traditions	4	2	9	3
Ability to refer to and to interpret Scripture easily	2	1	6	2

#### IV. Laity' Vision of Various Church Related Subjects

What is your approach to teaching the meaning of the Christian faith? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
There is one best and true interpretation and the Orthodox Church comes closest to teaching it.	75	82	80	79
There is one best interpretation, but no Christian Church can legitimately claim to be closer to it than another	11	8	9	9
There are probably many interpretations which are equally valid. Therefore, different churches may be equally correct teaching Christian faith.	14	10	11	12

Which type of parish do you prefer? (%)

	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
A parish that requires uniformity of belief and practice, where people hold more or less the same views	69	67	59	68
A parish where people hold different views but keep them to themselves	4	8	9	6
A "big-tent" parish that tolerates diversity of beliefs and practices, where people hold different views and openly discuss their disagreements and varied approaches	27	25	32	26

How important to you are the following sources of authority? (% of all respondents, % on each line add to 100%)

	Fundamental	Somewhat important	Of little importance
Sacred Scripture	92	7	1
Doctrine and traditions of the Orthodox Church	88	12	0
Guidance of your parish priest	74	25	1
Guidance of your ruling Metropolitan	49	40	11
Human reason and understanding	45	45	10
Personal experience	44	47	9

How important to you are the following sources of authority?

**% of respondents reporting that the following sources of authority are of "fundamental importance" to them**

	GOA	OCA	Indp	Total
Sacred Scripture	91	93	88	92
Doctrine and traditions of the Orthodox Church	86	90	86	88
Guidance of your parish priest	74	74	61	74
Guidance of your ruling Metropolitan	45	53	41	49
Human reason and understanding	55	36	47	45
Personal experience	50	39	38	44

Below is a pair of the statements describing the things you might have learned while growing up. Please, indicate which ONE statement you learned the MOST about while growing up. (%)

While growing up, did you learn most	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
About the importance of the Orthodox Church	24	15	29	19
About the importance of your personal relationship with God	35	48	37	42
About both Equally	41	37	34	39

Below is a pair of the statements describing the things you might have learned while growing up. Please, indicate which ONE statement you learned the MOST about while growing up. (%)

While growing up, did you learn most	GOA, %	OCA, %	Indp, %	Total, %
That the Orthodox Church is the only true Church	38	32	41	39
That being a good Christian is more important than the denomination or Church one belongs to	37	47	41	43
About both Equally	25	21	18	22

The following statements deal with what many think it takes to be a good Orthodox Christian. Please, indicate if you think a person can be a good Orthodox Christian **WITHOUT** performing these actions? (% on each line add to 100%)

	No, he/she cannot be considered a good Orthodox Christian	Yes, he/she still can be a good Orthodox Christian
Without believing that Jesus rose from the dead	98	2
Without believing that in the Eucharist, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus	97	3
Without donating time or money to help the parish	73	27
Without donating time or money to help the poor	72	28
Without their marriage being approved by Orthodox Church	60	40
Without observing lent and fasting on certain days	50	50
Without obeying the priest	47	53
Without going to church every Sunday	40	60

The following statements deal with what many think it takes to be a good Orthodox Christian. Please, indicate if you think a person can be a good Orthodox Christian **WITHOUT** performing these actions?

**% of respondents saying that "No, he/she cannot be considered a good Orthodox Christian"**

	GOA	OCA	Indp	Total
Without going to church every Sunday	33	45	36	40
Without observing lent and fasting on certain days	44	55	48	50
Without believing that in the Eucharist, the bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus	96	97	92	97
Without obeying the priest	44	51	38	47
Without their marriage being approved by Orthodox Church	65	55	50	60
Without donating time or money to help the poor	69	76	78	72
Without donating time or money to help the parish	70	76	76	73
Without believing that Jesus rose from the dead	97	99	94	98

Would you support or oppose women in the following roles in the Church? (% on each row add to 100%)

	Oppose	Not sure	Support
Women as an altar server	51	18	31
Women as a deacon	52	19	29
Women as a priest	77	13	10

Would you support or oppose women in the following roles in the Church? (% of respondents saying that they **WOULD SUPPORT WOMEN** in the following roles)

	GOA	OCA	Indp	Total
Women as an altar server	38	25	41	31
Women as a deacon	36	23	44	29
Women as a priest	14	6	15	10

By marking an “X” in the appropriate box, please indicate to which extent you **AGREE** OR **DISAGREE** with the following statements:

Orthodox bishops in America strive to guide the Church wisely and competently

	“Agree”	“Disagree”	“Neutral or unsure”
<b>GOA, %</b>	62	15	23
<b>OCA, %</b>	53	20	27
<b>Indp, %</b>	55	30	15
<b>Total, %</b>	57	28	25

On the whole, parish priests do a good job

	“Agree”	“Disagree”	“Neutral or unsure”
<b>GOA, %</b>	87	4	9
<b>OCA, %</b>	87	2	11
<b>Indp, %</b>	71	12	17
<b>Total, %</b>	87	3	10

In general there is a good match between our parish and our priest.

	“Agree”	“Disagree”	“Neutral or unsure”
<b>GOA, %</b>	89	5	6
<b>OCA, %</b>	92	3	5
<b>Indp, %</b>	71	21	8
<b>Total, %</b>	91	4	5

Ordination to the priesthood means an entirely new status which makes priest “different” from the laity within Church

	“Agree”	“Disagree”	“Neutral or unsure”
<b>GOA, %</b>	79	13	8
<b>OCA, %</b>	75	16	9
<b>Indp, %</b>	67	29	6
<b>Total, %</b>	77	14	9

In the case of disagreements with laity, priests should have the final authority in the parish.

	“Agree”	“Disagree”	“Neutral or unsure”
<b>GOA, %</b>	58	17	25
<b>OCA, %</b>	67	12	21
<b>Indp, %</b>	56	23	21
<b>Total, %</b>	63	14	23

The Orthodox parish is like a family: people shouldn’t even think about leaving with the intent to “pick-and-choose” another parish.

	“Agree”	“Disagree”	“Neutral or unsure”
<b>GOA, %</b>	48	30	22
<b>OCA, %</b>	50	29	21

<b>Indp, %</b>	38	38	24
<b>Total, %</b>	49	30	21

To be truly Orthodox Christian, one must accept unquestioningly all teachings and requirements of the Orthodox Church.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	62	24	16
<b>OCA, %</b>	65	25	10
<b>Indp, %</b>	48	45	7
<b>Total, %</b>	63	24	13

Only members of the Orthodox Church can be saved.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	8	75	17
<b>OCA, %</b>	7	78	15
<b>Indp, %</b>	17	80	3
<b>Total, %</b>	7	77	16

Orthodox Christianity contains a greater share of truth than other religions do.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	80	8	12
<b>OCA, %</b>	85	5	10
<b>Indp, %</b>	89	6	5
<b>Total, %</b>	83	6	11

The only reason for Orthodox to participate in inter-Christian meetings and discussions is to spread the message of Orthodox Christianity and to seek conversion of others into the Orthodox faith.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	31	52	17
<b>OCA, %</b>	38	47	15
<b>Indp, %</b>	36	53	11
<b>Total, %</b>	35	49	16

I cannot imagine being anything but Orthodox

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	88	7	5
<b>OCA, %</b>	86	8	6
<b>Indp, %</b>	91	6	3
<b>Total, %</b>	87	8	5

It is very important to me that the younger generation of my family grow up as Orthodox Christians

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	93	3	4
<b>OCA, %</b>	86	3	11
<b>Indp, %</b>	89	5	6
<b>Total, %</b>	89	3	8

I often feel that I cannot explain my faith to others

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	24	66	10
<b>OCA, %</b>	32	58	10

<b>Indp, %</b>	20	73	7
<b>Total, %</b>	28	62	10

The primary calling of married women is in the sphere of home and family. All other social and business activities should be considered as secondary in comparison with family duties and obligations.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	43	43	14
<b>OCA, %</b>	40	42	18
<b>Indp, %</b>	44	38	18
<b>Total, %</b>	41	43	16

The idea that the priest is a “man set apart” is a barrier to the full realization of true Christian community

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	25	47	28
<b>OCA, %</b>	20	54	26
<b>Indp, %</b>	33	57	10
<b>Total, %</b>	22	51	27

Most priests don’t expect the laity to be leaders, just followers.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	19	62	19
<b>OCA, %</b>	15	62	23
<b>Indp, %</b>	29	56	15
<b>Total, %</b>	17	62	21

Priests today need to be more involved with broad social and moral issues beyond their own parish’s level

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	69	14	17
<b>OCA, %</b>	59	16	25
<b>Indp, %</b>	68	12	20
<b>Total, %</b>	64	15	21

It is urgent that priests achieve greater social status as competent professionals in the eyes of Orthodox community

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	54	20	26
<b>OCA, %</b>	42	28	30
<b>Indp, %</b>	51	26	23
<b>Total, %</b>	47	23	28

The Orthodox Church in the US should welcome Roman Catholic priests and Protestant ministers who want to become Orthodox priests

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	76	7	17
<b>OCA, %</b>	80	6	14
<b>Indp, %</b>	83	6	11
<b>Total, %</b>	78	6	16

The last statement “I think it is a good idea if Orthodox parishes were to choose their own priest from among available ordained priests” touches sensitive issue – the process of selection of the candidates for being a priest



in a particular parish. Today, depending on particular Orthodox jurisdiction (denomination) and on the local circumstances, the lay members are to a larger or smaller degree consulted during selection of a parish priest. Yet, both practically and legally (by the Church canon law), the final authority in this process belongs to the ruling diocesan hierarchs (Metropolitans in GOA and Bishops in OCA). Technically speaking, the priests in American Orthodox parishes are not selected by members, but appointed by the diocesan hierarchs. Laity responses to the statement “I think it is a good idea if Orthodox parishes were to choose their own priest from among available ordained priests” show that slightly less than half of GOA (47%) and OCA (42%) members would challenge the practice of appointment parish clergy by the bishops, and introduce instead the process of selection of the priests by parishioners.

I think it is a good idea if Orthodox parishes were to choose their own priest from among available priests

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	47	27	26
<b>OCA, %</b>	42	29	29
<b>Indp, %</b>	52	27	21
<b>Total, %</b>	45	28	27

I think it is a good idea if Orthodox clergy and laity were more involved in the selection of bishops

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	57	14	29
<b>OCA, %</b>	56	16	28
<b>Indp, %</b>	68	14	18
<b>Total, %</b>	57	15	28

The Orthodox Church needs to move faster in empowering lay persons in ministry

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	51	15	34
<b>OCA, %</b>	38	23	39
<b>Indp, %</b>	55	17	28
<b>Total, %</b>	44	19	37

I would like to have more access to our bishops to discuss Church matters

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	56	11	33
<b>OCA, %</b>	51	16	33
<b>Indp, %</b>	60	18	22
<b>Total, %</b>	53	14	33

All Orthodox Christians should have the individual freedom to interpret the Scriptures and Orthodox Tradition for themselves and be tolerant of differing interpretations.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	24	64	12
<b>OCA, %</b>	14	72	14
<b>Indp, %</b>	18	70	12
<b>Total, %</b>	19	68	13

The Orthodox Church should allow its local parishes more freedom to explore new forms and patterns of liturgical life.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	20	61	19
<b>OCA, %</b>	12	69	19
<b>Indp, %</b>	17	70	13
<b>Total, %</b>	16	65	19

I am willing to tolerate different viewpoints on Church life in my parish even if it spills over into conflict sometimes.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	42	34	24
<b>OCA, %</b>	43	35	22
<b>Indp, %</b>	50	32	18
<b>Total, %</b>	42	35	23

I can perfectly well imagine myself learning about Jesus and Christian faith from the people in other (not Orthodox) Christian churches.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	36	47	17
<b>OCA, %</b>	36	48	16
<b>Indp, %</b>	33	56	11
<b>Total, %</b>	36	48	16

I feel confident explaining the Orthodox Faith to non-Orthodox.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	83	7	10
<b>OCA, %</b>	69	16	15
<b>Indp, %</b>	91	3	6
<b>Total, %</b>	75	12	13

How a person lives is more important than whether he or she is an Orthodox Christian

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	59	22	19
<b>OCA, %</b>	55	23	22
<b>Indp, %</b>	52	31	17
<b>Total, %</b>	57	23	20

Evolutionary theory is compatible with the idea of God as Creator.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	40	40	20
<b>OCA, %</b>	42	37	21
<b>Indp, %</b>	53	26	21
<b>Total, %</b>	41	38	21

Even if homosexuality is wrong, the civil rights of gays and lesbians – including legal status for “same-sex couples” - should still be protected.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	35	49	16
<b>OCA, %</b>	31	53	16
<b>Indp, %</b>	36	50	14
<b>Total, %</b>	33	51	16

Children need to be exposed to a variety of cultural and religious differences so they can make informed choices as adults.

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	46	37	17
<b>OCA, %</b>	45	38	17
<b>Indp, %</b>	36	44	20
<b>Total, %</b>	46	37	17

It is important that public schools at all levels keep religion and religious issues “out of classrooms.”

	<b>“Agree”</b>	<b>“Disagree”</b>	<b>“Neutral or unsure”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	31	53	16
<b>OCA, %</b>	23	61	16
<b>Indp, %</b>	30	55	15
<b>Total, %</b>	26	58	16

Would you generally favor or oppose teaching creationism INSTEAD of evolution in public schools?

	<b>“Favor”</b>	<b>“Oppose”</b>	<b>“Unsure/No opinion”</b>
<b>GOA, %</b>	34	31	35
<b>OCA, %</b>	31	38	31
<b>Indp, %</b>	18	56	26
<b>Total, %</b>	33	35	32