

# OR HODOXY

**IN A NUTSHELL: The Basic Beliefs of the Orthodox Church of God**

1. We believe in One God the Father Almighty
2. We believe that God the Father brought forth from all eternity, before time, two distinct persons from His own essence—God the Son eternally begotten from God the Father, and God the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from God the Father. The Son and Holy Spirit were not created, for created things were brought into existence from God out of nothing in time and given their own created essence, but the Son and Holy Spirit were brought forth from God the Father's own eternal Divine Essence in eternity, outside of time. While the Son and Spirit share the Father's Divine Essence, yet they retain their own distinct Divine Personhoods.



3. God the Father is the Fountainhead of the Holy Trinity. The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the eternal Word of God personified, and is the exact image of the eternal Father. The Holy Spirit is the eternal Breath of God personified. He is the Lord and Giver of life.

4. Father Son and Holy Spirit, therefore, are of one essence and are glorified together. This is the Holy Trinity.

5. The Holy Trinity alone has eternal being and alone exists outside of time. Before time began nothing existed save God. All other things have a beginning in time and were brought out of nothing

(ex nihilo) into being by God's creative power. God the Father, through the Son and in the Holy Spirit brought all created things visible and invisible from non-existence into existence. God is also the sustainer of all things. God communicates with the creation through His Divine Energy, in which He reveals Himself as uncreated grace. As the Apostle says, "in Him we live and move and have our being." 6. We believe that God created man in His own image. We affirm that human persons are comprised of body and soul, and that God wills the salvation of the whole person, body and soul.

7. We believe that God loves the world and in a special way loves mankind. Because of God's love for us, He willed from all eternity that His Only Begotten Son, sharing the essence and nature of God from all eternity, also

also in the fullness of time would come in full to share the created essence and nature of man. He became what we are so that we might become what He is by grace. He chose to take flesh from the Virgin Mary, grew in human stature, preached the Gospel, instituted the Mysteries of His heavenly Kingdom, suffered, died and was buried, descended into Hades, conquered death, and, preaching the Gospel, gave those who were held captive there the opportunity for redemption. He was resurrected on the third day, ascended into heaven 40 days later, confirmed the Church and sent forth the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost to guide her into all truth.

**8.** We believe that the Church of God is founded upon Christ Himself, who is the Rock of our Faith and the sole Head of the Church, which is His Body. We believe that God's Church is the family of God and the Kingdom of God in our midst. We believe that the ultimate purpose of human existence is for human persons to become

what God originally intended us to be, for people to be able to reach the true fulfillment of their personhood by His grace, and to attain union and Communion with God, which is called theosis, from the two Scriptural terms God (theos) and union (enosis). God has established the Church so that all might be able to draw nearer to Him and for mankind to realize its place as the family of God.

**9.** We believe that the Church of God is Orthodox—it is “the pillar and foundation of the truth” as Scripture says, not departing from that which was handed down from the Apostles. It worships and believes in accord with this Sacred Tradition handed down by Christ “in word and epistle” through the Apostles to all generations as the Scriptures tell us.

**10.** We believe that the Church of God is One. She has unity in the Sacraments and common Faith, all in communion with their Bishop and each Bishop in communion with all other Orthodox Bishops. We are told by the Lord that with regard to the Church the wheat and the tares will grow together, and that the sheep and the wolves will coexist. But neither the latter nor even the gates of hell prevail against Her. There are splits away from the Church but the Church herself prevails.

**11.** We believe that the Church of God is Holy. She is set apart to be the Body of Christ, the Bride of Christ, and the “fullness of Him that fills all in all” as Scripture says. She provides the fullness of grace to all who will come



and drink from the waters of life, and it is in her that we can, as far as is possible before the resurrection of all, experience God's Kingdom here and now, and shall experience it more perfectly in the life of the age to come. We honor those who have "finished the race" and reached a level of holiness that is called for, and these we call Saints. We believe that by assuming matter Christ has sanctified matter, and thus, while deploring idols, we give honor to both persons who have shown themselves to be worthy images of God as well as holy depictions of icons. For by the incarnation God has shown that He came to sanctify matter and to bring about our salvation through matter, as the Holy 7<sup>th</sup> Ecumenical Council declared.



**12.** We believe that the Church of God is Catholic. The Church is whole and complete. Catholic means "according to the whole" and "universal." She is meant to be a home for all mankind, and to bring the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God, which are also called the Sacraments, to all who will come and participate in a state of repentance and acceptance. In the Church, together those who are sinners find themselves to become something that they in isolation were not: one Body of Christ.

**13.** We believe that the Church is Apostolic. She does not depart from that which was handed down from the Apostles. She continues Apostolic succession and in the Holy Spirit passes on unblemished the Apostolic Tradition, by written and spoken word. The whole Body of Christ as guided by the Spirit is the keeper and preserver of the Apostolic Faith handed down, but the Bishops in particular have the sacred role of interpreting and safeguarding the Faith once and for all delivered to the saints—the Church in the Bishop and the Bishop in the Church.

**14.** We look to the Sacraments, or Mysteries of the Church, as ways in which God imparts special grace to those who receive them. We acknowledge one Baptism for spiritual rebirth and remission of sins. We affirm the Sacrament of Chrismation whereby we receive the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit, are confirmed as Christians, and made members of the royal priesthood of all believers. We acknowledge the renewal of Baptism through the Sacrament of Repentance (Confession), whereby we are reconciled to the Church by God's grace. From within the priesthood of all believers received through Baptism and Chrismation, there are some who are called to receive the ordained priesthood in the Mystery of Holy Orders, administered by the Bishops, and it

is via the special ministry of the ordained priesthood that the other Sacraments are accomplished. Also, there is the Mystery of Holy Unction for the healing of soul and body. There are special holy callings within the Church: Marriage, and Monastic tonsure. All of the Sacraments find their ultimate fulfillment and seal in the Great Sacrament of the Church, the “Mystery of Mysteries,” the Eucharist.

**15.** We believe that the Church is the Body of Christ because it partakes of the Body of Christ in Communion. As St. Paul says, we are one Bread and one Body, for we all partake of that one Bread—the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 10.17), and have all been given to drink of one Spirit (1 Cor. 12.13). But we must do so believing and after having examined ourselves and repented. We believe that Communion is the greatest Sacrament and that thereby those who are prepared through an active faith have Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit living and abiding within them (John 6.56)

**16.** We believe that Christ will come again to judge the living and the dead. We believe that human persons have a will with freedom of thought and action. We believe that God has given us the commandments and guidelines for living so that we may draw closer to Him by cooperating with Him. We believe that people are responsible for their own actions and will be held accountable for them. We believe that all will need to answer for the things they have done both in this age and in that which is to come. People will repose until the Lord come again. Their souls will either go to the presence of God (referred to as Paradise, Abraham’s bosom) or to Hades and will be reunited with their bodies at the general resurrection.

**17.** We believe that when Christ comes again that all will be resurrected, some to the life of the age to come in the Kingdom of God, and some to the condemnation they have chosen. We believe that His Kingdom has no end.



Consistory Office of Religious Education-Ukrainian  
Orthodox Church of the United States of America  
Fr. Harry Linsinbiger, ORE Director

(Insert Parish information here)