

Sunday of Pentecost

June 23, 2024

*On June 23rd we Commemorate:
The Martyr Agrippina of Rome and those with her.
The Meeting of the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God.*



Icon of the Holy Spirit Descending upon the Apostles at Pentecost

Holy Wisdom Orthodox Mission

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*Great Vespers, Saturday Evenings at 6:00 pm
Divine Liturgy, Sunday Mornings at 9:30 am (Hours at 9:05 am)
Paraklesis to the Theotokos, Wednesday Evenings at 6:00 pm*

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*Holy Wisdom Orthodox Mission
is a parish in the Diocese of the West
of the Orthodox Church in America
under the spiritual and ecclesiastical jurisdiction of
Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West*



EPISTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS

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Epistle for the Sunday of Pentecost, Acts 2:1-11

IN THOSE DAYS: When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”

Gospel for the Sunday of Pentecost, John 7:37-52

AT THAT TIME: On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, Whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Therefore, many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, “Truly this is the Prophet.” Others said, “This is the Christ.” But some said, “Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?” So, there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, “Why have you not brought Him?” The officers answered, “No man ever spoke like this Man!” Then the Pharisees answered them, “Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed.” Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, “Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?” They answered and said to him, “Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee.”



REFLECTION ON THE FEAST

Sunday of Pentecost – The “Eighth Sunday”

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Today we, the Orthodox throughout the world, celebrate the Great and Holy Feast of Pentecost. We should note, however, that this feast originated in the Old Testament, although its full meaning was realized only in the New Testament.

For the Hebrew people of the Old Testament, Pentecost was the occasion to remember one of the most important events in their history.

The descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob (who was also given the name Israel) dwelt in Egypt for many years, as foreigners and ultimately as slaves. In His mercy, and in fulfillment of His promise to Abraham, God delivered these twelve tribes from their cruel bondage and led them through the Sinai wilderness to the Promised Land.

To form these tribes of Israel into a single nation, a people of God, the Lord gave them the Ten Commandments and the whole Law of Moses. It was fifty days after their departure from Egypt, fifty days after the Passover, that Moses received the stone tablets containing the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai.

The Hebrews thus celebrated Pentecost as a day on which God gave them His Law; the Law that guided them as a righteous and holy people.

Together with this event, God also directed the Hebrews, through the Law given to Moses, to celebrate the first of three harvest festivals. In other words, this day brought to mind the fact that God gives us His teachings that are unto eternal life and also that He provides the bounties of the earth to sustain our earthly lives.

Orthodox Christians today additionally celebrate Pentecost as a day on which God gave us the Holy Spirit; the Spirit that will guide us unto all truth and righteousness.

Even more, the Holy Spirit dwelling within us brings forth “rivers of living water” from our hearts. This Christian Pentecost reminds us that God gave the Ten Commandments which Christ completed with His teachings; and that through the seeds planted first in the Apostles a great harvest of souls has been – and continues to be – gathered.

The Holy Spirit gives Christians a powerful strength; with His help we can hold fast to the commandments of Christ, and to do great and wondrous works to the glory of God.

Let us receive the Holy Spirit today with open hearts; that we may be able to do the Lord’s will in all things.

Amen.

HOMILY ON THE FEAST

On the Sunday of Pentecost – Trinity Sunday

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

On this day, the fiftieth after Easter, we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost when the fullness of the Holy Trinity was revealed through the coming of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

On this day we sing that Christ “made the fishermen most wise.” How did Christ do this?

He taught them humility and purity of heart, and then when they were ready, He sent down from His Father the Holy Spirit. This humility and purity of heart, crowned by the Holy Spirit, is the key to understanding, it is Wisdom.

This explains why very highly educated people are often the most ignorant, responsible for terrible misfortunes and genocides. Thus, there have been many great geniuses in the history of the world and some of them have become blood-soaked dictators. It is one thing to have instruction, but it is quite another to know how to use that instruction.

This is the meaning of wisdom. Wisdom is discernment, or the ability to use aright information and knowledge. On the other hand, the meaning of stupidity is to have instruction and instead of using it for good, to use it to blind oneself, to fall in love with oneself and be so full of oneself that one is blind to God and so denies the existence of God, which is so obvious to the simplest peasant. As the Scriptures say: “The fool has said in his heart, there is no God.”

Pride blinds but humility opens eyes. Pride makes the Holy Spirit to flee, but humility draws the Holy Spirit like a magnet.

This is why two equally educated people may read the Gospels, one will become a believer, the other will dismiss them as a myth.

The first has humility and purity of heart and therefore his spiritual eyes will be opened. The other has pride and therefore he will be blinded by pride and self-opinion and puffing himself up, will make himself ridiculous.

Thus, understanding is quite independent of education, but dependent on humility and purity of heart.

For it is not written, “Blessed are the educated,” but: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Continued on page 5 ☞

Continued from page 4 ☞ On account of this you will notice that wherever there is pride, there are stubbornly-held opinions and therefore divisions. For pride leads to disunity, humility to unity. This is what we sing of in another hymn today, the Kontakion.

We recognize that at the time when men in their pride built the Tower of Babel, there was a confusion of tongues. Indeed, the very word “Babel” has become a synonym for confusion. Why is this? It is because opinions and opinionatedness and so divisions are the fruit of impurity in the heart, the fruit of pride.

For example, many people say of the Church: “Ah yes, that is a good idea, but I do not go to Church because there are so many divisions and splits.” But no divisions exist in the Church, they exist only among those who break away from the Church and Her Spirit, the Holy Spirit.

All divisions, from the most ancient to the most modern, exist because of pride. If we look at every single split from the Church, we find pride, either personal or collective.

They put the things of this world first and the Spirit second. Where there is the Holy Spirit, there is unity. Where the Holy Spirit is not, there is an ideology of whatever sort, and thus division. “By their fruits ye shall know them.”

On the other hand, we recognize that among the humble the Holy Spirit brought unity and different peoples were able to understand one another despite difference of language.

That is why today faithful Orthodox Christians, members of the Church, of all ages and all over the world and of all nationalities and languages celebrate the Feast of Pentecost together.

Today we concelebrate the Feast with the Apostles and the Fathers, the Martyrs and the Confessors, of all ages, of ages past and of the present age and of the age to come.

And this day we concelebrate the same Faith with the faithful in our churches throughout the world. For we confess the same Orthodox Faith of the Holy Spirit, “Who proceeds from the Father and rests on the Son”, for we confess the same Orthodox Faith of the Holy Spirit, Who brings Wisdom and Unity wherever there is humility and purity of heart. Amen.

*The Reverend Andrew Phillips, Pastor
Saint John’s Orthodox Church, Colchester, England*

The Holy Spirit as Fire

Saint Gregory, Pope of Rome, the Dialogist (AD 540-604)

We read that the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples in tongues of fire. But why did the Holy Spirit, co-eternal with the Father and the Son, appear as fire? Why as tongues of fire? Why does He sometimes appear as a dove and at other times as a flame? Why did He descend as a dove upon the Only-begotten Son, but as a flame upon the disciples?

The Holy Spirit appears as fire because, in the words of the holy Apostle Paul, God is an ethereal, indescribable, and invisible fire: “*For our God is a consuming fire*” (*Hebrews 12:29*). God is also called fire because He destroys the rust of sins.

But the Lord sends fire down to earth when, with the breath of the Holy Spirit, He enflames the hearts of mortal men. And the earth lights up when a heart of flesh, that is cold in its iniquitous pleasures, abandons the desires of the modern world and becomes enflamed with love for God.

Thus, the Spirit very properly appeared as fire, because from every heart in which He chooses to dwell, He dispels the numbness of ice and enflames such a heart with a desire for eternal life.

And the reason He appeared in tongues of fire was because the Spirit is co-eternal with the Son, while the Son is the Word of the Father. Just as the tongue is in close proximity to the word, so the Holy Spirit appeared in flaming tongues, in order to show the Spirit’s particular closeness to the Word of the Father. Furthermore, the Spirit also appeared in tongues of fire because He causes everyone in whom He dwells to be ardent and cogent.

Church teachers possess tongues of fire, because in their sermons on the need to love God they kindle the hearts of their listeners. This flame was acquired from the mouth of the Lord Himself by those who said: “*Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us... and while He opened to us the Scriptures?*” (*Luke 24:32*).

From the spoken word the spirit is kindled, its cold rigidity is dispelled, the soul begins to burn with lofty aspirations, and distances itself from earthly desires. Celestial commandments are never heeded with a cold heart, but with a heart burning with the fire of inner love for them.

The Holy Spirit appeared both as a dove and as fire, because He makes all those whom He encompasses both pure and ardent: pure as a dove and fiery in their ardor. A man in whom is such a combination of ardor and purity is the *only* man acceptable to God.

Since the Spirit teaches both righteousness and purity, He had to appear as a dove, so that every heart touched by His grace would be tranquil with meekness and fiery with ardor for the truth. *Continued on page 7* ☞

Continued from page 6 ☞ Yet why did the Holy Spirit appear as a dove over our Redeemer, our Intercessor between God and men, whereas He appeared upon the disciples He descended as fire?

It is well-known that the Only-begotten Son of God is the Judge of mankind. But who could have borne His judgment if He, before gathering us together in meekness, had judged our sins with ardor for truth?

Thus, having made Himself Man for the sake of men, He appeared meek before men. He did not want to destroy sinners, but wished to gather them to Him; He wished first to rectify them through meekness, in order to have with Him those who could later be saved on the Day of Judgment.

For this reason, the Holy Spirit appeared as a dove over the One Who came not to destroy sinners through ardor, but to bear them a while longer through meekness.

On the other hand, upon the disciples the Holy Spirit had to descend as fire, so that they, being plain people and even sinners, could spiritually enflame other slaves of sin to rebel against their sins and to cleanse by means of repentance those sins which God had spared through meekness.

And the fact that even adepts of the Heavenly Teacher are not without sin is confirmed by Saint John, who says: *“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us” (1 John 1:8).*

Thus, the Holy Spirit descended as fire upon people and as a dove upon the Lord because we, in our ardor for truth, must carefully notice and burn with the fire of constant repentance those of our sins which the Lord mercifully bore through meekness.

Consequently, the Spirit appeared over the Redeemer in the form of a dove and over people in the form of fire, because the more moderate is our Judge’s strictness towards us, the more must our weakness be enflamed against its own self.

Parish Calendar

The following are scheduled *every* week at Holy Wisdom Parish:

- Saturday Evenings: Choir Practice at 5:00 pm; Great Vespers at 6:00 pm
- Sunday Mornings: Hours at 9:10 am, and Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am
- Wednesday Evenings: Paráklisis at 6:00 pm

Going on Vacation this Summer?

God never goes on vacation. He loves you and gives you breath every moment of every day of your entire life. Vacations are great! However, what good would it be to feed the mind and the body but not the soul? What a joy it would be to visit a different parish in another part of the country while on vacation! While on vacation this Summer: *Go to Church on Sunday!*

After “Blessed is the Kingdom...” and the Litany of Peace, the “Typical Psalms” are replaced by the following Antiphons

The First Antiphon, Tone 2

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us. (4)

The Second Antiphon, Tone 2

Refrain: O Good Comforter, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia. (3)

Glory ..., both now & ever ..., O only-begotten Son and Word of God...

The Third Antiphon, Troparion, Tone 8

Refrain: Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, • Who hast shown forth the fishermen as supremely wise, • by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, • and through them didst draw the world into Thy net. • O Lover of mankind, glory be to Thee. (3)

Entrance Verse (Eisodikón)

Priest: Be Thou exalted, O Lord, in Thy strength; we will sing and chant of Thy mighty acts.

Troparion of the Feast, Tone 8

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God...

Glory ..., both now & ever ...,

Kontakion of the Feast, Tone 8

Once, when He descended and confounded the tongues, • the Most High divided the nations; • and when He divided the tongues of fire, • He called all men into unity; • and with one accord we glorify the all-holy Spirit.

Instead of the Trisagion

As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia.

Instead of “It is truly meet...”

Rejoice, O Queen, glory of mothers and virgins! • No tongue, however sweet or fluent, is eloquent enough to praise thee worthily. • Every mind is overawed by thy childbearing. • Therefore, with one voice, we glorify thee.

Communion Hymn

Let Thy good Spirit lead me on a level path. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



Евангелие


В последний же великий день праздника стоял Иисус и возгласил, говоря: кто жаждет, иди ко Мне и пей. Кто верует в Меня, у того, как сказано в Писании, из чрева потекут реки воды живой. Сие сказал Он о Духе, Которого имели принять верующие в Него: ибо ещё не было на них Духа Святаго, потому что Иисус ещё не был прославлен. Многие из народа, услышав сии слова, говорили: Он точно пророк. Другие говорили: это Христос. А иные говорили: разве из Галилеи Христос придёт? Не сказано ли в Писании, что Христос придёт от семени Давидова и из Вифлеема, из того места, откуда был Давид? Итак произошла о Нём распря в народе. Некоторые из них хотели схватить Его; но никто не наложил на Него рук. Итак служители возвратились к первосвященникам и фарисеям, и сии сказали им: для чего вы не привели Его? Служители отвечали: никогда человек не говорил так, как Этот Человек. Фарисеи сказали им: неужели и вы прельстились? Уверовал ли в Него кто из начальников, или из фарисеев? Но этот народ невежда в законе, проклят он. Никодим, приходивший к Нему ночью, будучи один из них, говорит им: судит ли закон наш человека, если прежде не выслушают его и не узнают, что он делает? На это сказали ему: и ты не из Галилеи ли? рассмотри и увидишь, что из Галилеи не приходит пророк. ... Опять говорил Иисус к народу и сказал им: Я свет миру; кто последует за Мною, тот не будет ходить во тьме, но будет иметь свет жизни (Ин. 7, 37-52 – 8, 12).



Митрополит Антоний Сурожский

Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа.

Мы сейчас будем просить о полноте Святого Духа, Который Церковь наполнил, Который в Церкви живет, Которого мы получили в день, когда нас крестили и миропомазали, но Которого мы теряем – грехом, рассеянностью, жизнью не по Христу. Будем молиться о том, чтобы сошел на нас Вседержитель Святой Дух, и будем силиться принести те плоды Духа, которые описаны святым апостолом Павлом из недр его опыта: мир, радость, любовь, терпение и другие плоды, которые он упоминает, и венец которых, вершина которых – самозабвенная, жертвенная, радостная, все свое отдающая

1  любовь. Будем молиться, чтобы Господь нам дал Духа, а сами обязуемся ныне трудиться над тем, чтобы не напрасно снизошел на нас Святой Дух.

Аминь.

Протоиерей Александр Шаргунов

Во имя Отца и Сына и Святого Духа.



Завершился наш путь от Великого поста и Страстной Седмицы и Воскресения Христова до Пятидесятницы, или лучше сказать, от Рождества Христова до сегодняшнего дня, и мы собрались в храме Божиим Духом Святым. Сейчас, после Божественной Литургии мы совершим вечерню пресветлого праздника Пресвятой Троицы с тремя коленопреклоненными молитвами - первый раз после пасхальных дней и Вознесения.

Со страхом и трепетом преклоним колена пред Богом живым и принесем молитву покаяния и хвалы Творцу нашему, исповедаем наши заблуждения и грехи, каждый отдельно и все вместе, будем учиться носить в молитве, как в жизни, тяготы друг друга, со Христом, бремя Которого легко, и иго Которого - свет. **Да будет дано нам узнать, что мы братья и сестры, что мы дети Божии, которые от радости этого дивного дара ищут того, чтобы все пришли к Богу.**

Каждый отдельно и все вместе склонимся пред Господом, каждый со своею судьбой и своими привычками и поступками, которые могут быть замечательными и прекрасными, но которые также могут быть исполнены ошибок, и самое главное - грехов. Да простит нас Господь и даст нам избавление от всего безобразного и злого, чтобы мы уже не возвращались к этим грехам, не повторяли их, чтобы не пришлось снова упоминать о них. Пусть будут вычеркнуты они навсегда из нашей жизни! Но этого не произойдет, если не будет у нас подлинного покаяния. Только сейчас, во всей полноте постигаем мы слова Христовы: Покайтесь, ибо приблизилось Царство Небесное.

В чем каяться? Есть известный рассказ о священнике, который предложил одному чаду духовному, не видящему свои грехи, внимательно прочитать вечернюю молитву Святому Духу, где все подробно названо и перечислено, и когда этот человек сказал: «Вот этого греха у меня нет», - священник с изумлением ответил: «Неужели Дух Святой ошибся?» Во многом надо нам каяться, но прежде всего в том, что в мире сейчас открыто и нагло заявляет себя и всюду господствует - в сребролюбии и сластолюбии, главных проявлениях себялюбия. В культе денег, разврата и гордыни, насаждаемых в

2 ☞ обществе. Если есть в нашем сердце скрытая, неизжитая до конца любовь к маммоне, или похоть, или самоутверждение, с которыми мы не хотим расстаться, мы в какой-то степени, страшно сказать, тоже участвуем в строительстве вавилонской башни. Эта башня порою, кажется, достигает неба, однако сегодня очевиднее, чем когда-либо: строители говорят друг с другом, но уже не понимают друг друга. Эта башня рушится на глазах, и не только Россия погибнет под обломками коммунизма, как сказал писатель. Дело обстоит куда серьезней - **весь мир погибнет под обломками этой вавилонской башни, если не будет покаяния.**

Чтобы приготовить пути Господу, Духу Святому, прямыми сделать стези Его, мы без лукавства должны увидеть в себе малейшее присутствие прежде всего именно этих грехов. Только до конца освободившись от них, обретем мы силу от Господа противостоять этому злу в мире и побеждать это зло. Подлинное покаяние означает также полное изменение нашей личной, и церковной нашей жизни. **Кто хочет стать причастником Духа Святого, ощутить Его, тот должен перестать плыть по течению, повернуться на сто восемьдесят градусов, в сторону ветра жизни Пятидесятницы, в направлении, куда дует Дух Святой.**

Куда, в какую сторону Он дует? Дух, как ветер: не знаешь, откуда приходит, и куда уходит, - говорит Господь, однако, **плоды Духа известны: любовь, радость, мир, кротость, воздержание, милосердие, вера**, а те, кто Христовы, плоть свою распяли со страстями и похотями. И туда, куда показывают путь эти маяки, будем идти - к целостности жизни, разбитой грехом, к единению со всеми, живущими во Христе, и всеми от века в Господе усопшими, со всем святым человечеством, которое едино, потому что свято, и в котором без святости, как сказал древний философ, - неизбежная война всех против всех.

Да дарует нам Господь осознать боль разделения друг от друга - она ранит Христа, и не забудем, что все, что происходит с человечеством, зависит прежде всего от Церкви - только она свята, потому что Дух Святой пребывает в ней. Исповедуя единство, соборность и апостольство Церкви, в день рождения ее, будем помнить, что она - святая.

Мы все время забываем, что мы должны быть святыми, поскольку наслаждаемся утешением Святого Духа, и всеми дарами Христовой Церкви. Путь Утешителя - единственный вечный путь, который Христос дал нам в Церкви, и нет другого пути. Наша жизнь должна становиться, если можно так сказать, утешительной, чтобы это ☞ 4

3 ☞ могло ощущаться нами и всеми. Без святости ничто не имеет плода, и Церковь не имеет смысла. **Дай Бог нам сегодня по-настоящему это глубоко пережить, что каждый из нас и все мы вместе нуждаемся в святости, в покаянии и прощении, молитве, истине и любви!**

Итак, преклоним колена и будем молить Господа, чтобы было дано нам преобразование и истинное откровение. Соединим нашу молитву с молитвою всех, преклоняющих сегодня колена в тысячах православных храмов, и с молитвою Церкви небесной. С нами Божия Мать и святые апостолы, и все святые мужчины и женщины, известные и неизвестные, чья жизнь видима всем или сокрыта в Боге. И будем молиться друг за друга, как они молятся за нас, в нашей устремленности к святости, волею Отца Небесного, крестною жертвою Сына Божия, и утешением Святого Духа. **Нас, христиан, немного в мире, но если мы будем на самом деле закваскою, остатком, избранным по благодати - в человечестве будет присутствие Христа, люди смогут получать полноту Духа, пить воду живую, и всё делается новым здесь, и сейчас, и вовеки. Бог сделает жизнь возможной, когда она невозможна. Бог не даст ей распасться, когда она распадается. Бог превратит ее в стоящую, драгоценную, когда она кажется бессмысленной и пустой, и все увидят, что Бог есть жизнь.**

Апостол Иоанн Богослов в первом послании говорит о тайне, которая была сокрыта: Жизнь явилась, и мы видели ее, и свидетельствуем, и возвещаем вам сию вечную жизнь, которая была у Отца и явилась нам - о том, что мы видели и слышали, возвещаем вам, чтобы и вы имели общение с нами, а наше общение - со Отцем и Сыном Его Иисусом Христом. Эта жизнь, о которой свидетельствует апостол Иоанн Богослов, есть Дух Святой, благодать Его. Жизнь без Бога, говорит блаженный Августин, недостойна названия жизни. Настоящей может быть только вечная жизнь.

Аминь.

