

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

Wed: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM

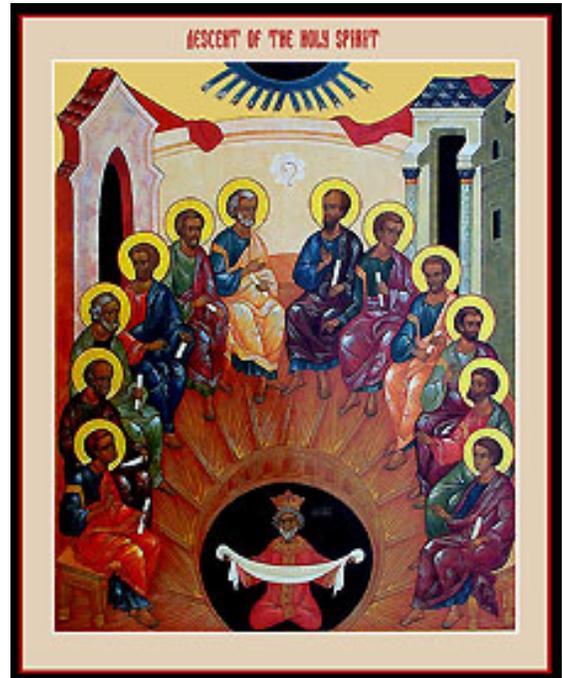
Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM | Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

May 27, 2018 – Holy Pentecost

Pentecost for the Jews was one of the three great annual feasts (Exodus 23:14, 16, 17; Deut. 16:16). By the day of Pentecost the Jews had finished the harvest, which began with the feast of Pascha, according to that, the fiftieth day after the first day of Pascha was actually the feast of the ending of the harvest, in which under the law they should offer to God a thanksgiving sacrifice from fruits of the earth. (Exodus. 23:16; Num. 28:26). Over time this feast began to incorporate and commemorate the giving of the Sinai law received by the Hebrews within 50 days after their exodus from Egypt. For the Jews this feast was solemn and joyful (Deut. 16:11), and for this feast they flocked to Jerusalem in great numbers. Each of them considered it a sacred duty to visit the Holy City, in order to bring the sacrifice from the gathered harvest in gratitude to God, established by the law, (Lev. 23:17, 30), and it was considered obligatory not only for Palestinian Jews, but also for those outside of Palestine living in countries all over in the then known world. Therefore in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost it was possible to meet those who arrived from Rome, Egypt, Crete, Mesopotamia, from all areas of Asia Minor and Western Asia, from "all of the people under Heaven," not only Jews, but also proselytes, i.e. those converted from paganism (Acts 2:5, 9:11, 20:16).



On the tenth day after the Ascension of Jesus Christ during the Jewish feast of Pentecost, at the third hour but according to our reckoning at nine o'clock in the morning, when people usually go to the temple both for offering up a sacrifice and prayer all the disciples were assembled in Jerusalem, in the upper room (Acts 1:13), which was "on Mount Zion," "and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind," (as though from an unusually strong wind)." Actually there was no wind rustling, but the noise was similar as if it were from the strength of a wind, but without the wind." This noise "filled the whole house where they were sitting," not only of the apostles, but, according to the commentary of St. John Chrysostom, even other believers in Christ (Acts 1:16). In that instant in the middle of the house in the air appeared many tongues as of fire, being carried above the heads of the disciples, dropped down and rested on them. They were not really fiery tongues, but were "as if of fire," i.e. it only had the appearance of fire; they shone only, but did not burn. Directly behind these, or even together with these external appearances, the event followed the internal, completing in the souls of the believers: "all were filled with the Holy Spirit."

The mighty wind was closest to the prophecy, and the appearance of fiery tongues was seen as the sign of the coming of the Holy Spirit. The mighty wind and vision of fiery tongues proceeded not for long, maybe for a moment; but the Holy Spirit has always poured himself out into the souls and hearts of the believer.

Brightly and triumphantly," says His Grace Theophanes, Bishop of Tambov, "the Holy Church celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles." And how can she not celebrate? Because the Holy Spirit actually created the Church of God on the foundation established by the Lord Jesus Christ.

He finally reveals and explains to the Apostles the mysteries of the kingdom and the entire Christian teaching. By Him all languages are mastered and are given to the hearers of the faith. He bestows all powers "to those living in godliness. He is the source of all their rules and institutions for the development, strengthening and protection of the believers. He from here on keeps the pledge of our salvation whole and undamaged.

Being most pure and bodiless, the Holy Spirit has selected a physical sign to more perceptively manifest His presence. "For," reasoned St. Gregory the Theologian, "as the Son of God was seen to be visible on earth, it also was necessary for the Holy Spirit to be seen to be visible." But St. Leo the Great teaches, "Yes, who will not think that what was visible with physical eyes was the most Divine essence of the Holy Spirit? That which actually belongs to His essence is hidden in His Divinity, because human sight, as it cannot see the Father and the Son, also cannot see the Holy Spirit. According to His nature the Holy Spirit is invisible, similar to

the Father and the Son; at His descent only the attribute is revealed in His service and action in such signs, as He Himself wishes." And He without any special purpose has now selected these, rather than other signs: logically nothing happens without a cause. Instead of the darkness and thunder at the giving of the Law on Sinai, here was heard "a sound from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind," that clearly was that same Holy Spirit, then and now, who gives the law, who sanctifies it and who fulfills it. The strong sound signified that a mighty power was transferred to the apostles. The movement from Heaven signified that this wondrous power proceeded from the One who ten days before these events ascended to Heaven. The filling of the whole house by the noise and the blessing of the assembly through the fiery tongues signified that all of them were washed and baptized by the Holy Spirit and by the abundance of gifts received from Him.

The fire expressed the revitalizing power of the words of the Gospel, which should cleanse the hearts of the people, and expressed the light of faith, the warmth of love, both in the ardent zeal of the preachers and the devoted attention of the hearers of the Gospel. Fiery tongues lay on the heads, because the head of man is the noblest and main part of the body. The meekness of the fire, which lay on the heads, signified the mercy and grace of God. The tongues signified the gift of words and the knowledge of many foreign languages, which up to that time were unknown to them, that were bestowed on them for the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world. The divided tongues signified that the Gospel would be preached in different countries and to various peoples. The Holy Spirit descended on them after the passing of ten days, instead of immediately after the Ascension, so that those who accepted Him would be made most ardent. The Holy Spirit descended within fifty days after Pascha as a reminder of the old law, for Israel received the Ten Commandments after the passing of 50 days after crossing the Red Sea. At the third hour, on this one day the Lord God granted the grace to inspire us to honor the three Persons in one essence. On the feast, the descent of the Holy Spirit takes place in order that the many who have gathered carried the message about this event everywhere, and so that those present at the feast of Pascha and former eyewitnesses of the events concerning Christ may understand their extraordinary significance. (*adapted from Manual for Church Servers by S. Bulgakov, trans. Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris*)

Today's Epistle Lesson – The Acts of the Apostles 2:1-11

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."

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint John 7:37-52, 8:12

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." Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Do not worship God with material things and superficially, but with a good conscience, fear, love, obedience, thanksgiving, prayer and faith. For God is Spirit, nonmaterial, and is therefore worshipped in nothing else but in spirit and in truth (Jn. 4:24). Mention the name of God with all reverence, fear and devotion, and that only when and where we ought to mention it, because the name of God is holy

and awesome, and those who mention it without reverence sin grievously. Render, then, all reverence to the name of God as to God Himself. You mention the name of an earthly king with respect; that is as it should be. How much more should we mention the name of God the Heavenly King, which is revered, beloved and sweet to angels and to the souls of the saints, with extreme reverence?

The name of God is rightly mentioned in prayer, in glorification, in thanksgiving, in praise, and spiritual songs and in conversations and discourse befitting of Christians. That is when the conversation is about the Holy Word of God, about the Law and the Gospel, about the advent of Christ into the world, about His life on earth, His suffering and death which He endured for our sake, about death, about the Judgment of Christ, about eternal torment and everlasting life, and so on. Do not mention it in other conversations without extreme need, and if there is need to mention it, mention it with all caution and due reverence. Guard against mentioning the name of God in lies and jests, lest God's judgment come upon you at that moment. "For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

Without living faith and the fear of God it is impossible to live in a godly way. Living faith is inspired in the human heart by contemplation of the word of God and by the Holy Spirit. For this reason we should read and heed the word of God and pray that God Himself ignite the lamp of faith in our heart. The fear of God arises most often from contemplation of the omnipresence of God and His omniscience. God is in essence everywhere present; and wherever we may be, He is with us; and whatever we may do, say, think, and undertake, we do, say, think, and undertake all before His holy eyes. And He knows our deeds far better than we do ourselves. Think about this, O Christian, and heed it, and with God's help the fear of God will be born in you. The fear of God will guard you and correct you everywhere and in all things, and will turn you away from every evil deed, and confirm you in every good deed. Thus day by day you will become better.

Keep God, then, before your spiritual eyes and you will have the fear of God, imitating the Psalmist, "I beheld the Lord ever before me"(Ps. 15:8). But what you ought to do will be made clear to you in subsequent points. Take heed, then, and endeavor to comply with it.

While standing in church attend diligently to the reading and singing. This gives birth to compunction, true prayer, heartfelt singing and thanksgiving. Avoid, then, standing bodily in church while wandering outside the church in mind, and standing bodily before God while wandering about in spirit in worldly affairs, lest that saying be applied to you, "This people draws near to Me with their mouth, and honors Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me" (Mt. 15:8). While standing bodily in church, then, stand with heart and spirit as you stand before

God. When you look upon the icons of the saints, call to mind that One is the Creator who created them and you, and that His purpose was the same for them as it is for you, that is, to save both them and you. They are glorified, and before you lies the same glory, only imitate their lives and you shall be saved.

Prayer consists not only in standing and bowing before God in body, and in reading written prayers, but even without that it is possible to pray in mind and spirit at all times and in everyplace. You can do it while walking, sitting, reclining, among people, and in solitude. Raise up your mind and heart to God, and so beg mercy and help from Him. For God is everywhere and in every place, and the doors to Him are always open, and it is easy to approach Him, not as with man. And we can approach Him with faith and with our prayer everywhere and at all times, and in every need and circumstance. We can say to Him mentally at any time, "Lord, have mercy, Lord help!" and so on.

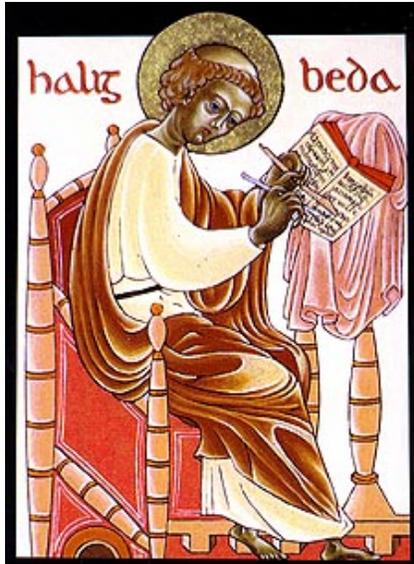
– St. Tikhon of Zandonsk

Also Commemorated Today: Hieromartyr Therapon

The Hieromartyr Therapon, Bishop of Sardis suffered for Christ during the third century (the city of Sardis was in Lydia, Asia Minor). In fulfilling his priestly service, Saint Therapon enlightened many of the pagan Greeks with the light of the Christian Faith and baptized them. For this, he was brought to trial before the governor Julian and fearlessly declared himself a Christian bishop. They threw him into prison, where he languished with hunger and thirst, and then they gave him over to cruel tortures. These torments did not break the saint's valiant confession of faith. They led the saint off in chains to the city of Sinaion in Phrygia, and then to Ancyra. In these cities they tortured him again. They took him to the River Astala, where they stretched him naked upon the ground, fastened to four stakes, and fiercely beat him. After this torture, they took the passion-bearer to the outskirts of the Satalia diocese, part of the Sardis metropolitanate, and here after long beatings Saint Therapon ended his martyric contest. The stakes to which the saint had been tied, and which were soaked with his blood, put forth green shoots and grew into large trees, whose leaves were found to have curative powers. Many people received healing through them.

Venerable Bede

Saint Bede was a church historian who recorded the history of Christianity in England up to his own time. He was probably born around 673 in Northumbria. We do not know exactly where he was born, but it is likely that it was somewhere near Jarrow. When he was seven, Bede was sent to Saint Benedict Biscop (January 12) at the monastery of Saint Peter at Wearmouth to be educated and



raised. Then he was sent to the new monastery of Saint Paul founded at Jarrow in 682, where he remained until his death. There he was guided by the abbot Saint Ceolfrith (September 25), who succeeded Saint Benedict in 690, ruling both Wearmouth and Jarrow.

There is an incident in the anonymous *Life of Ceolfrith* which may refer to the young Bede. A plague swept through Ceolfrith's monastery in 686, taking most of the monks who sang in the choir for the church services. Only the abbot and a young boy raised and educated by him remained. This young boy "is now a priest of the same monastery and commends the abbot's admirable deeds both verbally and in writing to all who desire to learn them." Grieved by this catastrophe, Ceolfrith decided that they should sing the Psalms without antiphons, except at Matins and Vespers. After a week of this, he went back to chanting the antiphons in their proper place. With the help of the boy and the surviving monks, the services were performed with difficulty until other monks could be brought in and trained to sing.

Saint Bede was ordained as a deacon when he was nineteen, and to the holy priesthood at the age of thirty by Saint John of Beverley (May 7), the holy Bishop of Hexham (687), and later (705) of York. Bede had a great love for the church services, and believed that since the angels were present with the monks during the services, that he should also be there. "What if they do not find me among the brethren when they assemble? Will they not say, 'Where is Bede?'"

Bede began as a pupil of Saint Benedict Biscop, who had been a monk of the famous monastery at Lerins, and had founded monasteries himself. Saint Benedict had brought many books with him to England from Lerins and from other European monasteries. This library enabled Bede to write his own books, which include biblical commentary, ecclesiastical history, and hagiography. Bede was not an objective historian. He is squarely on the Roman side in the debate with Celtic Christianity, for example. He was, however, fair and thorough. His books, derived from "ancient documents, from the traditions of our ancestors, and from my own personal knowledge" (Book V, 24) give us great insight into the religious and secular life of early Britain. To read Saint Bede is to enter a world shaped by spiritual traditions very similar to those cherished by Orthodox Christians. These saints engage in the same heroic asceticism shown by saints in the East, and their holiness fills us with love and admiration. Christians were expected to fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, and there was a forty day Nativity Fast (Book IV, 30).

Saint Bede became ill in 735. For about two weeks before Pascha, he was weak and had trouble breathing, but experienced little pain. He remained cheerful and gave daily lessons to his students, then spent the rest of the day singing Psalms and giving thanks to God. He would often quote the words of Saint Ambrose, "I have not lived in such a way that I am ashamed to live among you, and I do not fear to die, for God is gracious" (Paulinus, Life of Saint Ambrose, Ch. 45). In addition to giving daily lessons and chanting the Psalms, Saint Bede was also working on an Anglo-Saxon translation of the Gospel of Saint John, and also a book of extracts from the writings of Saint Isidore of Seville (April 4). On the Tuesday before the Feast of the Lord's Ascension, the saint's breathing became more labored, and his feet began to swell. "Learn quickly," he told those who were taking dictation from him, "for I do not know how long I can continue. The Lord may call me in a short while." After a sleepless night, Saint Bede continued his dictation on Wednesday morning. At the Third Hour, there was a procession with the relics of the saints in the monastery, and the brethren went to attend this service, leaving a monk named Wilbert with Bede. The monk reminded him that there remained one more chapter to be written in the book which he was dictating. Wilbert was reluctant to disturb the dying Bede, however. Saint Bede said, "It is no trouble. Take your pen and write quickly."

At the Ninth Hour, Bede paused and told Wilbert that he had some items in his chest, such as pepper, incense, and linen. He asked the monk to bring the priests of the monastery so that he could distribute these items to them. When they arrived, he spoke to each of them in turn, requesting them to pray for him and to remember him in the services. Then he said, "The time of my departure is at hand, and my soul longs to see Christ my King in His beauty." That evening, Wilbert said to him, "Dear Master, there is one sentence left unfinished." Bede said, "Very well, write it down." Then the young monk said, "It is finished now." Saint Bede replied, "You have spoken truly, it is well finished." Then he asked Wilbert to raise his head so that he could see the church where he used to pray. After chanting, "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit" to its ending, Saint Bede fell asleep in the Lord Whom he had loved.

Although Saint Bede reposed on May 25, the eve of the Ascension, he is commemorated on the 27th, since the Feast of Saint Augustine of Canterbury is appointed for the 26th. His body was first buried in the south porch of the monastery church, then later transferred to a place near the altar. Today his holy relics lie in Durham Cathedral, in the Galilee chapel. Saint Bede is the only Englishman mentioned by Dante in the DIVINE COMEDY (Paradiso). (*from oca.org*)

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Grace Bishop GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. Vincent Saverino, Presbytera Katie Baker and family, Santiago Alzugaray, Alicia Barosio and family, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl and family, Robert & Pam Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Bernie Takabayashi & family, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Subdcn. Nectarios and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)