

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

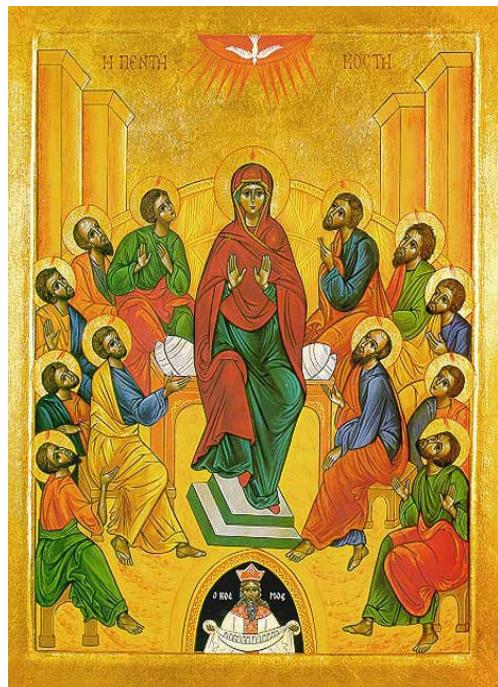
Wed: Moleben to the Theotokos 6:00 AM

Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Great Vespers 5:00 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM



***Please note that attendance is currently limited by restrictions dictated by local response to the COVID-19 pandemic; if you are currently not assigned to an attendance group, please contact outreach@apostlethomas.org for information on when you may attend.**

June 7, 2020 | Holy Pentecost

When seed is sown, the power of warmth and light must descend upon it to make it grow. When a tree is planted, the power of the wind must come in order to make it strong. When a householder builds his house, he has recourse to the power of prayer, in order to sanctify it.

Our Lord Jesus Christ has sown a most select seed in the field of this world. The power of the Holy Spirit had to descend in order to warm and sanctify that seed, so that it would grow and prosper. God the Son planted the tree of life in the overgrown field of death. The mighty wind of God the Holy Spirit had to sweep through, in order to strengthen the tree of life. The Divine Bridegroom chose a Bride for Himself, the Church of pure souls, and the Spirit of eternal joy had to descend, so that heaven and earth might be betrothed, and the Bride adorned in white garments.

All of this happened just as it was foretold. The Holy Spirit was promised, and the Holy Spirit descended. Who could promise the descent of the Omnipotent Spirit on the earth other than He Who knew that this Spirit would obey Him and descend?

And to Whom could the Omnipotent Spirit show such speedy obedience if not to the One for Whom He had perfect love?

Oh, how perfect love is always ready for perfect obedience! After all, perfect love cannot be perfectly expressed in any other way than by perfect obedience. Love is always vigilant in its desire and readiness to obey its beloved. And from perfect obedience flows, just like a stream of honey and milk, perfect joy, which is the content of the attractive power of love.

The Father has perfect love for the Son and the Spirit. The Son has perfect love for the Father and the Spirit. And the Spirit has perfect love for the Father and the Son. According to this perfect love, the Father is in the most zealous obedience to the Son and the Spirit, and the Son is in the most zealous obedience to the Father and the Spirit; and the Spirit is in the most zealous obedience to the Father and the Son. Perfect love makes the Father the perfect servant of the Son and the Spirit; and the Son, the perfect servant of the Father and the Spirit; and the Spirit, the perfect servant of the Father and the Son. Just as no love in the created world can be compared to the mutual love of the Divine Hypostasis, neither also can any obedience be compared to Their mutual obedience. "I have glorified Thee on earth: I have finished the work which You gave me to do" (Jn. 17:4). "May Your will be done." Are these not the words of the Son's perfect obedience to the Father? "Father, I thank You that You have heard me. And I know that You always hear me, said the Lord Jesus Christ at the resurrection of Lazarus; and later He would exclaim: Father, glorify Your name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (Jn. 11:41-42; 12:28). Is this not the perfect obedience of the Father to the Son? "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I do not go away, the Comforter will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send him to you" (Jn. 16:7). "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; but when the Comforter is come, whom I will send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, he shall testify of me" (Jn. 14:16; 15:26). And truly, on the fiftieth day after the Resurrection, the Comforter, Spirit of Truth descended upon those to whom it was promised. Is this not the perfect obedience of the Holy Spirit to the Son?

And the salvific rule that the Apostle Paul commands all the faithful to keep - "Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Rm. 12:10) - is perfectly performed between the Hypostases of the Holy Trinity. Each one of the Hypostases strives to prefer one another in honor; so also does each wish to decrease Himself before the Other Two. And if each Hypostasis did not have that most sweet and holy striving to render His honor to the Other Two and decrease Himself in obedience, then in that endless love, which

Each of them has for Each Other, the Trinitarian nature of the Divinity would drown in a kind of indifference of Hypostasis.

Thus, according to the boundless love of God the Spirit for God the Son, the Holy Spirit with boundless obedience hastened to fulfill the Son's will and descended at the predetermined time upon the apostles. God the Son firmly knew that God the Spirit would obey Him, and therefore He so firmly promised Its descent upon the apostles. "But tarry in the city of Jerusalem, until you are endued with power from on high" (Lk. 24:49), our Lord Jesus Christ commanded His apostles. Do not ask how the Lord knew beforehand that this power from on high, or the Holy Spirit, would descend upon His disciples. The Lord knew beforehand not only this, but also everything else that would happen till the end of time, and even after the end of time. However, if you contemplate deeper this event, you will see that the Lord's foreknowledge and foretelling of the descent of the Holy Spirit is foreknowledge and foretelling only in that it relates to the external event of its descent, but not as it relates to the agreement of the Holy Spirit and Its desire to fulfill the will of the Son, and so descend. For even before the Lord spoke of the descent of the Holy Spirit, He already had a zealous and voluntary agreement with the Spirit about this. More correctly, the Holy Spirit was also speaking through Him about Its descent. For was it not said in the Gospels: "Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit" (Lk. 4:1)? And did not our Lord Jesus Christ Himself admit in Nazareth that the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled in Him: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor" (Lk. 4:18)? Clearly the Son thus abides in ceaseless communion with the Holy Spirit as also with the Father, in a communion of mutual love, obedience and joy. The anointing by the Spirit testifies to the living and true habitation of the Spirit in a specific person. Then how could the Anointed One say anything about that very Spirit that the Spirit did not already know? Or promise any kind of co-working with that very Spirit if the Spirit had not already agreed to it?

And that the Holy Spirit abided in our Lord Jesus Christ and agreed with His every word, deed, and promise, is witnessed in today's Gospel reading. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink" (Jn. 7:37). This refers to the feast of Tabernacles, which was celebrated in autumn in memory of the building of the Tabernacles in the desert during the Jewish people's time of wandering there. This feast was marked in the seventh month according to the Jewish calendar, which corresponds to our month of September, and was a time of great festivity (cf. Lev. 23:34; Deut. 16:13-14). It was celebrated on the seventh day, and the last day must have been marked with especial solemnity, since it was called great. "If any man thirst," declared the Lord, "let him come unto Me, and drink." In waterless Jerusalem it was hard to

provide even ordinary, material water to that great crowd. Special water-bearers dragged water for the temple vessels from the spring of Siloam. What inspired the Lord to speak of thirst and water? Perhaps it was the people's complaint of thirst. Perhaps it was the appearance of the water-bearers, who were pulling the water from Siloam up Mount Moriah where the temple stood. And perhaps it was the circumstance that this was the last day, and therefore the Lord wanted to make use of the time, to remind the people whose hearts had hardened, of spiritual thirst, and to offer them spiritual drink. Once He told the Samaritan woman: "But whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (Jn. 4:14). And now He is talking about that same living-giving spiritual water now, when He calls all who thirst to "come to Me and drink" (Jn. 7:38-39). First the Lord determines belief in Him. He promises a reward to those who rightly believe in Him; that is, who believe as the scripture has said. He does not want people to believe in Him as one of the prophets. All of the prophets prophesied of Him. And He does not want people to consider Him a second Elijah or John the Baptist. Both Elijah and John were but servants of God and forerunners of Him. And He did not call Himself a servant of God, nor the forerunner of anyone, no matter who it may be. Holy Scripture speaks of Him as the Son of God, born of God the Father in eternity and of the Most Holy Virgin Mary in time. When the Apostle Peter confessed such faith in Him, saying: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Mt. 16:16), the Lord praised his faith. When the elders and scribes wanted to confuse Him with various cunning questions, He Himself confused them and silenced them by citing the Holy Scripture, where it is written that the awaited Messiah is not only the son of David, but also the Son of God (Mt. 22:41-66). He wants people to believe in Him also as the highest divine revelation, in which all the other revelations are united, from beginning to end. Outside of Him faith is in vain, hope is in vain, and love is impossible. That the right faith in Him is salvific is something of which the one who rightly believes will be convinced. How can one be convinced? "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Living water here means the Holy Spirit, as the Evangelist himself explains: "He spake here of the Spirit." Thus, the Holy Spirit comes to abide in the one who believes in the Son of God, and spiritual, life-bearing rivers shall flow from his belly. But why from his belly? Because the body of a saint in this life is the habitation of the Holy Spirit, as the apostle says: "What? Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which you have of God, and you are not your own?" (1 Cor. 6:19). This is what the Apostle Paul said to the faithful, upon whom the Holy Spirit had already descended through their faith in the Son of God. In a narrower sense, the belly is understood to be the human heart, as the concentration of life both physical and spiritual. The same Apostle Paul says: "God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts" (Gal. 4:6). Thus, from the heart as from the main lamp

of the Holy Spirit pour spiritual, life-bearing streams throughout the entire person, both bodily and spiritually. The consequence of this will be that the body of a person with faith will become an instrument of the human spirit, and the human spirit will become an instrument of the Holy Spirit. The whole person will be purified, illumined, confirmed, and made deathless by the streams of God the Spirit, so that all of his thoughts, all his love, and all his activities will be aimed at eternal life. The streams of his life will pour into eternity, and the streams of eternity will pour into his life.

He who believes in me, as the scripture says, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this He spoke of the Spirit, which those who believe in him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified).

However, when our Lord Jesus Christ spoke this, "the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because Jesus was not yet glorified." That is, the Holy Spirit was not yet upon the faithful, but It was upon Jesus. The Holy Spirit had not yet begun Its activity in the world in all fullness and strength, for our Lord Jesus Christ had not yet been glorified; that is, He had not finally brought Himself as a sacrifice for the human race and had not completed His work as the Savior of man. In the economy of man's salvation, the Father has the fullness of activity, performing this work of salvation as the God-Man; and the Holy Spirit has the fullness of activity, confirming, sanctifying, and continuing the work of the Son. But this must not be understood to mean that the Son and the Spirit did not act when the Father acts; or that the Father and the Spirit did not act when the Son acts; or that the Father and the Son did not act when the Spirit acts. May any such wicked and senseless thought be far from you. For, while the Son was in the fullness of His activity on earth, the Father and the Spirit acted with Him, as was revealed at the Baptism in the Jordan, and as our Lord Jesus Christ Himself said: "My Father has been working until now, and I have been working. " (Jn. 5:17). That means that the Father and the Son act together and at the same time. In precisely the same way, together and at the same time the Holy Spirit and the Son act, as can be seen from our Lord Jesus Christ's promise to send the Comforting Spirit, even though He Himself will also be with them always, "even unto the end of the world" (Mt. 28:20). The Trinitarian Divinity is of one essence and undivided, but It expresses Its activity in relation to the created world more noticeably now through One Divine Hypostasis, now through another. Thus, when our Lord Jesus Christ promised the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, the Holy Spirit was in Him, so that it could be said that to the extent this promise proceeded from God the Son, so it proceeded from God Himself, the Holy Spirit.

Let us look now at how this promise was fulfilled, or how the descent of God the Holy Spirit took place, as we celebrate this solemn feast today. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place" (Acts 2:1). According to their Lord's command, the apostles remained in Jerusalem and awaited the power from on high that would show them what to do next. They were all together with one accord in prayer all as one person, as one soul. The content of souls makes human souls unlike or like one another; but the content of the souls of all the apostles at that time was one and the same: their souls were filled with praise of God for what had already taken place, and with yearning for what will be.

"And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:2-4). What was this sound? Was it not the sound of the angelic hosts? Was it not the sound of the cherubim's wings, which the Prophet Ezekiel had heard (Ez. 1:24)? Whatever it was, it was not from the earth but from heaven, and not from earthly winds, but from the heavenly powers. This sound announced the descent of the King of Heaven, God the Spirit, the Comforter. Spirit is not fire, nor is it a dove. But It appeared in the Jordan in the form of a dove, and now it appears as fire. Then, it appeared in order to portray the innocence and purity of our Lord Jesus Christ upon whom It descended; now, in order to portray fiery power, warmth, and light - a light that scorches away sins, a warmth that warms the heart, a light that enlightens the mind. The spirit is bodiless and does not incarnate into any kind of body, but when necessary It appears in the physical form that best symbolizes the meaning of the given moment. But why the Holy Spirit appears in this instance in the form of cloven tongues of fire, which as if sat upon each of the apostles becomes immediately clear from the following:

"And (they) began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4). Here is the explanation of why God the Spirit appeared in the form of tongues, and cloven tongues at that. Its first effect was to make the apostles capable of speaking in other languages. From this it is clear that from the very beginning of the Church of Christ, the Gospel of salvation was preordained for all the peoples of the earth, as the Lord determined after His Resurrection, commanding the apostles: "go therefore, and teach all nations" (Mt. 28:19). For after the Jews - the chosen people of God - had rejected the Lord and crucified Him, the Victorious Lord made a new choice of all the peoples on the earth, and so the new God-chosen nation arose - not of one language, but of one spirit, a holy people, or the Church of God. How could Christ's apostles go forth to teach all nations if they did not know the languages of those nations? Thus, the first power needed by these first missionaries of the Gospels so that they could begin their

mission was the ability to understand foreign languages and speak them. They were simple folk.... If they were to start studying many other languages in the ordinary way, when would they learn them? And if they spent their whole lives studying they would not learn what the Holy Spirit taught them in one instant. Just take a look at how many different peoples, speaking all different languages there were in Jerusalem then: "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, In Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians!"

"And every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled." They saw before them simple folk, with simple manners, simply attired, and each heard them speaking in his own native language about the great works of God. How could they not be amazed? How could they not marvel? Others, who did not know how to explain it all, said, "These men are full of new wine." But it is often that way - to the drunk, sober people seem drunk, and to the insane, the sane people seem insane. Those wreathed with earth and drunk with the earth - how could they judge otherwise about people filled with the Holy Spirit, about spirit-bearers, speaking as the Spirit gave them to do? Lovers of routine do not like surprises, and when they are met with the unexpected, they either get angry or mock it. But the Holy Spirit is not like a man forcing his way into another's home. It goes to the place where the door is voluntarily opened to It, and where It is awaited as the dearest and most desire Guest. The apostles waited for It with great impatience, and It descended upon them and came to abide in them. It descended upon them with a sound - not a threatening, but joyful sound.

Oh, brothers, how the Holy Spirit rejoices with an unspeakable joy when it finds pure and open souls who thirst for It! With a joyful sound It comes and abides in them and gives them Its rich gifts. As fire, It enters them in order to scorch the last growth of sin; as light, in order to illumine them with the unwaning light of heaven; as warmth, to warm them with the Divine warmth of love, by which the immortal angelic hosts are warmed in the Kingdom of God. ("Though a lamp may be filled with oil and have a wick, if it is not lit with fire it remains dark. So it is with the soul apparently adorned with all the virtues - if it is not made a participant of the light and grace of the Holy Spirit, it remains extinguished and dark, and its works are yet unsteady; for they must first be reproved and made manifest by the light" [cf. Eph. 5:13]. - St. Ephraim the Syrian, Homily 59). It conferred the gift of tongues upon the apostles as Its first gift, most needed by them at the time. But later, again according to the needs of their apostolic service, It poured out other gifts upon them: the gift of wonderworking, the gift of prophecy, the gift of discernment, the gift of speaking, the gift of patience, the gift of inner peace, the

gift of unwavering faith and hope, the gift of the love of God and man. Abundantly and joyfully did the Holy Spirit disseminate these gifts not only to the apostles, but also to their successors, and to the all the saints of Christ's Church up to the present time, according to human needs and purity. By His great work on earth did our Lord Jesus Christ bring great joy to the Father and the Holy Spirit. From the first paradisal days of Adam, the Holy Spirit did not have the joy that It had on the day of Pentecost, when God the Son created the possibility for It to act among people in full power. True, It unceasingly acted upon the human race, even when the human race was kept in the bonds of sin, from the fall of Adam to the Resurrection of Christ; nevertheless Its activity then was limited and hindered by human sin.

By a very narrow way did It walk then amidst people, pouring oil into the lamp of life only so much as to prevent it from going out altogether. It acted also through the laws of nature, through human laws, through the prophets and kings, and through artists and sages, to the extent that these were able and willing to give themselves over to Its action. Wherever a tear sprung from a thirst for God's righteousness might have fallen upon the dust of earth, it fell because of the warmth by which the Holy Spirit inspired a human heart. Wherever the sage's bright thought gleamed for the One eternal God, it gleamed because of the spark of the Holy Spirit, cast into the human soul. Wherever the artist created, chiseled or sketched some tale of life, thereby opening even to some small measure mankind's blinded eyes to a vision of Divine truth, there did the Holy Spirit make contact through Its life-giving breath with the human spirit. Wherever the noble hero sacrificed himself with faith in God and arose to defend flouted truth and righteousness, there did the Holy Spirit pour Its strength into the human heart. But all of this happened on no sweeping scale or with any great joy. All of these were but crumbs thrown to hungry prisoners in the dungeon. When our Lord and God Jesus Christ destroyed the prison of sin and death and led before the Holy Spirit His twelve apostles like twelve bright, royal chambers, then God the Holy Spirit with a joyful sound and the fullness of Its activity came and abode in them. God the Holy Spirit, sorrowing from the time of Adam's sin, then for the first time and with a great breath, great breadth of scale, and great joy once again began Its unlimited action of power and inspiration in people....

From the divine apostles flowed rivers of living water across the whole world. Others came and drank their fill of this living water, while others did not. The apostles walked among people like gods, working miracles, healing all sicknesses and every infirmity, preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins. Some received them rejoicing, while others rejected them, angrily and mockingly. Those who accepted them also experienced communion with the Holy Spirit and the action of the Holy Spirit in them. And so the holy nation grew, and God's Church spread and

became established in the world. The seed grew and bore fruit. Thus was the house of truth, the cornerstone of which is our Lord Jesus Christ, sanctified by the All-Holy Spirit, spread to the four corners of the world, and its rooftop rose to the greatest heights of heaven.

As we celebrate today the feast of the Holy Spirit, which out of boundless love for God the Son and with boundless joy and obedience willed to descend upon earth and take into Its omnipotent hands the work of man's salvation, let us also remember in grateful hymns the Most Holy Virgin Mary, upon whom the Holy Spirit descended earlier than It did to the apostles. God the Spirit descended upon the apostles as upon the Church, as upon the unanimous community of saints; but upon the Mother of God it descended as to a specially chosen person. "The Holy Spirit shall come upon you, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow you" (Lk. 1:35), announced the Archangel Gabriel to the Most Holy Virgin. And by the power of the Holy Spirit, she gave birth to a most beautiful Fruit, from Whom both heaven and earth are fragrant, and by Whom are nourished all the faithful from beginning to end. O Most Holy and Most Pure Theotokos, dawn and cradle of our salvation, our image of humility and obedience, Mediator and Prayerful Intercessor before the throne of God, pray unceasingly with the holy apostles for us!

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of truth, come also to us and abide in us, and remain in us as strength, light, and warmth, as our life and joy! Cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One! Fill our hearts with joy and our lips with hymns, that we may glorify and magnify Thee with the Father and the Son, the Trinity One in Essence and Undivided, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen. - St. Nikolai Velimirovich (*from johnsanidopoulos.com*)

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

Prooimion: When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, he parted the nations. When he divided out the tongues of fire, he called all to unity; and with one voice we glorify *the All-Holy Spirit*.

Give swift and stable comfort to your servants, Jesus, when our spirits are despondent. Do not part from our souls in afflictions, do not be far from our minds in perils, be ever before us. Be near us, be near, you who are everywhere. As you are also always with your apostles, so too unite yourself with those who long for you, O Compassionate One, that united to you, we may praise and glorify *the All-Holy Spirit*.

You were not parted from your disciples, Savior, when you took the road to heaven, for having reached the things on high, you still hold those below, for not one place is separate from you, O Uncontainable One; and were there such a place,

it perishes and vanishes and becomes like Sodom. For you establish the universe, filling all things. The apostles there had you in their souls. And so, when you had been taken up from the Mount of Olives, they came down dancing and singing and glorifying *the All-Holy Spirit*.

The eleven disciples returned with joy from the Mount of Olives. For Luke, the revealer of sacred mysteries, writes this. They returned to Jerusalem, ascended to the upper room, where they were staying. They entered and sat down - Peter and the rest of the disciples. Kephas, as their leader, said to them, "Sharers of the Kingdom, let our hearts be on high with the One who made the promise and said, 'I will send you *the All-Holy Spirit*.'"

When he had spoken like this to the apostles, Peter roused them to prayer, and standing in their midst, cried out, "Let us pray, let us bend the knee, let us ask, let us make this room a church. For so it is and so it has become. Let us sing and cry aloud to God, 'Send us your good Spirit that he may guide us all into your upright land which you have prepared for those who honor and who glorify *the All-Holy Spirit*.'"

On hearing this, those who had been called with him gathered themselves at once like lambs to a shepherd, charmed by his word, and silently they articulated what they longed for and made intense supplications to the Almighty, which contained these words, "To you the Governor and King of the angels, to the Suzerain and Creator of mortals, to you, the One who by his mere nod holds sway over things on earth and sea, your friends and servants cry aloud, 'Swiftly send us *the All-Holy Spirit*.'"

As soon as they had completed their supplications, they signed them, having sealed them with faith and sent them on high. Their Teacher read them and said, "Of your own free will, O Paraclete, under no order, but as you wish, descend. For the disciples, whom I gathered for you and the Father, await you, the ones whom I instructed when I said, 'Make disciples of the nations proclaiming the Father, honoring the Son and praising *the All-Holy Spirit*.'"

Then God the Paraclete heeded those who implored him and took hold of them as they prayed. Yet the ineffable in no way changed his place, for condescension did not become alteration, nor did he suffer diminution, for he was on high and he was below and everywhere. For divine nature is ineffable and intangible. He is not seen with the eyes, but he is known by faith. He is not grasped by hands, but he is handled by the hearts of believers, *the All-Holy Spirit*.

When the divine Pentecost had been completed, [i.e., 50 days] the eleven initiates stood together, persevering in prayers, and, as the reading from Acts says, there came a sudden sound, as of a mighty wind, resounding from heaven, while it filled

the whole room with fire, but even more, it also struck the loved ones with amazement. And so, seeing the house tossed about like a skiff, they cried out, “Master, still the storm and send *the All-Holy Spirit.*”

The wise apostles, thinking the whole upper room was collapsing under the wind, all shut their eyes in fear. And then, something more fearful came to pass and wonder succeeding wonder added to the first alarm a second terror. For fiery tongues were touching them again, and lighting on the head of the beloved, tongues that were not burning their hair, but enlightening their minds; for to purify and cleanse he had sent them on before him, *the All-Holy Spirit.*

When Peter saw all that had taken place, he cried out, “Brothers, let us honor what we see, do not let us pry into it. Let no one say, ‘What is this that is being done?’ For what has been accomplished surpasses understanding and vanquishes reasoning. Spirit and fire are yoked together – certain wonder. Breeze and flame are linked together – awesome spectacle. Torches with winds, and sparks with drops of dew. Who has seen? Who has heard? Who can say what he grants, *the All-Holy Spirit.*

“You then, beloved, stand your ground and quietly contemplate the fire that He who Is in the highest has sent from on high. Do not be afraid, for the coals do not burn. Do not be amazed, for this fire does not consume, but as prudent men remember how of old the three youths received fire, how their bodies were not burned, nor a single hair, how that which received the three showed them to be four, for it gave up with interest those it had received, because it feared *the All-Holy Spirit.*

“So, brothers, let each of you now cast away the fear from his soul and let him show his longing for the One who was taken up. For this is how he loved those whom he called: everything that he foretold he has fulfilled, as he said, so he has done. Why then should we be afraid of a flame that does not burn? Let us think that the fire is a rose, as indeed it is, for it has been placed on our heads like flowers with which he has crowned us, adorned us, made us resplendent, *the All-Holy Spirit.*”

When Kephas had said this to all the apostles, he became still along with them and with them received the Holy Spirit, for the latter had come after this, as it is written. He had used as forerunners the two wonders of fire and wind, because it was necessary that a wonder run before the Spirit, necessary that a flame precede the Enlightener and inform the world beforehand like a sounding trumpet that, as he knows how and as he wills, he comes upon the earth, *the All-Holy Spirit.*

Great and fearful were all the things that happened and they held the minds of all, for suddenly, being filled with the Spirit, they all spoke with those who heard them

just as they heard them, to the Romans not as foreigners, to the Parthians like themselves and to the Medes as their own. To the Elamites they appeared to be speaking well and clearly, to the Arabs they were immediately their kin. To Asians and Phrygians they spoke clearly and distinctly and to all the nations they were speaking as he gave them power, *the All-Holy Spirit*.

But when those who were there from every land saw them all speaking in tongues, they were amazed and cried out, What does this mean? The apostles are Galileans; how then, as we now see, have they become fellow countrymen of all the nations? When did Peter Kephas ever see Egypt? When did Andrew ever dwell in Mesopotamia? How did the sons of Zebedee see Pamphylia? How can we understand these things? What are we to say? It was entirely as he willed it, *the All-Holy Spirit*.

Now those who before were fishermen have become skilled speakers. Now those who once stood by the shores of lakes are orators, and clear ones. Those who previously used to mend their nets now unravel the webs of orators and make them worthless with simpler utterances. For they speak one Word, instead of many, they proclaim one God, not one of many. The One as one they worship, a Father beyond understanding, a Son consubstantial and inseparable, and like to them *the All-Holy Spirit*.

Was it not then given them to overcome all through the tongues they speak? And why do the fools outside strive for victory? Why do the Greeks puff and buzz? Why are they deceived by Aratos the thrice accursed? Why err like wandering planets to Plato? Why do they love debilitated Demosthenes? Why do they not consider Homer a chimera? Why do they go on about Pythagoras, who were better muzzled? Why do they not run believing to those to whom has appeared *the All-Holy Spirit*.

Brothers, let us sing the praise of the tongues of the disciples because, not with elegant words, but with divine power they caught all mortals in their nets, because they took up His Cross like a rod, because they used words again as lines and fished the world, because they had the Word as a sharp hook, because the flesh of the Master of all things became for them a bait, not hunting to bring death, but drawing out to life those who honor and glorify *the All-Holy Spirit*.

– St. Romanos the Melodist, Kontakion on Pentecost

JOIN your CN Friends for the...

CN SUMMER CAMP EXPERIENCE 2020

*We had to switch gears...we aren't getting together AT Camp Nazareth
for our Summer Weeks,
BUT our CN Family is STILL getting together!*

REGISTER ONLINE STARTING JUNE 1, 2020!!!

Dates for the CN Summer Camp Experience

Week 1: July 19-24, 2020

Johnstown, Pocono, Southern Tier, Youngstown and Chicago Deaneries

Week 2: July 26-July 31, 2020

Pittsburgh, Mid-Atlantic, Tri-State and Washington D.C. Deaneries

Week 3: August 2-August 7, 2020

New England, NY, NJ, Florida and Canada Deaneries

Register Online Starting June 1, 2020

Register at – *campnazareth.org*

Register by July 1, 2020!!!!

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Eminence Metropolitan 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, Presbytera Katie Baker and family, Dn. Steve Hall, Santiago Alzugaray, 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, Howl Family, 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, Robinson Family, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Bernie Takabayashi & family, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Dcn. 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.)