

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

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The Great Feast of Pentecost

John 7:37-52, 8:12

In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.) Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is the Prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Shall Christ come out of Galilee? Hath not the scripture said, That Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was? So there was a division among the people because of Him. And some of them would have taken Him; but no man laid hands on Him. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought Him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this Man. Then answered them the Pharisees, Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him? But this people who knoweth not the law are cursed. Nicodemus saith unto them, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,) Doth our law judge any man, before it hear him, and know what he doeth? They answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. (*KJV*)

God's Holy Church gives us the great feast of Pentecost each year to experience and celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit. The well-known prayer says the Holy Spirit is everywhere and fills all things.

Baptized Christians are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. We know from Holy Scripture the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (I Cor.16:19) Each time a believer uses the sign of the Cross, belief in the Holy Spirit is confessed.

God's Holy Church has completed the celebration of Pascha, the Lord's Resurrection. The Church has celebrated Jesus' Ascension into heaven. Today, the Descent of the Holy Spirit is the great focus of attention.

Belief in the Holy Trinity, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is expressed in the Creed at Baptism and at each Divine Liturgy. Life as a Christian is lived inseparably with and because of the Holy Trinity.

Believers pray to Holy Spirit for strength and wisdom. Individuals with faith turn to the Holy Spirit to be purified. The days of the Christian life are enriched and shaped with the Holy Spirit.

A sense of completion takes place in the Church with the celebration of Pentecost. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles had a profound affect. The Holy Apostles were transformed, strengthened and motivated.

Pentecost has a transforming affect on parish life. Believers celebrating the Feast of Pentecost today are renewed, strengthened and motivated. Barriers to the life in Christ are overcome through the renewal taking place on this feast.

The Lord Jesus Christ spoke about the Holy Spirit in the current Gospel. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed references the Holy Spirit speaking through the Prophets.

The believer's world-view and worldly actions rest in the Holy Trinity and are formed by belief in the Holy Trinity. Believers living fully in faith have lives unfolding as intended by the Lord God.

Holy Apostle Paul put life in perspective to the Corinthians. Paul said: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor.3:18)

Remaining united with the Lord throughout life is a challenge. When the believer is baptized, faithfulness to the Lord is confessed and expected. Constant repentance is necessary to remain true to the Baptismal commitment.

God's Holy Church offers the nourishment and teachings for believers to remain faithful and to grow throughout life. The responsibility rests with each believer to fully utilize the Church's nourishment and teachings.

Major feasts of the year such as Pentecost strengthen, inspire and direct the believer. Attentive believers heed the Gospel teachings and the full content of the Divine services.

The life in Christ is intended from the moment of baptism until departure from this life. Joy thrives in the heart, mind and soul of the believer remaining true. God is ever-present to lead, guard and protect the believer in life's journey.

The Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life are the goal of each believer. The believer does not journey alone. Jesus said: "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." (Jn.10:10)

Each day and throughout the year, the Church offers guidance and nourishment for the believer seeking to follow the path to the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life.

The parish priest is ever-present to provide guidance for believers in life's journey. In addition to the Church's Divine services, believers have the benefit of the Holy Scriptures to learn from.

The Lord Jesus Christ said in the present Gospel, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." (Jn. 7:37) Take time to drink from the Lord Jesus Christ throughout each day.

Always be mindful of the Holy Spirit and pray to the Holy Spirit with great faith. Live well in God's Holy Church and realize the boundless love of the Lord for each and every person.

The Great Feast of Pentecost May 30/June 12, 2022. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

ON THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

From the Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles by St. John Chrysostom

Homily I. Acts 1:1–2

Being seen of them during forty days.

He [the Lord] was not always with them [His disciples] now, as He was before the Resurrection. For the writer does not say "forty days," but, "during forty days." He came, and again disappeared; by this leading them on to higher conceptions, and no longer permitting them to stand affected towards Him in the same way as before, but taking effectual measures to secure both these objects, that the fact of His Resurrection should be believed, and that He Himself should be ever after apprehended to be greater than man. At the same time, these were two opposite things; for in order to the belief in His Resurrection, much was to be done of a human character, and for the other object, just the reverse. Nevertheless, both results have been effected, each when the fitting time arrived.

And what did He, when appearing unto them those forty days? Why, He conversed with them, says the writer, *concerning the kingdom of God*. For, since the disciples both had been distressed and troubled at the things which already had taken place, and were about to go forth to encounter great difficulties, He recovered them by His discourses concerning the future. *He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father*. First, He led them out to Galilee, afraid and trembling, in order that they might listen to His words in security. Afterwards, when they had heard, and had passed forty days with Him, *He commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem*. Wherefore? Just as when soldiers are to charge a multitude, no one thinks of letting them issue forth until they have armed themselves, or as horses are not suffered to start from the barriers until they have got their charioteer; so Christ did not suffer these to appear in the field before the descent of the Spirit, that they might not be in a condition to be easily defeated and taken captive by the many. Nor was this the only reason, but also there were many in Jerusalem who should believe. And then again that it might not be said, that leaving their own acquaintance, they had gone to make a parade among strangers, therefore among those very men who had put Christ to death do they exhibit the proofs of His Resurrection, among those who had crucified and buried Him, in the very town in which the iniquitous deed had been perpetrated; thereby stopping the mouths of all foreign objectors. For when those even who had crucified Him appear as believers, clearly this proved both the fact of the crucifixion and the iniquity of the deed, and afforded a mighty evidence of the Resurrection. Furthermore, lest the Apostles should say, How shall it be possible for us to live among wicked and bloody men, they so many in number, we so few and contemptible, observe how He does away their fear and distress, by these words, *But wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of Me*. You will say, When had they heard this? When He said, *It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you* (Jn. 15:7). *And again, I will pray the Father, and He shall send you another Comforter, that He may abide with you* (Jn. 14:16).

But why did the Holy Ghost come to them, not while Christ was present, nor even immediately after his departure, but, whereas Christ ascended on the fortieth day, the Spirit descended *when the day of Pentecost*, that is, the fiftieth, *was fully come* (Act. 2:1)? And how was it, if the Spirit had not yet come, that He said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost* (Jn. 20:22)? In order to render them capable and meet for the reception of Him. For if Daniel fainted at the sight of an Angel (cf. Dan. 8:17), much more would these when about to receive so great a grace. Either this then is to be said, or else that Christ spoke of what was to come, as if come already; as when He

said, *Tread ye upon serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the devil* (Lk. 10:19). But why had the Holy Ghost not yet come? It was fit that they should first be brought to have a longing desire for that event, and so receive the grace. For this reason Christ Himself departed, and then the Spirit descended. For had He Himself been there, they would not have expected the Spirit so earnestly as they did. On this account neither did He come immediately after Christ's Ascension, but after eight or nine days. It is the same with us also; for our desires towards God are then most raised, when we stand in need. Accordingly, John chose that time to send his disciples to Christ when they were likely to feel their need of Jesus, during his own imprisonment. Besides, it was fit that our nature should be seen in heaven, and that the reconciliation should be perfected, and then the Spirit should come, and the joy should be unalloyed. For, if the Spirit being already come, Christ had then departed, and the Spirit remained; the consolation would not have been so great as it was. For in fact they clung to Him, and could not bear to part with Him; wherefore also to comfort them He said, *It is expedient for you that I go away* (Jn. 14:7). On this account He also waits during those intermediate days, that they might first despond for awhile, and be made, as I said, to feel their need of Him. And then reap a full and unalloyed delight. But if the Spirit were inferior to the Son, the consolation would not have been adequate; and how could He have said, *It is expedient for you*? For this reason the greater matters of teaching were reserved for the Spirit, that the disciples might not imagine Him inferior.

Consider also how necessary He made it for them to abide in Jerusalem, by promising that the Spirit should be granted them. For lest they should again flee away after His Ascension, by this expectation, as by a bond, He keeps them to that spot. But having said, *Wait for the promise of the Father, which ye have heard of Me*, He then adds, *For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence*. For now indeed He gives them to see the difference there was betwixt Him and John, plainly, and not as heretofore in obscure hints; for in fact He had spoken very obscurely, when He said, *Notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he*: but now He says plainly, *John baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost* (Mt. 11:11). And he no longer uses the testimony, but merely adverts to the person of John, reminding the disciples of what he had said, and shows them that they are now become greater than John; seeing they too are to baptize with the Spirit. Again, He did not say, I baptize you with the Holy Ghost, but, *Ye shall be baptized*: teaching us humility. For this was plain enough from the testimony of John, that it was Christ Himself Who

should baptize: *He it is that shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire* (Lk. 3:6); wherefore also He made mention of John.

The Gospels, then, are a history of what Christ did and said; but the Acts, of what that “other Comforter” said and did. Not but that the Spirit did many things in the Gospels also; even as Christ here in the Acts still works in men as He did in the Gospels: only then the Spirit wrought through the Temple, now through the Apostles: then, He came into the Virgin’s womb, and fashioned the Temple; now, into Apostolic souls: then in the likeness of a dove; now, in the likeness of fire. And wherefore? Showing there the gentleness of the Lord, but here His taking vengeance also, He now puts them in mind of the judgment likewise. For, when need was to forgive, need was there of much gentleness; but now we have obtained the gift, it is henceforth a time for judgment and examination.

But why does Christ say, *Ye shall be baptized*, when in fact there was no water in the upper room? Because the more essential part of Baptism is the Spirit, through Whom indeed the water has its operation; in the same manner our Lord also is said to be anointed, not that He had ever been anointed with oil, but because He had received the Spirit. Besides, we do in fact find them receiving a baptism with water [and a baptism with the Spirit —P. Schaff], and these at different moments. In our case both take place under one act, but then they were divided. For in the beginning they were baptized by John; since, if harlots and publicans went to that baptism, much rather would they who thereafter were to be baptized by the Holy Ghost. Then, that the Apostles might not say, that they were always having it held out to them in promises (Jn. 14:15–16), (for indeed Christ had already discoursed much to them concerning the Spirit, that they should not imagine It to be an impersonal Energy or Operation, (ἐνέργειαν ἀνυπόστατον) that they might not say this, then, He adds, *not many days hence*. And He did not explain when, that they might always watch: but, that it would soon take place, He told them, that they might not faint; yet the exact time He refrained from adding, that they might always be vigilant. Nor does He assure them by this alone; I mean, by the shortness of the time, but withal by saying, *The promise which ye have heard of Me*. For this is not, saith He, the only time I have told you, but already I have promised what I shall certainly perform. What wonder then that He does not signify the day of the final consummation, when this day which was so near He did not choose to reveal? And with good reason; to the end they may be ever wakeful, and in a state of expectation and earnest heed.

For it cannot, it cannot be, that a man should enjoy the benefit of grace except he watch...

The Prologue from Ochrid
St Nikolai of Zhicha
(06.14.2022)

1. THE HOLY MARTYR JUSTIN THE PHILOSOPHER

Justin was born of Greek parents in the Samaritan town of Shechem, later called Nablus, one hundred-five years after Christ. He zealously sought wisdom among philosophers, at first with the Stoics and after that with the Peripatetics, with the Pythagoreans and finally with the Platonists. Even though Plato's philosophy did not satisfy him, nevertheless, he adhered to it the longest time, not having anything else that would attract him more. By God's Providence Justin encountered an honorable elder, who shook his faith in the philosophy of Plato and persuaded him that men cannot know the truth about God unless God reveals it and that God had revealed the truth about Himself in the books of Holy Scripture. Justin began to read Holy Scripture and became a thoroughly convinced Christian. However, he did not want to be baptized or to be called a Christian until he was personally convinced of the falseness of all the accusations that the pagans raised against the Christians. Coming to Rome in a philosopher's dolman [cape], he quickly achieved great respect as well as many followers there. He was present at the martyrdom of St. Ptolemy and St. Lucian. Witnessing the tortures of innocent Christians, Justin wrote an *Apologia* (Defense) of Christians and Christian teachings and presented it to Emperor Antoninus and to the Senate. The emperor read the *Apologia* with care and ordered the persecution of Christians to cease. Justin took a copy of the emperor's decree and journeyed with it to Asia, where, with the help of this decree, he saved many persecuted Christians. After that he returned to Rome. When a persecution began under Emperor Marcus Aurelius, he wrote another *Apologia* and sent it to the emperor. A disreputable philosopher, Crescens, a Cynic, out of envy denounced him as a Christian because Justin had always overcome him in their debates, and Justin found himself in prison. Desiring the death of Justin and fearing that he [Justin] would somehow justify himself before the court, Crescens seized the opportunity and poisoned Justin in prison. So ended the earthly life of this great defender of the Christian Faith, who took up habitation in blessed eternity in the year 166 A.D.

2. THE HOLY MARTYRS JUSTIN, CHARITON, CHARITA, EUELPISTUS, HIERAX, PAEON, VALERIAN [LIBERIANUS] AND JUSTUS

They all suffered martyrdom in Rome during the reign of Marcus Aurelius and the Roman prefect [eparch] Rusticus. When Rusticus asked: "Do you think that if you die for Christ you will receive a reward in heaven?" St. Justin replied: "We do not think, we know!" Then they were all beheaded in the year 163 A.D. and took up their habitation in the Eternal Kingdom of Christ our God.

3. THE VENERABLE AGAPITUS OF THE CAVES IN KIEV

Agapitus was an unmercenary physician, who practiced medicine by using natural remedies. He was a disciple of St. Anthony of the Caves. He cured people through prayer and by giving them greens, from which he prepared bread for himself. In this manner he cured Prince Vladimir Monomachus, because of which Agapitus became known everywhere. Being envious of this, the prince's physician, an Armenian, began to slander Agapitus. When Agapitus became ill, the Armenian came to him and, examining him, said that he [Agapitus] would die within three days and that if he [Agapitus] did not die, he, the Armenian, would become a monk. Agapitus said that it had been revealed to him by the Lord that he would not die in three days, but in three months. And so it happened. After the death of Agapitus, the Armenian came to the abbot of the Caves and begged him to tonsure him a monk, for, he said, Agapitus had appeared to him from the other world and had reminded him of his promise. Thus the formerly envious one became a humble monk by the providence of God, Who wishes that all men be saved. St. Agapitus died in about the year 1095 A.D.

HYMN OF PRAISE

ST. JUSTIN THE PHILOSOPHER

Whoever belongs to Christ dies for Christ.

Saint Justin, defender of the truth,

Recognized the power of Christ and expressed it,

And fearlessly traveled throughout the empire,

Defending the righteous, the heathens admonishing,

To the entire world, shining with truth.

He was from the city of unbaptized ones, where once ten lepers
To Christ the Savior, bitterly cried out,
And by His word were healed.
Now Justin's leprosy of falsehood
By the power of the Faith of Christ was healed.
Like a father he protected Christians;
The foolishness of paganism he unmasked;
To emperors he spoke the truth;
He was a light until the candle burned down,
Until the evil ones his body took,
And his soul to Paradise the angels raised,
That in heaven it might shine like the sun,
As his *Apologia* also shines,
Glorifying the name of the immortal Justin,
Teaching the world what is the truth.

REFLECTION

No one has ever spread as much shameful slander about Christ the Lord as the Jews. Their Talmud seethes with evil and malice toward the Lord. But all of those worthless calumnies are refuted by the most prominent historian of the Jews, Josephus Flavius, a rabbi and scholar who lived near the end of the first century after Christ. Josephus writes: "Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call Him a man; for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to Himself both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ. And when Pilate, at the denunciation of the most eminent men among us, had Him condemned to the cross, those that loved Him from the first did not forsake Him. He appeared to them alive

again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold, and they foretold many other things concerning Him. And the sect of Christians, so named after Him, remains to the present day." [Antiquities of the Jews, Volume 2, Page 45 1845 Edition]. Thus wrote a man who did not believe in Christ but was a scholar free of prejudice and malice.

CONTEMPLATION

To contemplate the miraculous healing of Peter's mother-in-law:

1. How the Lord took the feverish woman by the hand, and the fever left her and she served them;
2. How the Lord can cure even me of the fever of passion, so that I may immediately straighten up and serve Him with my whole spirit.

HOMILY

About what is the beginning of wisdom

"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Proverbs 1:7).

If someone knew the number of stars in the heavens and the names of the fish in the sea and the amount of the grass in the field and the habits of the beasts in the forest, but did not have the fear of God, his knowledge would be as water in a sieve. And his knowledge would make him a greater coward in the face of death than the completely ignorant.

If someone could guess all the thoughts of mankind and foretell the fate of mankind and reveal every mystery that the earth conceals in its depths, but did not have the fear of God, his knowledge would be as milk poured into an unclean container, by which all the milk would be spoiled. And, in the hour of his death, his wisdom would not shine even as much as a piece of charcoal without a flame, but would make the night of his death even darker.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. How can he who has not begun aright finish aright? Whoever has started out on a wrong path from the beginning must turn back and take up the correct beginning, i.e., he must set his feet on the right path. He who does not have the fear of God cannot have love for God. What are we talking about? He who has no fear of God has no faith in God. The greatest ascetics, those who mortified themselves and who lived a life of asceticism day and

night for forty or fifty years, were filled with the fear of God until death, and these, the most sinless among mortals, cried out at their hour of death: "O God, have mercy on me a sinner!"

The fear of God is the salt of all piety. If there is no such salt then all of our piety is insipid and lax. The fear of God girds the loins, girdles the stomach, makes the heart sober, restrains the mind, and flogs self-will. Where is repentance without the fear of God? Where is humility? Where is restraint? Where is chastity? Where is patience? Where is service and obedience?

O my brethren, let us embrace this word as the holy truth: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.* O Lord Almighty, implant Your fear in our hearts.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

Services this Week

- ❖ *Monday 06.13. '22 Pentecost Monday - 09:00 AM Divine Liturgy*
- ❖ *Tuesday 06.14. '22 Pentecost Tuesday - 09:00 AM Divine Liturgy*
- ❖ *Saturday 06.18 '22 – Blessing of the graves – Pg. 12*
- ❖ *1st Sunday after Pentecost – of All Saints – June 19th – 09:00 AM Divine Liturgy*

Donations June 5,, 2022

Offering - \$210.00 Candles - \$1,224.00 Dues - \$500.00

Large Candles

In Memory of Julie Lambrinos from Kumovi Dan & Dyne Tomak

In Memory of Parents, Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Robert & Milica Knepp

In Memory of Ranka Marinkovich from Richard Kondas

In Memory of Ed Gartrell from Steve Purich

In Memory of Linda (Locher) Leckrone from Dorothy Podolak

MEMORIAL SERVICES 2022

Memorial services at the Church cemeteries will be held as follows:

OLD ST. NICHOLAS CEMETERY - Saturday, June 18, 2022 – 9:30 AM

ST. PETKA CEMETERY - Saturday, June 18, 2022– 10:30 AM – (Begin at Top)

JOIN US FOR



Saturday, August 13th, 2022