

Saint Nicholas Serbian Orthodox Church

971 St. Clair Rd, Johnstown, PA 15905

Rev. Presbyter Dragan Vukovic

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The Great Feast of Pentecost

(06.04.2023.)

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)**

Believers are blessed today and every day to experience the Lord Jesus Christ.

Experiencing the Lord Jesus Christ is necessary for sanity, peace and truth in this earthly life.

God's Holy Church is where best to experience and learn about the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Church proclaims and offers the experience with Christ until the glorious Second Coming

The present Gospel includes Jesus' invitation for believers to come to Him and to drink.

Jesus' words are proclaimed as they are known and preserved in the Church.

In the Church believers learn about Jesus Christ as He has been known down through the centuries by the saints and martyrs. The saints and martyrs have lived in Christ and witnessed to Him in their lives.

The saints and martyrs are proof of the value of living in Christ, drinking from Christ and bearing witness to Him. Believers benefit greatly from looking to the saints and martyrs and learning about Jesus Christ from them.

Jesus describes Himself as the light of the world and as the antidote of darkness. Jesus said His followers shall have the light of life. Jesus' message of light is welcomed in today's world so often filled with news darkening to life.

Today's world is plagued with increased violence and the absence of truth. Greed and debauchery are very actively present. The Lord God is needed for believers to live a life of sanity and peace.

On this Great Feast of Pentecost, the Descent of the Holy Spirit is at the forefront of believers' thoughts. Belief in the Holy Spirit is first expressed at Baptism and is reaffirmed at each Divine Liturgy.

The Holy Prophets of old were filled with the Holy Spirit spoke out about the decay and decadence of the times in which they lived. The Holy Prophets have words of wisdom to address the decay and decadence in today's world.

God's Holy Church is where to learn to put present life into perspective. The Church teaches the way of Christ as the path to the Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life.

The Church teaches the love of Christ as the foundation and essence of human relationships. Greed and violence have no part in the Christian life.

Prayer and fasting facilitate love and the sharing of earthly treasures.

Wisdom has been garnered in God's Holy Church down through the centuries. The Holy Spirit has filled and guided the Church through the centuries. God's love permeates the Church around the world and through the centuries.

Pentecost is a Great Feast in the Church and fills the heart, mind and soul with the Holy Spirit. The Church celebrates Pentecost with a certain fullness unique in the Church's ecclesiastical year.

The vibrancy of life is accentuated on Pentecost. Believers actively participating in the Divine services on the Great Fast of Pentecost rejoice and are transformed by the Holy Spirit.

The hunger in the soul is nourished and satisfied by participating the Great Feast of Pentecost and each of the feasts of God's Holy Church. Humans benefit by living and dwelling in unity in God's Holy Church.

God blesses and nourishes believers throughout life from conception until departure from this life. The Lord God is the Creator and Giver of Life. Pentecost is not only a celebration of life but also an expression of gratitude for life.

God's Holy Church is where to give continuous thanks for life and for being able to live and grow in Christ. Jesus offers unending growth for those choosing to come to Him for nourishment and to drink from Him.

Jesus offers nourishment and light for the soul in the present world. Believers need not suffer in hunger and darkness in the soul when Christ is ever-present to transform life into brightness and joy.

Peace and joy are always possible in Christ. Embracing and following Christ ensures peace and joy regardless of life's circumstances. On this Great Feast of Pentecost rejoice and give abundant thanks to the living and loving Triune God.

**The Great Feast of Pentecost. May 22/June 4, 2023.
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania.**

Father Rodney Torbic

THE DAY OF THE HOLY TRINITY. PENTECOST: THE GOSPEL OF THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT From the collected works of St. Nikolai (Velimirovich)

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 Thou gavest me to do* (Jn. 17:4). *May Thy will be done.* Are these not the words of the Son's perfect obedience to the Father? *Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I knew that Thou hearest me always,* said the Lord Jesus Christ at the resurrection of Lazarus; and later He would exclaim: *Father, glorify Thy 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 go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto 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 unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth 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 affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring 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 ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be 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 Ghost* (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 hath 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 unto 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 drinketh 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 unto 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 hath 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 Elias or John the Baptist. Both Elias 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: *Thou art 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? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye 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 hath 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 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)

However, when our Lord Jesus Christ spoke this, *the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that 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 worketh hitherto, and I work* (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 do 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 did It proceed 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 unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost

(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 ye therefore, and teach all nations* (Mt. 29:19). 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; they knew only their own native language—Hebrew, and no other. 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 and Asia, Phygia, and Pamphylia, In Egypt, and the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes 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 reprov'd 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 paradisaal 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 breathe, great breadth of scale, and great joy once again began Its unlimited action of power and inspiration in people.

Or, for a better understanding use the following comparison. The sun shines in winter and in spring. However, its light and warmth cannot make something grow through the snow in winter. But in the spring, the light and warmth of this same sun makes it possible for what was sown to sprout and grow. Scientists say that the earth turns away from the sun in winter, that snowy regions are then located farther from the sun and receive the sunlight through slanted, indirect rays. In the spring, the earth turns toward the sun and snowy regions become closer to it, and the sunlight and warmth come down in more direct rays. From Adam to Christ, the human soul was like the earth during wintertime. The Holy Spirit illumined and warmed, but the because of the human soul's sinful deformity and alienation from God it was literally far from God, and nothing could grow and bear fruit. Our Lord Jesus Christ straightened the human soul and brought it closer to God, cleansed it from the ice and snow, ploughed and sowed the Divine seed in it. Then the Holy Spirit, like the spring sun, began by Its power to grow and manifest wondrous and sweet fruits in the field of the human soul. Winter can never believe in the miracles in which the spring clothes the earth. So also people who have turned away from the Holy Spirit, living with a soul covered by the ice and snow of their own self-deceptions, can never believe in what miraculous gifts the Holy Spirit clothes those who become close to It and come under the direct rays of its Divine light and warmth. Yes—and how could the Eskimo, who was born and lived his whole life amidst ice and snow, believe a traveler from southern regions when he tells him of flowers and trees, of mottled fields and green hills?

So also some people from a country far from God, iced-over and darkened by sin, did not believe the apostles when they proclaimed the good news about the living God in the heavens, about the Father, Who calls to Himself all who desire to call themselves His children; about the Son of God, Who appeared in the world as a Man, lived among people, suffered for people, arose in power and ascended in glory; about the Holy Spirit, Who descended upon them and conferred upon them heavenly gifts; about our bright and deathless fatherland in the heavens, from which

sin alone separated us; about the purity of life that is demanded of us so that we might return to this heavenly fatherland of ours and become co-servants and brothers to the angels in eternal life. Others believed this joyful news, while others did not. 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 Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee* (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.*

Services this Week

- ❖ **Monday – 06.05.2023. - Pentecost Monday - 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**
- ❖ **Tuesday – 06.06.2023. - Pentecost Tuesday - 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**
- ❖ **Friday - 06.09.2023. – PARALYSIS - THE OFFICE OF SUPPLICATION TO SAINT NECTARIOS -05:00 PM – Confession**
- ❖ **1st Sunday after Pentecost- of All Saints – 06.11.2023. - 09:30 AM Divine Liturgy**

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The Following is a letter from our Dear Father Rodney Torbic regarding our Anniversary Celebration:

Protopresbyter Stavrophor Dr. Rodney Torbic Box 4236

1804 Eagles Ridge Ct.
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania 15502

May 22, 2023

Rev. Father Dragan Vukovic, Parish Priest Mr. Eli Cvijanovic, Parish Board
President St. Nicholas Parishioners
971-1001 St. Clair Road

Johnstown, Pennsylvania 15905

Dear Beloved in Christ:

Hristos Voskrese!

Thank God for the wonderful parish Slava celebration yesterday.

The St. Nicholas Choir sang inspiring responses to God's glory.

Kumovi Richard and Suzette were certainly deserving of the honor.

Congratulations to the graduates.

Joy filled the church and the hall as all your love for St. Nicholas, the Lord God and the parish church was manifested.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your loving kindness and the beautiful icon of St. Nicholas.

In Deepest Gratitude

Father Rodney

Donations May 28, 2023

Offering - \$ 1,464.00 Candles - \$60.00 Donations - \$20.00

Building Fund

In Memory of George Moncilovich

Olga Lucas - \$100 James, Patricia & David McMichael & Family - \$50

In Memory of Amelia Moncilovich

Steve Purich - \$25

Large Candles

In Memory of Mike & Mildred Tumbas from Kathleen McDowell
In Memory of Bosiljka & Lazo Vuckovich from Dan & Dyne Tomak
In Memory of Julia & Demetrias Lambrinos from Dan & Dyne Tomak
In Memory of Andrew Grisin from Richard Kondas
In Memory of Damenja & Lazo Gjurich from Diane and Dan Tomak
In Memory of Connie Bartis from Bartis & Pavich Family

We are now taking donations for large candles in the Candle Room

Donations are being accepted for flowers to decorate the entrances to
the church!!!

Please see Donna Zimmerman or Pat Niel

REMINDER

Change in church time - Beginning Sunday, **June 4, 2023**. Divine Liturgy will
begin at **9:30 AM** and continue to Sunday, September 2, 2023.

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN TIME

GRANDVIEW CEMETERY - Saturday, June 10, 2023 - Beginning at 11:00 AM

Please visit our St. Nicholas Web Page

<https://stnicholasjohnstown.org>

We have now added a "DONATE" button to make it easier for you to
send your donations. Please take a look.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEMORIAL SERVICES 2023

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

BENSHOF HILL CEMETERY - Saturday, June 10, 2023 - 9:30 AM (Begin at Bottom)

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE IN TIME

GRANDVIEW CEMETERY - Saturday, June 10, 2023 - Beginning at 11:00 AM

Our recent graduate, Ben Ribaric, son of Casey and Danielle Ribaric, would like to invite everyone to his High School Graduation party!! Please respond to Danielle Ribaric at 814-418-1577 (call or text) no later than June 1, 2023.

- Place: ACRP Rec Park - 34 Knox St. Johnstown, PA 15906
- Date: Saturday, June 10, 2023
- Time: 1:00 PM

OLD ST. NICHOLAS CEMETERY - Saturday, June 17, 2023 - 9:30 AM

ST. PETKA CEMETERY - Saturday, June 17, 2023- 10:30 AM - (Begin at Bottom)

Band of Brothers - July 13-15 & 19-22, 2023



Taste of Serbia - August 12, 2023



Slavic Festival - September 15-16, 2023