



St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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Holy Pentecost

June 20, 2021

Troparion – Tone 8

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, Who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net.// O Lover of Man, glory to Thee!

Kontakion – Tone 8

When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, He divided the nations; but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity.// Therefore, with one voice we glorify the All-holy Spirit.

Prokeimenon – Tone 8

Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, / and their words to the ends of the universe.

V. The heavens are telling the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.

Holy Pentecost

In the Church's annual liturgical cycle, Pentecost is "the last and great day." It is the celebration by the Church of the coming of the Holy Spirit as the end—the achievement and fulfillment—of the entire history of salvation. For the same reason, however, it is also the celebration of the beginning: it is the "birthday" of the Church as the presence among us of the Holy Spirit, of the new life in Christ, of grace, knowledge, adoption to God and holiness.

This double meaning and double joy is revealed to us, first of all, in the very name of the feast. Pentecost in Greek means fifty, and in the sacred biblical symbolism of numbers, the number fifty symbolizes both the fulness of time and that which is beyond time: the Kingdom of God itself. It symbolizes the fulness of time by its first component: 49, which is the fulness of seven (7 x 7): the number of time. And, it symbolizes that which is beyond time by its second component: 49 + 1, this one being the new day, the "day without evening" of God's eternal Kingdom. With the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples, the time of salvation, the Divine work of redemption has been completed, the fulness revealed, all gifts bestowed: it belongs to us now to "appropriate" these gifts, to be that which we have become in Christ: participants and citizens of His Kingdom.

THE VIGIL OF PENTECOST

The all-night Vigil service begins with a solemn invitation:

"Let us celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit,
The appointed day of promise, and the fulfillment of hope,
The mystery which is as great as it is precious."

In the coming of the Spirit, the very essence of the Church is revealed:

"The Holy Spirit provides all,

Overflows with prophecy, fulfills the priesthood,
Has taught wisdom to illiterates, has revealed fishermen as theologians,
He brings together the whole council of the Church.”

In the three readings of the Old Testament (Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29; Joel 2:23-32; Ezekiel 36:24-28) we hear the prophecies concerning the Holy Spirit. We are taught that the entire history of mankind was directed towards the day on which God “would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh.” This day has come! All hope, all promises, all expectations have been fulfilled. At the end of the Aposticha hymns, for the first time since Easter, we sing the hymn: “O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth...,” the one with which we inaugurate all our services, all prayers, which is, as it were, the life-breath of the Church, and whose coming to us, whose “descent” upon us in this festal Vigil, is indeed the very experience of the Holy Spirit “coming and abiding in us.”

Having reached its climax, the Vigil continues as an explosion of joy and light for “verily the light of the Comforter has come and illumined the world.” In the Gospel reading (John 20:19-23) the feast is interpreted to us as the feast of the Church, of her divine nature, power and authority. The Lord sends His disciples into the world, as He Himself was sent by His Father. Later, in the antiphons of the Liturgy, we proclaim the universality of the apostles’ preaching, the cosmical significance of the feast, the sanctification of the whole world, the true manifestation of God’s Kingdom.

THE VESPERS OF PENTECOST

The liturgical peculiarity of Pentecost is a very special Vespers of the day itself. Usually this service follows immediately the Divine Liturgy, is “added” to it as its own fulfillment. The service begins as a solemn “summing up” of the entire celebration, as its liturgical synthesis. We hold flowers in our hands symbolizing the joy of the eternal spring, inaugurated by the coming of the Holy Spirit. After the festal Entrance, this joy reaches its climax in the singing of the Great Prokeimenon: “Who is so great a God as our God?”

Then, having reached this climax, we are invited to kneel. This is our first kneeling since Easter. It signifies that after these fifty days of Paschal joy and fullness, of experiencing the Kingdom of God, the Church now is about to begin her pilgrimage through time and history. It is evening again, and the night approaches, during which temptations and failures await us, when, more than anything else, we need Divine help, that presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who has already revealed to us the joyful End, who now will help us in our effort towards fulfillment and salvation.

All this is revealed in the three prayers which the celebrant reads now as we all kneel and listen to him. In the first prayer, we bring to God our repentance, our increased appeal for forgiveness of sins, the first condition for entering into the Kingdom of God.

In the second prayer, we ask the Holy Spirit to help us, to teach us to pray and to follow the true path in the dark and difficult night of our earthly existence. Finally, in the third prayer, we remember all those who have achieved their earthly journey, but who are united with us in the eternal God of Love.

The joy of Easter has been completed and we again have to wait for the dawn of the Eternal Day. Yet, knowing our weakness, humbling ourselves by kneeling, we also know the joy and the power of the Holy Spirit who has come. We know that God is with us, that in Him is our victory.

Thus is completed the feast of Pentecost and we enter “the ordinary time” of the year. Yet, every Sunday now will be called “after Pentecost”—and this means that it is from the power and light of these fifty days that we shall receive our own power, the Divine help in our daily struggle. At Pentecost we decorate our churches with flowers and green branches—for the Church “never grows old, but is always young.” It is an evergreen, ever-living Tree of grace and life, of joy and comfort. For the Holy Spirit—“the Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life—comes and abides in us, and cleanses us from all impurity,” and fills our life with meaning, love, faith and hope. Father Alexander Schmemmann (1974)

Epistle: Acts 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.”

Gospel: 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.” Nikodemos (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.”

Service Schedule for the week of June 20 – services will be streamed live

Today – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy and Pentecostal prayers followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall

Monday June 21 – 9:30 AM Divine Liturgy **HOLY SPIRIT DAY**

Saturday June 26 – 5:00 PM Vespers followed by Confession

Sunday June 27 – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour

Weekly Giving

June 13 – 46 adults, 9 youth, \$2,677

Parish Announcements

Happy Father’s Day to all of our fathers, grandfathers, stepfathers, and Godfathers! Memory Eternal to all of the fathers who have fallen asleep in the Lord.

The FOCA Club will provide hot dogs and beer during Coffee Hour today in honor of Father’s Day!

The church will hold the Rummage Sale again in Daria Hall this coming Saturday June 26 from 8:00 AM to 2:00 PM, and after services on Sunday June 27 for our parishioners. If you would like to help during the sale please see Melody Stavisky, or there is a sign-up sheet in the back of the church for volunteers to help on Saturday. This is a church fundraiser so please be generous with your time!

Archbishop Michael will visit the parish for our St. Vladimir Feast Day on

Saturday July 17 – Vespers followed by Potluck Supper

Sunday July 18 – Divine Liturgy followed by a Social (not a formal dinner) in Daria Hall

Sign-up sheets are in the back of the church for the Potluck Supper on July 17 and the Social on July 18. There is no charge for the Social, however, a donation basket will be available. The Social will be an enhanced Coffee Hour with appetizers and various foods to choose from, along with beverages, wine, and desserts. Vladika will gladly accept contributions from the various church organizations for the Distinguished Diocesan Benefactor Fund.

MOSAIC ICON: As you know, the parish has decided to add a mosaic icon of our patron saint, St. Vladimir, on the outside of the church above the entrance doors. The Parish Council met with the artist at our meeting this month and gave him the approval to start working on the prototype. Mr. Aituginov advised it will take approx. four months to complete the project, sometime in October. It appears there is a lot of excitement about this project as we have already received some donations without even starting the fundraising! That being said, donation envelopes are being printed and will be available at the candle desk in the next few weeks. If you will be making a donation, please write “Mosaic Icon” in the memo portion of your check so we make sure to properly account for all donations, and either turn in your donation at the candle desk or send it to

Father Volodymyr at the rectory. You don't have to wait for the donation envelope to make a contribution! If you have any questions please see Father Volodymyr or a member of the Parish Council.

The annual Church Picnic will be held at the picnic grounds on Sunday, September 19 after Divine Liturgy.

The beautiful mural in Daria Hall is almost finished! Thank you Anne Cheslock for all of your hard work and artistry on this painting! Please see a member of the FOCA Club if you are interested in purchasing a mural block (Daria Hall); funds will be used for Daria Hall improvements, the most recent being reparation of the dishwasher and a new faucet for the kitchen sink. Donors will have a brass nameplate added to the commemoration boards on the sides of the mural – either "Donated By" or "In Memory Of", with the names inscribed as designated by the donor. Thank you!