

Hymns of Pentecost

The Holy Spirit provides every gift: He inspires prophecy; perfects the priesthood, grants wisdom to the illiterate, makes simple fishermen become wise theologians, and establishes perfect order in the organization of the Church. Wherefore, O Comforter, equal in nature and majesty with the Father and the Son, glory to You! (Vespers)

The fountain of the Spirit has come down upon men in rivers of flame, enlightening the Apostles as a spiritual dew. It became a cloud bearing fire for them, a flame of radiance and refreshment. In them, grace was given to us through fire and water. Behold the Light of the Paraclete, making the world radiant. (Orthros)



FEAST OF PENTECOST The Descent of the Holy Spirit May 31, 2020



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (Feast)

1: May the Lord answer you in time of distress; may the name of the God of Jacob defend you.

O Good Comforter, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

2: May He send you help from the sanctuary, from Sion may He sustain you.

O Good Comforter, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

3: May He remember all your offerings and graciously accept your holocaust.

O Good Comforter, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Ascend, O Lord, in Your might; we sing and give praise to Your power.

People: **O Good Comforter, save us who sing to You, Alleluia.**

Troparion of Pentecost (Tone 8)

Blessed are You, O Christ our God, who have filled the fishermen with wisdom by sending down the Holy Spirit upon them, and who through them, have caught in Your net the whole world. O Lover of Mankind, glory to You. *(3 times)*

Kondakion of Pentecost (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 men to unity. Wherefore, we glorify the Holy Spirit with one accord.

Instead of Trisagion:

All of you who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia.

Our Ability to Believe – “No one can say ‘Jesus is Lord’ except in the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:3).

Our Ability to Pray – “The Spirit too helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning that cannot be expressed in speech” (Romans 8:26).

Our Confidence in God’s Love – “All who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God... The Spirit Himself gives witness with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:14-16).

The Growth of Our Inner Selves – “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patient endurance, kindness, generosity, faith, mildness and chastity” (Galatians 5:23).

Our Ability to Serve in the Church – “There are different gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different ministries, but the same Lord; there are different works but the same God who accomplishes all of them in everyone. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one, the Spirit gives wisdom in discourse, to another, the power to express knowledge. Through the Spirit one receives extraordinary faith; by the same Spirit, another is given the gift of healing; and still another, miraculous powers. Prophecy is given to one; to another, power to distinguish one spirit from another. One receives the gift of tongues, another, that of interpreting the tongues. But it is one and the same Spirit who produces all these gifts, distributing them to each as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:4-11).

When we were chrismated at our baptism, we were anointed with the anointing of Christ, becoming sharers in His royal priesthood. As Jesus is the Christ (the Anointed One), because He is penetrated by the Spirit of God, we too become *other christs* – other anointed ones – when we are chrismated. We believe that we received the gift of the Holy Spirit then, as the Fathers teach. St Cyril of Jerusalem, for example, insists, “See that you do not mistake the chrism for mere ointment. For, just as the Eucharistic Bread is not ordinary bread after the invocation of the Holy Spirit, so also this holy chrism is now longer simple ointment after the invocation, but the gift of Christ, bringing about the presence of the Holy Spirit by a divine operation” (*Mystagogic Catechesis*, 3,3).

Nevertheless, as the years go by, we must still ask ourselves if and to what degree this relationship with the Holy Spirit has become a conscious focus in our life, for it is possible to have received this gift of the Holy Spirit and never to have truly realized the greatness of that gift, or to have lived in His light. Thus St Simeon the New Theologian maintains that the greatest misfortune which can befall us as Christians is not to know consciously that God is truly living within us. Many believers, he asserts, “say they have the Spirit of God, without experiencing Him, and believe that they possess the Spirit within them from Holy Baptism and will argue that they have this treasure, knowing that in reality they are utterly devoid of the Spirit.” In fact, he says, they do not know what it means to have this gift. Simeon compares the believer who has been filled with the Spirit to a woman pregnant with a child. Both must surely be aware of what has taken place within them.

Like many of the Fathers, St Simeon recognizes that the gift of the Spirit is given when we are christened, but also that we must develop a conscious awareness of the Spirit’s presence in our own life.

Those who truly radiate the life of the Spirit are those who are deeply aware of His inner presence. It is for each of us to pray regularly that our hearts be open to the presence of the Spirit, that we be receptive to His guidance, and that we be moved to act in accordance with His leading.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today +Naphie Samara. Requested by Joe & Lorraine Lian

+**Richard Francis.** Requested by Michael & Virginia Mischitelli and Antonio & Karen Solitro

+**John Abraham.** Requested by Ron Abraham & Family.

June 7 +Mitchell Bollus. Requested by Joe & Lorraine Lian.

At each Divine Liturgy, I place a particle on the discos for the living of the parish and on for those who have passed away. I would like me to remember someone, living or deceased, at the Divine Liturgy, please call the rectory (508) 752-4174 or email me (olphmelkite@gmail.com).

Financials

May 2020

Income \$10,884

Expenses \$ 6,932

Net \$ 3,952

YTD (10/2019-5/2020)

Income \$69,017

Expenses \$72,114

Net (\$3,097)

As you can see, we ended May with net income of \$3,952. On one hand, this was great. On the other, it was sad, as most of this came from stole offerings and memorial donations for those we have lost over the last couple of months. We continue to pray for them and remember them at the Divine Liturgy.

Year to Date, we have a loss of \$3,097. All things considered, that is not too bad. We will continue to chip away at the balance we owe the Eparchy. Several of you have made donations specifically for that purpose, for which I thank you. We owe \$3,200 for 2019 and \$1,600 for May 2020. The balance prior to 2019 will have to wait.

Thank-you to all who have continued to send in their donations to the parish. It has made it possible for me to keep up with the monthly expenses without having to dip into our savings. God bless your continued generosity!

Dear Parish Family:

Christ is among us!

Under the current guidelines for the re-opening of churches, listed below are the standards to which we must adhere:

Who May Attend? People who feel well and were not recently exposed to the virus may attend services. Any sick person should stay home. People who are in greater danger of infection should stay home. Caretakers of people in danger should take precautions.

Seating: The limit on seating in the church is 80 people including the clergy. People who live together may sit together, otherwise they should be 6 feet apart. Every other pew will be closed so that one row of people will not be too close to the other. We will also mark the available pews with tape every 6 feet.

Sanitizing: There will be hand sanitizing lotion in the rear of the church.

Social Distancing: People must wear face masks unless they have a medical reason not to. Gloves are encouraged, but not required. Everyone should practice social distancing. Do not touch or kiss icons, the Gospel Book or the cross. Simply bow to them. Currently, there is no lighting of candles.

Ventilation: Some windows will be open during the Liturgy. This will prevent the buildup of virus laden air in the church.

Singing: Everyone should sing with their masks on.

Collection: A basket will be left just inside the sanctuary for envelopes and donations. The collection baskets will not be passed in order to reduce exposure to people and things.

Gospel Reading: Do not come up front for the Gospel Reading.

Kiss of Peace: Do not kiss each other or shake hands, simply say: *Christ is with us. He is and always will be.*

Holy Communion: Remove your face mask immediately before receiving Communion, and replace it as you walk back to your seat. Tilt you head back to receive Communion so that the priest will not touch your face. Return by the side aisle to your seat.

Coffee Hour: There is no Coffee Hour, instead visit outside in the open air while maintaining your distance. Remember that the virus dies in sunlight. In the sunlight is the safest way to visit with others. The Bookstore is also closed.

So that we do not exceed the maximum capacity, please call the rectory (508) 752-4174 or email ophmelkite@gmail if you want to attend the Divine Liturgy. If you are the least bit uncomfortable attending, please continue to stay home. We will livestream the services for the foreseeable future. If you are not comfortable receiving Communion now, that's fine.

I look forward to seeing you after this time away! Please continue to pray for all those infected with the virus, those who care for them, and those who have lost their lives to it..

In Christ,

Fr. Bryan

The Promise Fulfilled

FROM TODAY TO PASCHA NEXT YEAR, practically every church service and formal prayer in our tradition will begin with the invocation, “O Heavenly King.” The presence of the Holy Spirit, whom the first Christians received on Pentecost, is called upon whenever we pray – whenever we do anything as Church – because the Spirit is the “soul” of the Body of Christ. The Spirit is the “living water” promised by Christ to refresh and enliven believers as we live our lives in service to the Lord.

In the Gospel of St John, we see Christ saying, as His passion was about to begin, “*I will ask the Father and He will give you another Paraclete to be with you always: the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, since it neither sees Him nor recognizes Him...*” (Jn 14:16, 17). In this promise the Spirit is called by another image. The Greek word *paraklitos* meant a helper or an advocate, specifically someone who could guide you through the maze of the Roman legal system. This word is sometimes translated as comforter or consoler, a specific type of helper leading the believer along the path of this life. This image appears in the prayer mentioned above: O heavenly King, Paraclete, Spirit of truth...”

The Spirit is portrayed as ‘another Paraclete,’ implying that there was a first one whom we know. That Paraclete is the Lord Jesus, who was the guide and advocate of His followers on earth and is our advocate before the throne of the heavenly Father. Because Christ was *incarnate* (made man), His earthly presence was limited. As a man, He lived in a certain place, in a specific time, and His earthly life came to an end. The Holy Spirit, however, is not incarnate. His presence is spiritual and so is not bound by those earthly limitations. He is, as the prayer we have been quoting says, “present in all places and filling all things.”

From the beginning, God’s plan was to dwell with His creation forever. This goal was frustrated, but not defeated, by the Fall. The incarnation of His Son was God’s response to His creation’s broken state. The Son of God becomes man so that humanity can be divinized. As St Athanasius the Great is to have said, “God became man so that we might receive the Holy Spirit.” Now, with the coming of this Spirit-Paraclete, that plan has been fulfilled, insofar as is possible in this life.

Our experience of the Holy Spirit is not the end of the story, however. The Spirit, says St Paul, “...*is the pledge of our inheritance, the first payment against the full redemption of a people God has made His own, to praise His glory*” (Eph 1:14). The Holy Spirit, as we experience Him now, is merely a down-payment of the experience of God that we are meant to have in the future.

How Does the Spirit Enliven Us?

When the first believers received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, there were some dramatic results: where before they were afraid, they now preached Christ boldly. They spoke in tongues, they healed the sick, they gave their lives rather than deny Christ. But the Spirit also worked in individual believers – and still works – in less spectacular but equally remarkable ways. The Scriptures indicate several ways in which the Spirit of God activates our Christian life by His presence:

Prokimenon

Reader: Through all the earth, their voice resounds, and to the ends of the world, their message.

People: Through all the earth, their voice resounds, and to the ends of the world, their message.

Verse: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

People: Through all the earth, their voice resounds, and to the ends of the world, their message.

Reader: Through all the earth, their voice resounds,

People: And to the ends of the world, their message.

Epistle: Acts 2:1-11

Alleluia Verses

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

Verse: From heaven the Lord looks down. He sees all the children of men.

Gospel: John 7:37-52 & 8:12

Hirmos

You conceived in virginity, lending a body to the Word, the Creator of all, O Virgin Mother. O Theotokos, receptacle of the uncontainable God, Abode of your limitless Maker, we magnify you.

Kinonikon:

Your good Spirit shall guide me on level ground. Alleluia!

After Communion:

Troparion of Pentecost

