



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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The Days of Pentecost

by Fr. Lev Gillet

During the liturgy for the Great Feast of Pentecost, instead of an epistle, the account of the events of Pentecost, as they are described in the Acts of the Apostles (2:1-11), is read. Certain aspects of this account call specially for our attention:

“And when the day of Pentecost had fully come...” Pentecost is both a culmination and a start. A new way was opening to the disciples, but they had prepared themselves for it. Somehow, we cannot enter into Pentecost without preparation. We need first to have assimilated the whole spiritual substance that the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost have offered us. Before that, we need to have experienced the risen Christ: the days of the Passion, too, need to have been lived through. In short, one must have matured.

“They were all with one accord in one place.” Some other verses in Acts picture for us the eleven assembled “in the upper room” with Mary, mother of Jesus, and the women. It was the Church being born. They all prayed together. We find in this the necessary conditions for receiving the Holy Spirit. At certain moments we need to retire from the world and to shut ourselves in the upper room of our soul. There we must pray. And we must unite ourselves to the prayer and the faith of the whole Church. We must be “together” with the apostles and with the mother of Jesus. Whoever seeks to ignore the authority of the apostles, or to do without the maternal presence of Mary, cannot receive the Holy Spirit.

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing might wind...” The Holy Spirit is a breath, a wind. What matters for us is not to stand amazed at the power of this breath, but to submit ourselves to it completely and allow ourselves to be “guided” by the Spirit, like Jesus during his earthly life. May this breath direct us where it wills. And let us remember that this breath itself is “guided”: it is not an independent and incoherent force. Jesus breathed the Holy Spirit on his disciples, but this breath proceeded first from the mouth of the Father. It is an obedience to God. In obeying the impulse of the Spirit (the sound of the wind is but an external, and a rare, symbol – the inner impulse is the reality), we become part of the Spirit’s own obedience, proceeding from the Father, sent by the Son.

“And there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.” The Holy Spirit appears under the form of tongues. Pentecost heals the dispersion and confusion of languages brought about by the proud effort of the tower of languages brought about by the proud effort of the tower of Babel. It re-establishes the unity of human languages. The disciples will be understood by all the strangers then in Jerusalem, Parthians, Medes, and Cappadocians, who are astonished to hear the speech of these Galileans, as if in their own languages. The language of the Spirit – at least in its inner meaning – is still accessible today to all men, to all races, to all nations; the same Spirit transmits a universal message that each soul nevertheless recognizes as its own. And also, even in our day, someone in whom the Holy Spirit is active becomes capable, even if he cannot express himself in languages that are foreign to him, at least of finding the psychological “language” which will echo in, and open the heart of, each person. Thus “dialogue” becomes possible. The tongues which alighted on the disciples are tongues of fire, and imply a burning charity. The words seem conditioned by the flame. Lastly, these tongues are evenly distributed. They are not the privilege of Peter, or of Mary, or the eleven. They alight on all those present in the upper room – yet these tongues of flame are one and the same fire. Thus the problem of unity and of the person finds itself resolved in the Church. Neither the one nor the other is sacrificed.

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit...” This sudden and complete invasion of the whole soul by the Holy Spirit, accompanied by a new and extraordinary power, constitutes the “baptism of the Holy Spirit,” which differs both from the baptism by water and from the anointing by which the Church bestows the Spirit. There is a reality in this which we have, to a great extent, lost sight of, but on which Scripture insists and towards which our attention should be redirected.

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **ST. HELENA’S GUILD MEETING** – *Sunday June 14, following the Divine Liturgy*
- **INREACH/OUTREACH MEETING** – Sunday June 28, after the liturgy
- **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING** – *Monday June 29, at 7:00*

CHURCH PICNIC – will be on **SUNDAY JUNE 14**, at our church after the divine liturgy. Hot dogs and hamburgers will be provided by the parish, please bring salads and desserts. Please contact Gary Mosser for more information.

“COMMUNITY AWARENESS COMMITTEE” – There has been considerable discussion during the last several Parish Council Meetings regarding how our church can publicize events and become better known in our community. We would like to bring together those within our parish who are interested in these questions. Greg Sapnar will chair this committee and coordinate efforts. A meeting will be planned soon; please see him if you are interested or have any ideas.

ST. HELENA'S GUILD: St. Helena's Guild will be having a church **Yard Sale Saturday, June 13** so start cleaning out those closets, attics and cellars. This will be a "bring it; take it" yard sale meaning that unsold items must be taken back by the person who brought the items. Should anything be left, it will either be discarded or donated to a charity. The teens and/or other Sunday school groups are welcome to participate that day with a car wash or other event with monies staying within the group for future 'fun' outings. **PLEASE DO NOT BRING ITEMS TO THE CHURCH UNTIL THE DAY OF THE YARD SALE.**

PLEASE NOTE: THERE ARE SOME OPEN DATES FOR COFFEE HOUR. PLEASE CALL DIANE V. AT 609-288-6833 OR MARIE C. AT 856-482-1059 TO AD YOUR NAME TO THE ONCE-A-YEAR HOSTESS/HOST LIST.

SUMMARY OF THE MAY 28, 2009 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:

The monthly financial report was presented by our treasurer Caroline Graham. Contributions for the general fund and OCA assessment fund are under budget, but better than previous years. However, church contributions are expected to decrease during the summer months and are a concern.

As reported last month, water damaged hardy planks (siding) were found on the church exterior. It appears that the original hardy plank installation was incomplete, as flashing under the planks was not installed, which caused the water damage. Also, some damaged floor tile in the kitchen need replacement; and the church exterior requires some painting. Don Matlack has been retained to do this work. The church budget is tight right now, and this work should be completed as soon as possible to prevent further damage. Therefore the parish council is asking for contributions from its members to cover this expense. The church also has some landscape issues that require attention, but this work will be postponed due to budget concerns. Joe Drayton, a local landscaper, has agreed to mow the lawn at Holy Cross.

The Council approved the request of Eugenia Skuby's for financial support to attend the *Oriental Lumen XIII Conference* entitled, "*Monastic Spirituality for Everyday Life*," to be held from June 15-18 at the Pope John Paul II Cultural Center in Washington, DC. She will report to the congregation on the Conference and make available any useful materials.

On Sunday July 12th, Father John will be on vacation and will be replaced by Father Sergius Kuharsky. Metropolitan Jonah indicated earlier this year that he will visit Holy Cross, but a date for his visit has still not been established.

FALL FESTIVAL 2009: MARK YOUR CALENDARS- This annual event will be held on Sat Sept 26 10:00-6:00 and Sunday Sept 27 Noon to 3:00. Co- chairs **are Liz Gibbons and Val Olesnovich.**

More details will be coming soon.

RESPONSIBILITIES for June, 2009

COFFEE HOUR:

June 14: Parish Picnic
21: Abdallah family
28: Diane Vozdovic
July 5: Liz Gibbons

READERS

June 7: Natalka Weismantel
June 14: Gene Dubiago
21: Diana Pasca
28: Greg Sapnar
July 5: Gary Mosser

ALTAR SERVERS

June 14: Leo Weismantel & Stephen Shimchick
21: Anatoly Lane & Eli Nugent
28: Andrew Abdallah & Paul Clifton
July 5: Paul Abdallah & Paul Giovanni

COMMUNION USHERS

June 14: Alexandra & Magdalena Plachuta
21: Kristina Zanghi & Faye Nugent
28: Natalia Rommen & Elisabeth Graham
July 5: Sierra & Miranda McCleery