



CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

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BULLETIN OF MAY 27, 2007

SUNDAY, MAY 27TH

HOLY PENTECOST

One of the Twelve Great Feasts

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Kneeling Vespers
Coffee Hour

SATURDAY, JUNE 2ND

6:00p.m. Vespers

SUNDAY, JUNE 3RD

ALL SAINTS SUNDAY

8:40a.m. Hours
9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour



Behold, through the truth of Christian humility you will be able to achieve victory over every vice; that is by attributing to God rather than to yourself the fact that you have won.

St. Martin of Braga

READER SCHEDULE

Sunday, June 3rd

Hours: Oleg Dudkin
Epistle: Oleg Dudkin

Sunday, June 10th

Hours: Jen Alexion
Epistle: Nick Borodulia



The Celebration of Pentecost

The Feast of Pentecost is one of the greatest and most joyous of the Church year. On this day we once again start using the prayer, "O Heavenly King" with our prayers. And from Pentecost through All-Saints Sunday we do not fast, even on Wednesday and Friday. This is in celebration of the fact that God has made us sharers in His Kingdom through the descent of His Holy Spirit.



Congratulations!

to Samuel (Symeon) Province, his family, and his sponsor, Bob (Alexander) Dodge, on his Baptism into the Orthodox Church, and to Michael McFarland on his entrance into the Catechumenate! May the Lord grant them many blessed years!



Last Monday's Bible Study

on the Ascension of the Lord was attended by 12 people, and in addition to the chosen topic we discussed: Orthodox Christianity as compared to non-Orthodox churches and non-Christian religions; the question, "Can we have the best of both worlds – earthly pleasures and heavenly joys?"; what we can learn from the lives of the Saints.

Father John will be Away

from Monday, May 28th through Tuesday, June 5th. In his absence Fr. Daniel will serve the Divine Services and be available in case of an emergency. Should you need to contact Fr. John during this time, you may do so via email or by calling his cell phone: 908-872-6589.



Church Reading Schedule

Until we all get accustomed to our new Readers' Schedule, readers for the upcoming weeks will be posted in the Sunday bulletin and the back of the church. It is requested that those who already know how to read make themselves available to guide those who are learning. May the Lord bless those who offer themselves in this holy service!

Sunday Collection Offering Envelopes

are now available for your use. If you make offerings weekly or monthly, you are encouraged to pick up a box of envelopes from the ushers in the back of the church. If you have any questions, please see Fr. John or Susan Pappas, our Treasurer.

The Fast of Ss. Peter & Paul

begins on Monday, June 4th (the day after All Saints Sunday) and extends until the celebration of the feast of the Holy Apostles on June 29th. During this fasting period we should avail ourselves of Confession and Holy Communion.



PENTECOST – THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ON THE APOSTLES

The tenth day after the Ascension of Jesus Christ was the fiftieth day after the Resurrection of Christ. It was the Jews' great feast of Pentecost, which commemorated the giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai.

All the Apostles, the Mother of God, and the other disciples of Christ and other of the faithful, were all together in one room in Jerusalem. It was the third hour of the day by the Hebrew reckoning of hours, according to our system – nine o'clock in the morning. Suddenly a sound came from Heaven, like a rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. There descended on them tongues that looked like fire, which rested on each one of them. There were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, previously unknown to them. Thus the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of the Savior, descended on the apostles in the form of tongues of fire, as a sign that He gave the apostles the ability and zeal to preach the teachings of Christ to all peoples. He descended in the form of fire as a sign of the power to cleanse sins, to sanctify and warm souls.

On the occasion of the feast of Pentecost, there were in Jerusalem many Jews who had come from various nations. Hearing the noise, a great multitude of people came together around the house where the disciples of Christ were. They were all bewildered and asked each other, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? How is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? How are they able to tell in our languages the mighty works of God?" In disbelief they said, "They are filled with new wine." Then the Apostle Peter, standing with the eleven, said that they were not drunk, but that the Holy Spirit had descended upon them, that it has been prophesied by the Prophet Joel, and that Jesus Christ, Whom the Jews had crucified, had risen from the dead, ascended into Heaven and poured out on them the Holy Spirit. Finishing this sermon about Jesus Christ, the Apostle Peter said, "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus, Whom you crucified."

The sermon of Peter so moved those who heard it that many more believed in Jesus Christ. They

asked Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; then you shall also receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." So those who believed in Christ readily accepted baptism, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. Thus began the building of the Kingdom of God on earth, the Church of Christ.

From the day of the descent of the Holy Spirit the Christian faith quickly spread with the help of God, and the number of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ multiplied. Instructed by the Holy Spirit, the apostles preached boldly to all about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, about His suffering for us and resurrection from the dead. The Lord helped them with many great miracles which were performed by the apostles in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. At first the apostles preached to the Jews, and then dispersed to various countries to preach to all the people. To perform the sacraments and to preach Christianity the apostles established, by the laying on of hands, bishops, presbyters, and deacons. This grace of the Holy Spirit, which was clearly conferred on the apostles in the form of tongues of fire, is now conferred in our Holy Orthodox Church invisibly in its sacraments, through the successors to the apostles, the pastors of the Church, its bishops and priests.



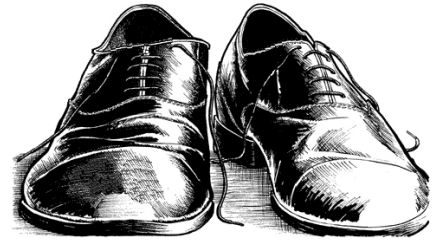
Troparion – tone 8

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit; 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!

SHOES IN CHURCH



I showered and shaved, I adjusted my tie. I got there and sat in a seat just in time. Bowing my head in prayer as I closed my eyes. I saw the shoe of the man next to me touching my own. I sighed. With plenty of room on either side I thought, "Why must our soles touch?" It bothered me, his shoe touching mine, but it didn't bother him much. A prayer began: "Our Father". I thought, "This man with the shoes has no pride. They're dusty, worn, and scratched. Even worse, there are holes on the side!" "Thank You for blessings," the prayer went on. The shoe man said a quiet "Amen." I tried to focus on the prayer but my thoughts were on his shoes again. Aren't we supposed to look our best. When walking through that door? "Well, this certainly isn't it," I thought, glancing toward the floor. Then the prayer was ended and the songs of praise began. The shoe man was certainly loud sounding proud as he sang. His voice lifted the rafters, his hands were raised high. The Lord could surely hear the shoe man's voice from the sky. It was time for the offering and what I threw in was steep. I watched as the shoe man reached into his pockets so deep. I saw what was pulled out, what the shoe man put in. Then I heard a soft "clink". As when silver hits tin. The sermon really bored me to tears, and that's no lie. It was the same for the shoe man for tears fell from his eyes.

At the end of the service, as is the custom here. We must greet new visitors and show them all good cheer. But I felt moved somehow and wanted to meet the shoe man. So after the closing prayer I reached over and shook his hand. He was old and his skin was dark and his hair was truly a mess. But I thanked him for coming, for being our guest. He said, "My names' Charlie. I'm glad to meet you, my friend." There were tears in his eyes but he had a large, wide grin. "Let me explain," he said wiping tears from his eyes. "I've been coming here for months and you're the first to say 'Hi.' I know that my appearance is not like all the rest. But I really do try to always look my best. I always clean and polish my shoes before my very long walk. But by the time I get here they're dirty and dusty, like chalk."

My heart filled with pain and I swallowed to hide my tears. As he continued to apologize for daring to sit so near. He said, "When I get here, I know I must look a sight. But I thought if I could touch you then maybe our souls might unite." I was silent for a moment knowing whatever was said would pale in comparison so I spoke from my heart, not my head. "Oh, you've touched me," I said, "and taught me, in part; that the best of any man is what is found in his heart." The rest, I thought, this shoe man will never know. Like just how thankful I really am that his dirty old shoe touched my soul.

GIVE ME HEAVEN -- BUT NOT YET

OrthodoxyToday.org – an article by John Kapsalis

Paradise delighted me as much by its peacefulness as by its beauty: in it there resides a beauty that has no spot; in it exists a peacefulness that knows no fear. How blessed is that person accounted worthy to receive it, if not by right, yet at least by grace; if not because of good works, yet at least through mercy.

St. Ephrem the Syrian, "The Hymns on Paradise"

French scientist and philosopher Blaise Pascal believed that there is a God-shaped vacuum in all of us that can only be filled by God. In other words, there exists at the very core of our being a sense of eternity, (cf. Ecclesiastes 3:11) a yearning for something that will last beyond our temporary life here on earth. But what is it? We all talk about living forever and going to heaven, but most of us hardly know how to get there. All we know is that there has to be more to our existence than the daily

troubles and anxieties of living. If we are hardwired to need God and to long for the eternal, how does that help us get through the mundane duties of our life now. Can heaven help us?

Clinging to the Old, Hoping for the New

We are anchored to the earth beneath our feet. We come from it and it cannot be any other way. Most of us want to get to heaven, but not yet. Even with all its miseries, this life is hard to let go of. Life is like that. We know of the awesome promises of God for a life that will have indescribable and eternal joy, yet we hang on to any shred of happiness here on earth. We tend to forget God and rely too heavily on a life that is only fading away. But God wants us to ache for the permanent, unseen hope of life to come. You see, once Adam and Eve messed everything up by their disobedience, God allowed

things to deteriorate. Pain, suffering and death seeped into our world, not because God is some sadistic being, but because He wants us to desire a better life—a new home, the one He intended for us from the beginning. But this is so hard to do.



The ancient Church writers often spoke of the need for detachment from this life. We need to be weaned off of life on earth, so that we can begin to savor life in God's kingdom. The setbacks we face are a reminder for us not to store up treasures here on earth. God allows things to go wrong so that we can remove ourselves from our attachment even to life itself. Otherwise we would be content to spend eternity separated from God in a decaying world.

St. Theognostos writes "the longing for transient things will not drag you earthwards if you keep your mind on the things in heaven; but when you are shackled by an attachment to earthly things you are like an eagle caught in a trap by its claw and prevented from flying. Regard all you possess as trash in the hope of better things. Shake off even your body when the time comes, and follow the angel of God that takes you from it."

Weaning ourselves off this life though isn't easy. Unfortunately, most of the time we can't even handle the minor inconveniences of life. We throw our hands in the air and wonder why God allowed us to have a fender-bender or why our vacation plans were ruined or how come we lost out on yet another promotion. How hypocritical we have become! God has to pry our tight grip off the stuff of this life to bring us to His kingdom. Our faith is nothing more than an opiate to quench our selfish wants. Our desire is not for God but for what He can do for us. And so until our love for God is more valuable than everything else, we will continue to fight to the death to remain in this life and let heaven wait.

So does this mean that we forget about our families, our jobs, the mortgage and the roof that needs repairing? No, of course not. We can't sit around with Bibles in our hands, being busybodies and lazy waiting for God to bring us home. We are expected to work for the kingdom come and for

food to put on the table, providing not only for our families but also for those in need. God created the heavens and earth for our enjoyment. God gives us life to savor His great glory now. It is the way we live our lives faithfully and in obedience to God now that glorifies God's kingdom come.

Never Satisfied, Always Hopeful

This life is designed in such a way not to satisfy. Perfect security and peace of mind cannot be found on this earth. We expect to receive everything we long for now. But we don't. We still get sick, everything still breaks down when we can least afford it, and anything that can go wrong usually does. Frustration seems permanent at times. The good news is that none of these things, not even death, can keep us from God when we live according to His will.

The amazing irony is that the moment we learn to leave this life is when we begin to actually enjoy it and live it to the fullest. St. Maximos the Confessor says that when we understand that this life is nothing but a rehearsal for death, we stop being greedy for the things of this life and start tasting the blessings of eternal life now.

Paradise Lost, Eternity Found

We live our lives always thinking of the future and it is no different with our belief in a heaven. Except God wants us to be heavenly-minded while we are still on earth because the Kingdom of God begins now. God wants us to know the life-giving Christ while we are still alive because it is in Christ that the Kingdom is revealed: "This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (John 17:3 NASB).

Heaven is where we get to see God face to face and that is the most awesome treasure we could ever find. Christ compared the kingdom of heaven to a treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field (cf. Matthew 13:44). The joy of knowing we will be in God's kingdom should trump anything and everything else in this life. Everything else should be counted as a loss compared to the knowledge that we will be with Christ in his kingdom forever. Heaven can help us.

John Kapsalis has an M.T.S from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology. OrthodoxyToday.org offers commentary on contemporary social and moral issues.



THE ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN