



SYNAXARIA OF THE PENTECOSTARION

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MONDAY of THE HOLY SPIRIT

On this day, the Monday of Pentecost, we celebrate the All-Holy and Life-Creating and Omnipotent Spirit, Who is God, and One of the Trinity, and of one Honor and one Essence and one Glory with the Father and the Son.

Verses

O every breath, glorify the Spirit of the Lord,
Through Whom the impudence of evil spirits is put to flight.

Synaxarion

On this day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit descended upon the Holy Apostles concretely in the form of fiery tongues, sitting upon each of them in the upper room in which they were staying. In honor of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Fathers, who have arranged all things well, decreed that we celebrate this event both separately and on the actual day of Pentecost. For, before His Passion, the Savior promised the coming of the Holy Spirit, saying: "It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (St. John 16:7). And again: "When He cometh, He will teach you and will guide you into all truth" (St. John 14:26; 16:13). And again: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall send you another Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who proceedeth from the Father" (John 14:16; 15:26). And again, after the Passion, when He was ascending to Heaven, He said: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (St. Luke 24:49). Therefore, having made these promises, He sent the Holy Spirit.

When the day of Pentecost came, while the Disciples were waiting in the upper room around the third hour of the day, it suddenly thundered from heaven, to such an extent that it resounded throughout the inhabited earth; and the Holy Spirit appeared in the form of fiery tongues to each one of them,

and not only to the Twelve, but also to the Seventy, and they spoke in foreign tongues, that is, each of the Apostles spoke the languages of all the nations. However, it was not so much that a foreigner heard an Apostle speaking his own language, but rather, that the Apostle heard and spoke the language of each nation; hence, to those who had gathered they appeared to be drunk; for, not understanding how each Apostle could be conversing with them all individually, they supposed that he was drunk. Others were amazed, saying: “What is the meaning of this?” These latter had assembled from all parts of the earth for the Feast—Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, who had some time previously been taken captive by Antiochos.

At any rate, the Holy Spirit descended after the Ascension, ten days having elapsed, and not immediately after the Ascension, so that the Lord might make the Disciples more fervent as they awaited the Spirit. Some say that on each of these days each of the Angelic Orders approached and adored that deified flesh of the Lord. Therefore, after nine days were fulfilled, the Holy Spirit descended, when reconciliation had taken place through the Son, fifty days after Pascha, in commemoration of the old Law; for, Israel received the Decalogue fifty days after crossing the Red Sea. Consider also the symbols: there a mountain, here the upper room; there fire, here tongues of fire; instead of thunder and darkness, here there is a mighty wind.

The Holy Spirit descended in the form of tongues, because this shows His affinity with the living Word; or because the Apostles were going to teach and convert the nations through the tongue; tongues of fire, because God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29), and also because fire has the property of cleansing; they were divided because of the different gifts of the Spirit. And just as at one time He divided into many languages and confounded those who knew one language, so also now He divided into many languages those who knew one language, in order to gather together those who were scattered by those languages into the ends of the inhabited earth. The descent of the Spirit took place on the Feast in order that, with many people gathered together, the event might be recounted everywhere, and in order that those who happened to be there at the Passover and who saw what happened to Christ might be able to marvel. It occurred on Pentecost, because it was necessary that the Grace of the Spirit be poured out at the same time that the Law was given of old, just as Christ did on the Judaic Passover when He celebrated the proper Passover, the true Passover.

The Holy Spirit did not sit in the mouths of the Apostles, but upon their heads, encompassing the nous itself, the principal part of the soul, and one which is superior to the body, from which the tongue derives the power of speech; or because the Spirit somehow emitted a sound through the tongues of fire when He Ordained the Apostles by touching their heads to be teachers of the entire world; for the laying on of hands is performed upon the head.

The sound and the fire were manifested because these things occurred on Mount Sinai, so as to show that it was the same Spirit both then and now that gave the Law and appointed all things. The multitude was confounded by the sound of the wind, because they thought that all the predictions which Christ had made to the Jews about their destruction had come to pass. St. Luke said “tongues as of fire” (Acts 2:3), lest anyone should think about the Holy Spirit in corporeal terms.

The Apostles were condemned for drunkenness. But Peter stood up and spoke in the midst of the crowd and exposed the falsity of this claim, citing the prophecy of Joel in his speech, and he converted about three thousand of them (Acts 2:41).

The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter, since He is able to comfort and refresh us, and because in His love for mankind He intercedes before God for us with unutterable sounds (Romans 8:26), as our Advocate, just as Christ also does. For He, too, is called a Comforter or Advocate; for this reason, the Holy Spirit is said to be another Comforter. The Apostle says: “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous” (I St. John 2:1). The Holy Spirit is called “another” Comforter because He is co-essential with the Father and the Son; for the adjective “another” (in the masculine gender) is applied to things of the same essence and nature, whereas we are accustomed to apply “different” (in the neuter gender) to different natures. The Holy Spirit is in both the Father and the Son in every respect. Hence, together with Them He creates the universe and the future resurrection, and He does whatever He wills; He sanctifies, appoints, renews, sends out, makes wise, and anoints the Prophets. To put it simply, He does all things, possessing sovereignty of will and being almighty, good, upright, and governing. Through Him come all wisdom, life, and movement, whatever participates in holiness and life of any kind; in short, He has whatever the Father and the Son have, except for ingenerateness and generation, for He proceeds from the Father.

When the Spirit was poured out upon all flesh, the world was filled with spiritual gifts of every kind, and through Him all the nations were guided to the knowledge of God, and every disease and infirmity was banished. Three times was the Holy Spirit given by Christ to the Apostles: before the Passion very indistinctly; more manifestly after the Resurrection, through insufflation; and now Christ sent Him down in concrete form; or rather, He descended, illuminating and sanctifying the Apostles more perfectly; and through them He reclaims the ends of the earth.

By the visitation of the Holy Spirit and the intercessions of the Apostles, O Christ God, have mercy on us. Amen.

