



Saint Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church

24 BURKE ROAD

FREEHOLD, NJ 07728

Pentecost Sunday

June 12, 2011

**Father Robert E Lucas, Pastor; Subdeacon Daniel
J. Korba and Nikitas Tsokris, Cantors**

Rectory 215-862-9227; Parish Center 732-780-3158

We Are A Stewardship Parish Of Time, Talent and Treasure

The mission of our parish faith community is to teach the Gospel message in the rich tradition of the Orthodox Church; to enable people to reflect the image of Jesus Christ in every day activities of life; to offer spiritual formation through changing times; and to celebrate community among Orthodox believers in our Freehold area.

We of St. Paul the Apostle Parish dedicate ourselves to maintaining the sanctity of worship and spiritual enlightenment in a family environment that reaches and involves all ages and unifies all people.

We believe in the spirit of ecumenism in which we share our faith by word and example and extend our spiritual insights to all people.

We accept the responsibility of Christian Stewardship that through generous giving we may all experience a faith communion with Christ as the Center of our lives.

We dedicate ourselves to insuring the well-being of all people so that we may truly experience the message of Christ's salutary gospel.

We are a beacon on a hill with the eyes of many upon us; that beacon is the inspired Light of Christ which must shine brightly in our lives.

It is not ourselves we preach but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has shone in our hearts, that we in turn might make known the glory of God shining on the face of Christ. This treasure we possess in earthen vessels to make it clear that its surpassing power comes from God and not from us. We are afflicted in every way possible, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in us 2 Corinthians 4: 5 – 8.

GLAD TIDINGS

+++ Today we celebrate the glorious feast of Pentecost, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the birthday of the Church of Jesus Christ. May we be ennobled as we contemplate our membership in the Bride of Christ, the vehicle of salvation for mankind. As our God is glorified on this feast at our celebration of the reality of salvation, may zeal possess our soul to witness to the fulfillment of man's redemption in Jesus Christ through the grace of the Holy Spirit!

+++ We have festal anointing today on the occasion of today's feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit. A special Birthday Offering is taken as we celebrate the anniversary of the founding of the Vehicle of Salvation among us.

+++ Tomorrow the feast of the Holy Spirit is celebrated with a Divine Liturgy at 7: 30 PM. Please join us in prayer and praise.

+++ **The last Pirohi Sale for the season took place yesterday. Many many thanks to all who worked to make it a success,**

+++ **The final Bake Sale for this season will take place this Friday with order pick ups on Saturday. Please secure orders and come with helping hands to assist us.**

+++ There is no fasting this week as creation rejoices in the coming of the Spirit among us.

+++ We are delighted to have a double celebration today as our First Confession Class is honored for receiving the forgiveness of sin for the first time in their lives. It is memorable as well since they are all related in the flesh, and today in the spirit as well. God grant them and loved ones Many, Blessed Years!

+++ The sign-up sheet for both the Web Site and Bulletin sponsors is on the bulletin board in the kitchen. Please sign up as soon as possible. Do NOT make payment until your sign-up month has arrived. This will make it easier for Father to keep track of payments. Thanks in advance to all who support the parish in this way.

+++ We offer thanks to the Blessed Trinity for inspiring generosity in the souls of our faithful and the blessing of abundant grace in our midst with the offering received this past week: Tithe Offering, \$593.00; Candles, \$28.00; Flowers, \$71.00; Pentecost, \$10.00; Food Coupons, \$440.00; Christian Fellowship, \$7.00, for a total of \$1149.00. We express our profound gratitude to the parishioner communicants who offered their God-given treasure and labored for the sake of the Lord and the good of our parish. God bless and reward you good and faithful souls! The attendance was 44 adults and 13 children last Sunday.

+++ As faithful believers, we intercede and associate ourselves in prayer with the following who have prayed and offered seven day lights for their intentions: Father Lucas, Pani Lucas, Louis Pasquino, +Paul Szmaida, Debra Szmaida, Kent Pasquino, Kyle Pasquino, Bob Gorbich, Anna Zacharyczuk and Pani Buletza.

+++ We make a **PENNIES FROM HEAVEN** Canister available for our faithful to bring in pennies for our altar and its appointments. We are already in receipt of \$1617.00 from this apostolate. Even your pennies can help and are a blessing to our parish.

For the expansion of our much needed parochial facilities, our parish pledge support to date totals \$107,815. 00. As we thank the Lord for inspiring generosity in the hearts of our faithful, we also thank the donors for accepting the challenge of the Lord in building up His Body. We cordially invite and look forward to receiving additional and increased pledges from all our devoted parishioners.

+++ Please be certain to see **Helen Karpiak** or a member of the Parish Council if you would like to help our parish by using **Shop Rite Food Coupons** available in \$20.00 denominations. We invite **ALL** to be caring

LORD



TEACH
US

God Is Spirit

God is Spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth John 4: 24.

The kingdom of God is not ushered in with visible signs. You will not be able to say 'It has begun in this place or there in that part of the country.' The kingdom of God is within you Luke 17: 20, 21.

Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there the heart is free 2 Corinthians 3: 17.

True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him John 4: 23.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control Galatians 5: 22, 23.

I assure you, no one can enter into God's kingdom without being begotten of water and the Spirit. Flesh begets flesh; Spirit begets spirit John 3: 5, 6.

Father into your hands I commend my spirit Luke 23: 46.

If we respect our earthly fathers who correct us, should we not all the more submit to the Father of spirits and live Hebrews 12: 9?

Do you not suppose that a much worse punishment is due the man who disdains the Son of God, thinks the covenant-blood by which he was sanctified to be ordinary, and insults the Spirit of grace Hebrews 10: 29?

Wisdom Of
The



Byzantine
Fathers

The Church, dispersed through the world to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and their disciples their faith in one God, Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth and sea and all that is in them; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became flesh for our salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who announced through the prophets the dispensations and the comings, and the birth from a Virgin, and the passion and the Resurrection from the dead, and the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and his coming down from heaven in the glory of the Father to reestablish all things; and the rising up again of the flesh of all humanity, so that to Jesus Christ our Lord, God, Saviour, and King, in accord with the approval of the invisible Father, every knee shall bend of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess him, and that He may make just judgment of all.; and that He may grant life, immortality and surround with eternal glory the just and the holy, and those who have kept his commandments and have persevered in his love... St. Ireneus.

Solemn Holyday Greetings

As we jubilantly celebrate the birthday and conception of the Body of Christ in our midst, we are overwhelmed our loving God has established for the sake of our salvation this glorious vehicle of redemption, to lift us, to elevate us, to sanctify us and restore us to our rightful dignity by delivering us to the portals of eternity holy and forgiven and reconciled.

How particularly fortunate and specially blessed is the man who is baptized, chrismated and sustained on Eucharistic nourishment to be a communicant of this Body of the Saviour. What heavenly joy is already experienced in the soul of him who is called by grace to salvation in sanctity by the Saviour by membership in the embracing and affirming Church of Jesus Christ.

As we celebrate the Descent of the Holy Spirit on the disciples transforming them from learners/students into ambassadors/apostles of the Son of God, we recognize our own inherent dignity because ours is an identical vocation. We too are invited and commanded to go forth and preach the gospel by our lifestyle, by our actions and our sustained commitment to Christ.

In celebrating the birth and inception of the Church, we also celebrate our ongoing baptismal Christian lifestyle made possible only by the grace of the Holy Spirit. "Come, Holy Spirit," we pray. "Lead us, guide us, strengthen and affirm us," we beseech the third Person of the Trinity. "Thank You for coming among us!" we never tire of saying. As new life is apportioned in nature to all that was seemingly resting and apparently dead, so we ask for similar grace for our souls that so oftentimes dead to sin, they are restored to living radiance by the flaming tongues of fire which set upon the heads of the disciples. Burn away within us the misery of separation from the Father which sin produces so that Christ's Resurrection will have eternal value for us. Help us appropriate the grace of Christ's victory for ourselves that we may enjoy God's glory for all eternity. Take us to yourself, O Holy Spirit of God that we live and reign together with Christ the Saviour and the Eternal Father. Because of your infused, shared and sustained grace, may we partake of heavenly joy with the Blessed Mother of God, all the saints and the bodiless powers. May our loved ones be joined to us in eternal beatitude to sing forever the glories of our God.

This is our ardent, sincere and devoted prayer for each communicant of our parish as we celebrate the Birthday of our blessed Church and witness the awesome Descent of the Holy Spirit for renewal of life and regeneration of faith and salvation of souls.

Since the feast of the harvest was celebrated on the fiftieth day after the Jewish Passover, the Greek speaking Jews (Tobias 2: 1; Maccabees 2: 31, 32) simply referred to it as Pentecost, from the Greek, *pentecoste* meaning fiftieth day. Thus, at the time of Jesus, the feast was generally known as simply Pentecost and was celebrated in commemoration of the Covenant, the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai and was solemnized with great pomp.

Before His ascension, Jesus Christ instructed His disciples to stay in Jerusalem to await the "...promise of my Father" Acts of the Apostles 1: 4, 5. which was fulfilled in a few days. After the Ascension, they returned from Mount Olivet to the Upper Room where they spent their time in "continuous prayer" Acts of the Apostles 1: 14, and worship "in the temple" Luke 24: 53. This was the first retreat of prayer and meditation made by the followers of the Lord, the Birthgiver of God and the close followers of Christ.

According to Jewish tradition, Moses awakened his people in the middle of the night in order to proclaim the Law of God to them. For this very reason, in preparation for the Feast of Pentecost, pious Jews would keep an all-night vigil during which they read the harvest and covenant themes from Scripture. The readings were interspersed by the singing of psalms and spiritual hymns. Some prophecies were also read, including the prophecy of Joel, which said: "I will pour out my spirit on all mankind. Your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on my servants will I pour out my spirit in those days" Joel 3: 1, 2.

We can imagine the Apostles at that all night-vigil. They listened to these prophetic words with avid expectation. Down deep in their hearts they must have sensed their imminent fulfillment as this did happen on the very next morning.

When they returned from the temple and gathered together in the Upper Room for morning prayers, suddenly the Holy Spirit descended upon them, as we read in the history of the apostolic Church: "When the day of Pentecost came, they all had met in one room. Suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were staying. Then the tongues of fire appeared to them as they separated, they came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit prompted them" Acts of the Apostles 2: 1 - 4.

The descent of the Holy Spirit took place on Jewish Pentecost. "When the day of Pentecost came..." Acts of the Apostles 2: 1, it coincided with the fiftieth day after the glorious Resurrection of Christ. Therefore, the Apostles also referred to this renewed memorial event as Pentecost, "I intend to say in Ephesus until Pentecost" 1 Corinthians 16: 8. But the celebration of this event as a separate feast came somewhat later, in the second half of the fourth century when the Church was finally free to manifest its faith in liturgical celebration. St. Gregory Nyssa (d. 394), in his homily, *On Pentecost*, already refers to it as the "great festivity of Pentecost." For Christians it marked the completion of the redemptive work

of Christ and the inauguration of the new and everlasting covenant, the covenant of grace which was poured out by the Holy Spirit, not written upon tablets of stone, but upon brave new hearts of flesh.

Pentecost is a constant reminder of our own individual "baptism by the Holy Spirit" Acts of the Apostles 1: 5, which we receive at the time of our Chrismation, which is the individual believer's experience of this glorious feast day occurrence. As the priest anointing our body with holy chrism pronounces the words, "The Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit," the heavens open and the third Person of the Holy Trinity descended on us, taking possession of our soul. We became then a living "temple of the Holy Spirit" 1 Corinthians 6: 19.

St. Peter did not hesitate to confirm this truth when describing the baptism of the household of Cornelius, "The Holy Spirit came down on them in the same way it came down on us at the beginning" Acts of the Apostles 11: 15. Similarly, St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 387) explained to his neophytes, "While our body is anointed with visible chrism, our soul becomes sanctified by the Holy and Life-giving Spirit." The Holy Spirit imparts new divine life and, therefore, we profess Him to be "Giver of Life" Confession of Faith.

Divine life is the life of grace, making us "partakers of the divine nature" 2 Peter 1: 4, and true children of God. "The Spirit you receive is not the spirit of slaves, but the spirit of children, and it makes cry out, 'Abba, Father!' The Spirit himself gives testimony to our own spirit that we are children of God" Romans 8: 15, 16. Chrismation then, is our own participation in the grace of Pentecost when Christ pours upon us the fullness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, enabling us to "live a life worthy of our Christian calling" Ephesians 4: 10, as children of God.

Since Pentecost was originally a feast of harvest, as we mentioned among the Jews, they used to decorate their homes with fruits of the harvest, flowers, green foliage, garlands, etc., in order to add pomp and solemnity to their celebrations. This same custom was also adopted by Christian believers. To them, however, the green branches and flowers took on a symbolic meaning, representing and recalling the divine life and gifts of the Holy Spirit.

The festive decorations of flowers and roses, it seems was first introduced in Italy in the middle of the fourth century from where it spread to the east. St. John Chrysostom (d. 407) admonished the faithful of his time not to celebrate the feast superficially, only adorning their homes with garlands, but rather spiritually ordering their souls with virtue in order to be more able to receive abundant fruit of the Holy Spirit.

A popular name for Pentecost is Green holydays which stems from the custom of adorning the churches and homes with green foliage, preferably linden branches and grass in celebration of the feast day. The green foliage was accepted as a symbol of divine life brought to us by the Holy Spirit. For this reason, vestments are of the same hue along with altar covers for the festive period of the holyday.

Since we are created in God's "image..." Genesis 1: 26, and receive the Holy Spirit at the time of our Chrismation, by living our life with Him in His Body, the Church, we gradually restore our human nature to its pristine perfection and His "likeness..." Genesis 1: 26. Justly, therefore, the Orthodox Fathers of the Church call the process of our growing in divine life, deification, or divinization. And this we achieve only by our cooperation with the grace of the Holy Spirit Who sustains us and makes us grow in divine life. Therefore, with piety and devotion, let us constantly implore Him with the well known Prayer to the Holy Spirit, extensively used by believers, "Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of truth, You are everywhere present and fill all things. Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious Lord."

Communion Hymn

Your good Spirit shall lead me into the land of righteousness. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!"

Troparion

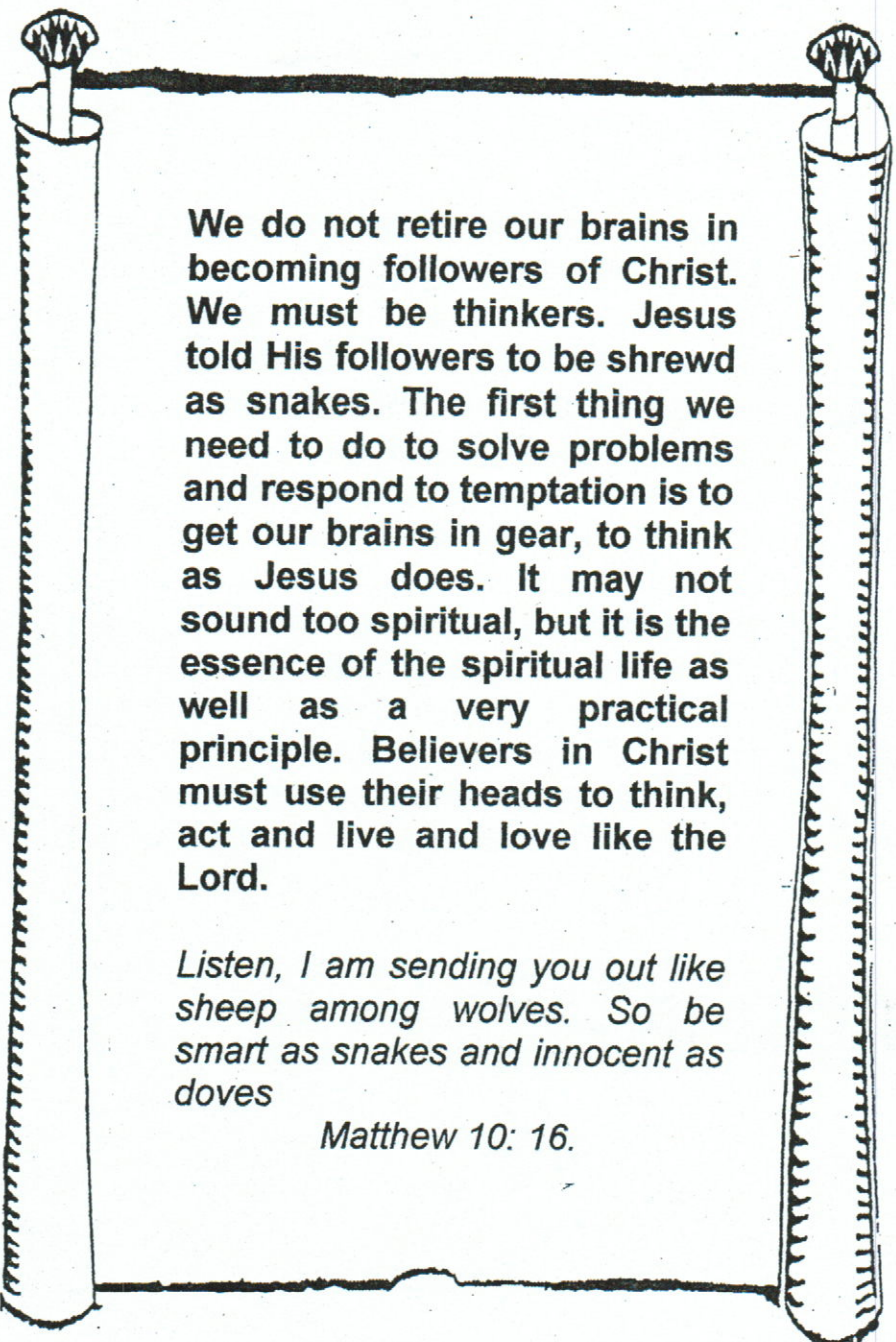
Blessed are You, O Christ our God, Who have filled the fishermen with wisdom by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and through them caught the universe in your net. O Lover of mankind, glory to you.

Kontakion

When the Most High descended, He confused the tongues and scattered the people; but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all of them to unity. Therefore, we praise the most Holy Spirit with one voice.

On The Holy Spirit

In former times men, seized by madness, wanted to build a tower to reach heaven, but the Lord, by dividing their tongues, divided and diminished their evil purpose. So now the Holy Spirit descends upon them in fiery tongues to unify a divided world. The result is something new and strange and mystical St. John Chrysostom.



We do not retire our brains in becoming followers of Christ. We must be thinkers. Jesus told His followers to be shrewd as snakes. The first thing we need to do to solve problems and respond to temptation is to get our brains in gear, to think as Jesus does. It may not sound too spiritual, but it is the essence of the spiritual life as well as a very practical principle. Believers in Christ must use their heads to think, act and live and love like the Lord.

Listen, I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. So be smart as snakes and innocent as doves

Matthew 10: 16.

The Feast of Pentecost Descent of the Holy Spirit

"We celebrate the feast of Pentecost and of the descent of the Spirit, the fulfillment of promise and the achievement of hope. O how great and exalted is the mystery" Vesper Hymn, Feast of Pentecost.

With this proclamation, we begin our liturgical celebration of Pentecost, solemnly concluding the yearly remembrance of our salvation. These words are taken from the famous homily of St. Gregory the Theologian, "On the Holy Spirit" which he delivered in Constantinople on the day of Pentecost in 381.

According to St. Gregory the Theologian, the descent of the Holy Spirit is the fulfillment of God's promise, since Jesus Christ assured the disciples He would send them the "promise of the Father..." Luke 24: 49. By the descent of the Holy Spirit, the apostles received even more than they hoped for. The descent of the Holy Spirit brought to its completion the divine revelation of the Holy Trinity which he described as the "great and exalted mystery." In the Orthodox Church, we celebrate this mystery at Pentecost which is so beautifully indicted in the vespertal hymnology: "We have seen the true light; we have received the heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith, and we worship the undivided Trinity, for the Trinity has saved us" Vesper Hymn, Feast of Pentecost.

This "true faith" inspired St. Gregory of Nazianzen to deliver his sermon about the divinity of the Holy Spirit, Who "completed the work of Christ." Gregory's homily was addressed against the followers of his predecessor in the See of Constantinople, Archbishop Macedonius (d. 362), who denied the divinity of the third Person of the Most Holy Trinity.

In the Old Testament, Jews were ordered by God to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost on the fiftieth day after Passover, "You shall also keep the feast of the grain harvest at the end of the year..." Exodus 23:16, in thanksgiving for the harvest and were expected to make an "offering of the new fruits" of their crops. Hence they referred to this feast also as the "Feast of First Fruits" Numbers 28: 26. Since officially, the harvest lasted for seven weeks, the day was also called the "Feast of Weeks." "You shall then keep the feast of weeks in honor of the Lord, your God, and the measure of your own free will offering shall be in proportion to the blessing the Lord, your God has bestowed on you" Deuteronomy 16: 10.

In post exilic times, the rabbis had a custom of motivating their liturgical celebrations with certain events of sacred history. Thus they tied Pentecost with the miraculous liberation of their people from Egyptian captivity and the feast of the harvest was associated with the covenant of Mount Sinai. According to the continuing records of the Jews, the Mount Sinai events took place on the fiftieth day after the crossing of the Red Sea.

Acts

History

Acts

Purpose/Theme:

The physician Luke is generally accepted as the author of this record of the establishment and growth of the early church. It emphasizes the presence of the Holy Spirit, the missionary work of Peter and Paul, and how Christianity was not the enemy of the Roman government.

Key Verse:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (1:8).

Outline:

The gospel is preached

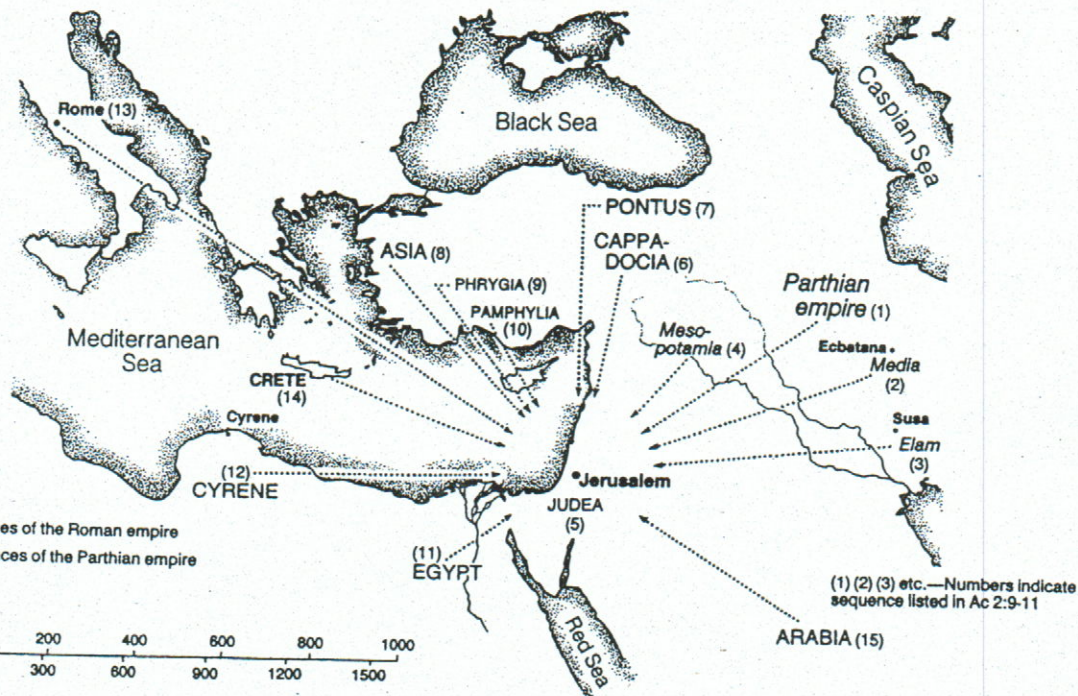
- ☐ in Jerusalem (Acts 1—7)
- ☐ in Judea and Samaria (Acts 8—12)
- ☐ to the world (Acts 13—28)

When Events Happened

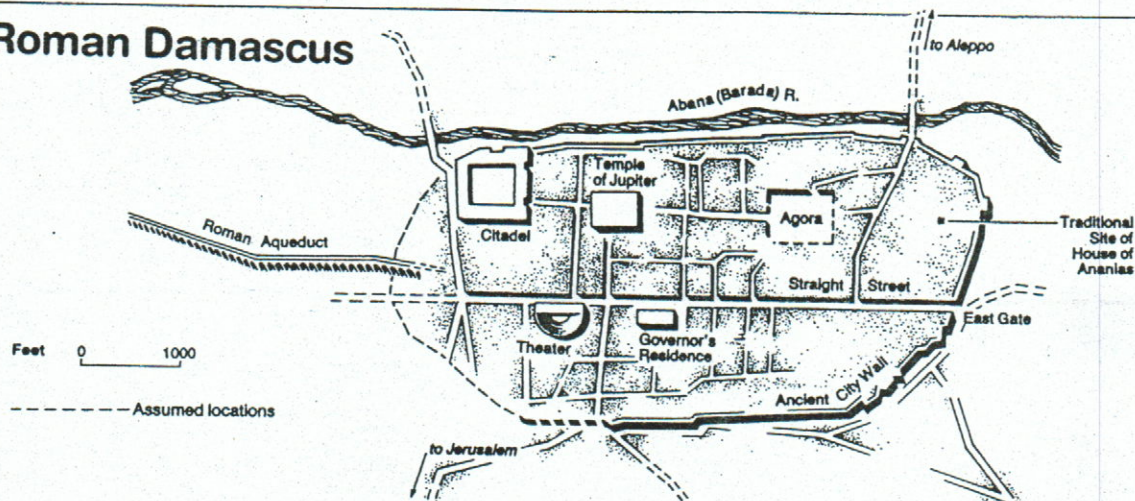


Countries of People Mentioned at Pentecost

Acts 2:9-11



Roman Damascus



Damascus represented much more to Saul, the strict Pharisee, than another stop on his campaign of repression. It was the hub of a vast commercial network with far-flung lines of caravan trade reaching into north Syria, Mesopotamia, Anatolia, Persia and Arabia. If the new "Way" of Christianity flourished in Damascus, it would quickly reach all these places. From the viewpoint of the Sanhedrin and of Saul, the arch-persecutor, it had to be stopped in Damascus.

The city itself was a veritable oasis, situated in a plain watered by the Biblical rivers Abana and Parpar.

Roman architecture overlaid the Hellenistic town plan with a great temple to Jupiter and a mile-long colonnaded street, the "Straight Street" of Ac 9:11. The city gates and a section of the town wall may still be seen today, as well as the lengthy bazaar that runs along the line of the ancient street.

The dominant political figure at the time of Paul's escape from Damascus (2 Co 11:32-33) was Aretas IV, king of the Nabateans (9 B.C.-A.D. 40), though normally the Decapolis cities were attached to the province of Syria and were thus under the influence of Rome.



As he sought understanding, Philip, in his confusion, said : " Lord, show us the Father." In answer, you told him : " Have I been so long a time with you and you have not known that the Father is in Me and I am in the Father?" Likewise, incomparable Lord, I cry out with fear :

O Jesus, God eternal!
O Jesus, most powerful King!
O Jesus, long-suffering Lord!
O Jesus, ever-merciful Savior!
O Jesus, ever-gracious Guardian!

O Jesus, cleanse me of sin!
O Jesus, deliver me from all iniquities!
O Jesus, forgive my insincerities!
O Jesus, my Hope, never forsake me!
O Jesus, my Help, do not reject me!
O Jesus, my Creator, do not forget me!
O Jesus, my Shepherd, let me go not astray!

O Jesus, Son of God, have mercy on me!

O Jesus, who bestowed heavenly power upon the apostles waiting in Jerusalem : fill me, who am deprived of all goodness, with your Holy Spirit so that I may lovingly sing to You : Alleluia.



The Holy Spirit

God Made Manifest in Lo

The Holy Spirit inspires prophets, poets and artisans. Animating the whole of creation and pouring out grace richly into our hearts, the Holy Spirit imparts life and love. The Holy Spirit makes it possible for creatures to become aware of God our Father.

The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and radiates Christ bestowing new life and the awareness of God-presence that deifies us. With his all-pervading presence the Spirit manifests the Son and makes us aware of his presence. By the Spirit's love and through the Son, we are brought to know the Father.

The Holy Spirit revealed Christ even before the Incarnation by inspiring the prophets. The Holy Spirit's mission is to sanctify, to make holy, to make us seek perfection, and to deify us by uniting us to Christ and

by dwelling in us as our supernatural life.

The Holy Spirit is a fire which refreshes the human heart and opens it to the sensibility of the presence of the Father and the Son. The gift of hope is granted us by sharing in the life of the Holy Spirit.

All of God's work is well planed and well-managed. The Greek word for God's "plan of redemption" is *economia*. The Holy Trinity desires that all creation, and most especially human creatures, mirror the majesty and unity within the Godhead.

The Father chooses and accepts us as his own. St. Paul writes to the Ephesians, "Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has bestowed on us in Christ every spiritual blessing in the heavens. God chose us in him before the world began, to be holy



and blameless in his sight, to be full of love; he likewise predestined us through Christ Jesus to be his adopted sons – such was his will and pleasure – that all might praise the glorious favor he has bestowed on us in his beloved” Ephesians 1: 3–6.

God the Son, as the perfect image of the Father, identifies himself with

us in his Incarnation and Resurrection so that we may return to the Father. "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father but through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father also" John 14: 6, 7.

The Holy Spirit give us the life of the Trinity and deifies us by imparting to us the life and knowledge of Jesus Christ. "The body is one and has many members, but all the members, many though they are, are one body, and so it is with Christ. It is in one Spirit that all of us, whether Jew or Greek, slave or free, were baptized into one body" 1 Corinthians 12: 12, 13.

God is present in as many dimensions as exist in the life of human beings. God makes himself present in our marvelous cosmos, in the human word of Sacred Scripture, in our most intimate being through grace and when we gather as his Body, the Church. God is active in every aspect of our lives. The divine economy is ever-radiant and life-giving.



Applicant Review For

Name: Jesus of Nazareth

Age: 33

Gender: F MXG L

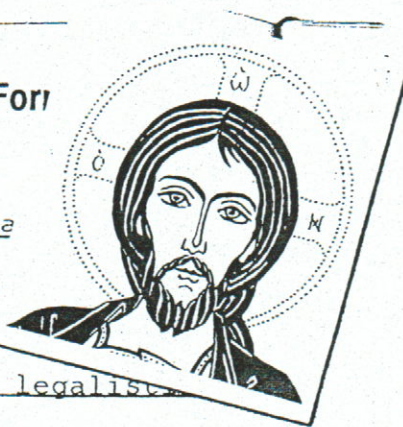
Comments: rigid, legalistic

angry, has authority issues,

displays intellectual immaturity,

unable to work well with others,

pastorally insensitive



DENIED

Unquestionably, today, if our Lord were to come among us as Creator, Lord, God and Saviour-Messiah, our confused politically correct culture would deny him any credibility because of his frankness and honesty. Yes, unquestionably as well, all would like the lofty promises the Lord made and still offers, but do not want the conditions under which they must live to seek them and make them reality.

Because of our very limited self-imposed superficiality, are we placing ourselves out of the actual ability of our Saviour to save us?

WISDOM! BE ATTENTIVE

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth: You are everywhere present and fill all things. Treasury of blessings and Giver of life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious Lord! Hymn to the Holy Spirit.

Blessed are You, O Christ God. You filled the fishermen with wisdom, sending down upon them the Holy Spirit. Through them, You have caught the whole world in Your net. O Lover of mankind, glory be to You! Troparion of Pentecost.

When the Most High came down and confused tongues, He scattered the nations; but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all men to unity. Therefore, with one voice, let us praise the Holy Spirit. Kontakion, Feast of Pentecost.

Through all the world their voice resounds, their message reaches to the ends of the earth. Prokimenon, Feast of Pentecost.

O my soul, extol the One God in three divine persons. Hail, O Queen, glory of virgins and mothers; to adequately praise you is beyond the eloquence of the most cultured tongue. The wonderful manner in which you gave birth to Christ amazes all intelligence. Therefore, with one accord, we the faithful extol you. Hymn instead of 'It is truly proper,' Feast of Pentecost.

Your good Spirit shall lead me into the land of righteousness. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Communion Hymn, Feast of Pentecost.

All the people have seen wonders today in the city of David, when the Holy Spirit descended in tongues of fire, as told by the God-inspired Luke, who said: "The disciples were gathered together; there was a sound like a mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And they began to speak in foreign tongues, teaching the doctrine of the Holy Trinity." Matins Hymn, Feast of Pentecost.



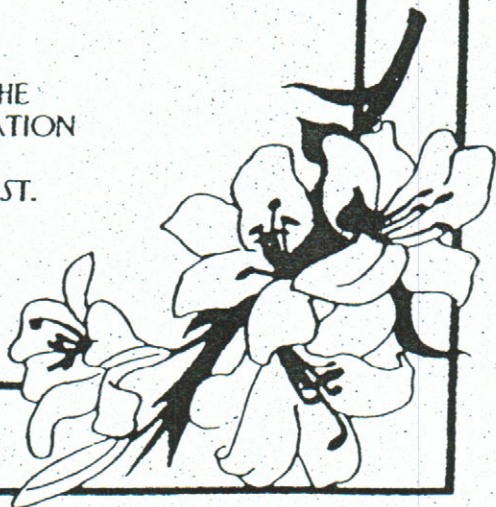
Our prayers and best
wishes are with

Sophia Rose Choti

Sarah Anna Harrison

Tatyana Lucas Harrison

AS THEY CELEBRATE THE
MYSTERY OF RECONCILIATION
AND RECEIVE THEIR
FIRST SOLEMN EUCHARIST.



Great Joy In Our Parish Today

Today we are delighted in the very depth of our soul as four of our young children celebrate encountering our Lord in the recesses of their heart and soul and then emerging united with him in so personal and intimate a way because they are once again returned by God's grace to their baptismal innocence. Growing healthily as they are, and becoming aware of susceptibility to temptation, they have apologized to the Lord for their disobedient and separating sins. Our celebration today concerns their return to God's love and grace.

For the first time in their lives, they begin to appreciate the intimacy of faith we who are more mature in commitment to our Saviour have long known and enjoyed. So, they enter our joy and assurance as well. They are more and more becoming aware of that unity which exists between us and our Creator. Now they know what it means to belong to Christ completely, totally and wholly. Sin will never keep them apart from our God again.

Today our children formally respond to the invitation of our Blessed Saviour: "People were bringing their little children to him to have him touch them, but the disciples were scolding them for this. Jesus became indignant when he noticed it and said to them: 'Suffer the little children to come to me and do not hinder them. It is to just such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. I assure you that whoever does not accept the kingdom of God like a little child shall not take part in it.' Then he embraced them and blessed them, placing his hands on them" Mark 10: 13 - 16.

Our heavenly Father is reminding us through them that we are also to become like children in faith response and faith commitment to that salvation and the kingdom of heaven can be ours. We must be trusting with the same undaunted simplicity we see personified in our children: "I assure you unless you change and become like little children, you will not enter into the kingdom of God. Whoever makes himself...like this child is of greatest importance in the heavenly kingdom" Matthew 18: 3, 4. As adults, we have a great responsibility to teach our children, but our Lord is telling us that we can also learn from them great and profound truths. When we are sincere and serious and live out our blessed commitment to Christ, we provide spiritual security and our "...children shall see and be glad, their hearts shall rejoice in the Lord" Zechariah 10: 7.

Today our children are not only spiritually united with our Creator and heavenly Father in intimate bond, but with our loving and devoted parents and family believers as well

because our Lord reminds us He comes among them to "...turn the hearts of fathers to their children..." Luke 1: 17. As they once again receive the precious Blood and sacred Body of our Saviour for the sustenance and nourishment of their souls and bodies, as adults we show them by our example that we have come to understand fully and much better the spiritual relationship as well as kinship that unites us with them in Christ. "Whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is brother and sister and mother to me" Matthew 13: 50. They are not only bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh, blood of our blood, but faith and soul of our same commitment to the Saviour. For all to see today, there is far more than simple and innocent human flesh which unites believing families into one organic unity. Today we manifest the common Denominator of unity in faith and security Who is Christ our Lord.

We call upon all the children of the parish as well as all the communicants to cherish the memory of this day because the very center and emphasis is our Lord Who taught us, "I myself am the bread of life. No one who comes to me shall ever be hungry, no one who believes in me shall ever thirst" John 6: 35. "This is the bread that comes down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he shall live forever; the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world" John 6: 50, 51. "Let me solemnly assure you, if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. He who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood has life eternal, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. The man who feeds on my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him" John 6: 53-56.

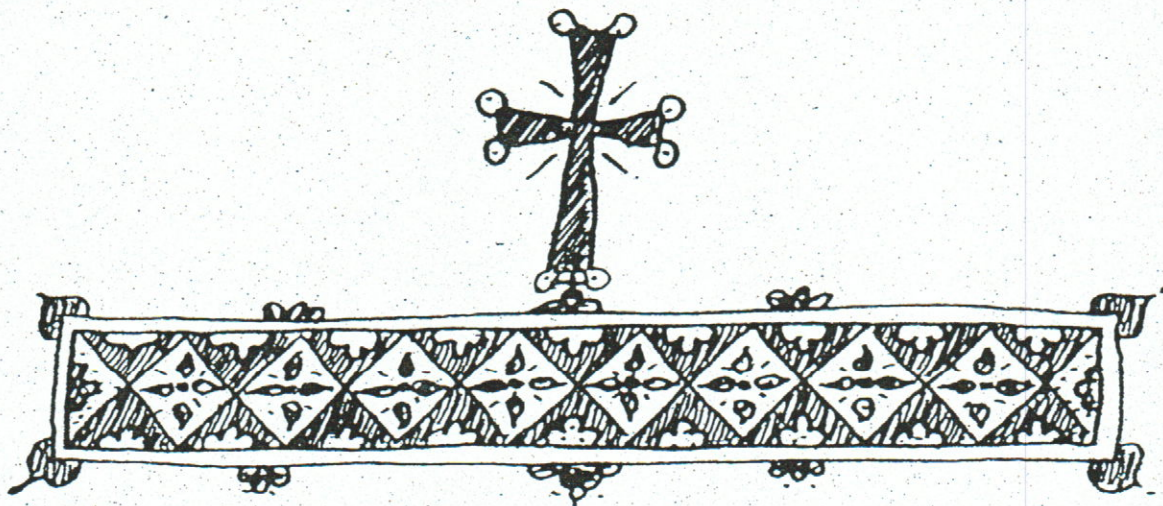
Our children are here today, asking pardon of their simple offenses because they wish to respond to the redeeming grace of Christ. In their simplicity, they separated themselves from the Lord, but wish to be reunited, knowing an apology is necessary for offending their loving Father. They take seriously St. Luke's admonition, "Therefore repent for your sins, that they may be blotted out" Acts of the Apostles 28: 13, because they already recognize "He who conceals his sin prospers not, but he who confesses and forsakes them, obtains mercy" Proverbs 28: 13. "For I acknowledge my offense and my sin is ever before me. 'Against you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight'" Psalms 50 5, 6. Today they make a solemn promise to "...detest what is evil, cleave to what is good" Romans 1: 9.

Today we witness the most obvious promise of our God coming to mature fruition, albeit slowly, in the lives of these blessed children. It is indeed a very special and memorable event! That is why we celebrate it so solemnly. Just as they are physically attired in refined beauty and purity, so also are their souls pristine and bright in the sight of the

angels of the Lord. This is the true reason we praise our God and extol His love for us. This is the reason we glorify our Creator and praise His holy Name. And today we have a particular reason to praise Him together with and for our First Confession Class.

We congratulate our children because we are proud of them and the investment they have made in studying and learning about salvation in Christ. We as a parish family promise today that by our example and prayers we will assist them in growing up as faithful believers. We will confirm them in belief. We will ground them in commitment. We will affirm their devotion with us to our God. Because we take our faith commitment seriously, we earnestly desire they also grow into it with sincerity and fidelity. Because they are created in His image, they receive His Body and Blood to restore His likeness once again. We glorify our God for offering them this marvelous opportunity.

We sincerely thank their parents for teaching them, for their soulful efforts as we acknowledge the goodness of soul in the children for their cooperation, prayer and devotion. Our ardent prayer is the Lord continue to bless them with his choicest grace, that He guide and strengthen them in their resolve, that they always grasp and understand his loving concern all the days of their lives. May they forever know the spiritual joy they experience today in the freedom from sin they experience. Many and Blessed Years, beloved children in the Lord! Continue to travel the road along with your beloved and devoted parents which leads us all to salvation in Jesus Christ. "While you have the light, keep faith in the light; thus you will become children of the light" John 12: 36.



PENTECOST: THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Before ascending into heaven, our Lord gave specific instructions to His Apostles: remain in Jerusalem and wait for "the Promise of the Father." And just what was this "promise?" It was the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Book of Acts relates how after sharing an emotional farewell with their Master, the Apostles obediently went back to the same Upper Room where they had shared the Mystical Supper with Him. They waited for 10 long days for the fulfillment of God's promise, and on the day of Pentecost, their patience was rewarded. With a rushing of a mighty wind and the appearance of tongues of fire, the Holy Spirit descended upon them! Thus the words of St. John the Baptist were made manifest concerning Christ: "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire." (Luke 3:16) The Holy Spirit filled the Apostles with a "burning desire" to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the whole world. These simple fishermen went out into the streets of Jerusalem and used their own tongues to communicate this important message to Jews from all over the world who had gathered there for this great festival. It is recorded that some 3,000 people were converted by them that very day, which we appropriately call the "birthday" of the Church. The Apostles were no longer frightened: they now believed that they had the strength to "Go and teach all nations" as Christ had commanded them to do.

The Feast of Pentecost reminds us that we, too, are expected to be "witnesses" for Christ as well. When we received the grace of the Holy Spirit on the day of our baptism, we were urged to follow the example of the Apostles and do our part in winning souls for our Savior.

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