



PARISH INFORMATION BULLETIN

PROGRAM FOR 27 MAY—2 JUNE 2018

SUNDAY 27 MAY PENTECOST	Feast of Pentecost—John 7: 7-52, 8:12 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.30— 11.00am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
<p>***** SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES *****</p> <p>(A free voluntary program organised by the Church)</p> <p><i>Immediately after Holy Communion until Church dismissal, in the building behind the Church, Religious Instruction lessons take place for our children. We have classes for ages ranging from 5yrs to teenage years and are given in a relaxed, friendly environment. The understanding of our faith through the religious instruction lessons bring our children closer to God and the joy of peace of His Love.</i></p>	
MONDAY 28 MAY MONDAY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00—9.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy• 10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall.
TUESDAY 29 MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7.00pm Parishes of St Vasilios and the Presentation of our Lord, Coburg Youth Group will meet in our Church Hall. The meeting will begin with the Compline Service in English.• 7.30pm Young Adults and Married Couples Bible Study Group at St. Vasilios, in the Church Coffee Room.
WEDNESDAY 30 MAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos followed by Bible Study
SATURDAY 2 JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3.45pm Service of Vespers
SUNDAY 3 JUNE	GOSPEL READING: Matt. 10: 32-33, 37-38, 19: 27-30 EPISTLE READING: Heb. 11: 33-40, 12: 1-2



Telephone Contact Numbers

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Fr Athanasios and
Fr Ephraim
are available at the Church
every Monday to Friday
between 4.00 and 6.00pm
for Holy Confession and
any spiritual need.

**Who is so great a
God as our God?
You alone are the
God who does
wonders!"**

VOICE OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

"The grace of the Holy Spirit which is given mystically to every Christian when he is baptized acts and is manifested in proportion to our obedience to the commandments of the Lord. That is, if a Christian obeys the commandments of the Lord more, grace acts with him more, while if he obeys them less, grace acts within him less. Just as a spark, when covered in the ashes of fire becomes increasingly manifest as one removes the ashes, and the more fire wood you put the more the fire burns, so the grace that has been given to every Christian through Holy Baptism is hidden in the heart and covered up by the passions and sins, and the more a man acts in accordance with the commandments of Christ, the more he is cleansed of the passions and the more the fire of Divine grace lights in his heart, illumines and deifies him."

+ St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain, *Christian Morality*

Pentecost—Trinity Sunday John 7: 7-52, 8:12

Today is the Feast of Pentecost. I think that today's feast is one of the most underemphasized and misunderstood Feasts in the Orthodox Church... as a matter of fact, Pentecost is among the most important Feasts. We might even dare to say that Pentecost is as important as Pascha itself! As important as Pascha, because Pentecost makes Pascha accessible to us. Pentecost makes Pascha relevant. Pentecost is the descent of the Holy Spirit on the Church, and without the presence of the Holy Spirit, Christ's resurrection is, at best, a historical fact. Yes, Jesus rose from the dead. Yes, Death could not contain Him. Yes, He is God, who created heaven and earth and He emerged from the tomb after three days, but what does the fact of Christ's resurrection mean to me? Can I know this Jesus, who rose from the dead? Can I have a relationship with Him that is meaningful. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit, the answer to these questions is, "no." Think about it, right after He rose from the dead, He ascended into heaven. How then would the disciples, let alone us who live 2,000 years later, have a relationship with Jesus. He was taken up into the sky. I often imagine the disciples after the ascension, looking at one another, saying, "Where did He go?"

And then came the day of Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit descended, like tongues of flame on the disciples, and it remained upon them. The Holy Spirit turned a group of disciples into apostles. The Holy Spirit turned a Jewish faction into the Church. God's Son ascended into heaven, but His Spirit came and took up permanent residency. So through the presence of the Holy Spirit, Christ, the Risen Lord, is present everywhere, in all places, at all times. Yes, you can know Christ! Yes, you can have a meaningful and life-saving relationship with Him, because you have received His Holy Spirit! Christ is now accessible to all people, regardless of where they are, who they are, what language they speak, etc, etc. The bible tells the story in this way:

The disciples were gathered together we are told in Acts 2:1 – 11 and then, like a mighty rushing wind, tongues of fire came upon their heads and then they began to speak in different languages. They went out and taught the crowds in the streets, and everyone understood the message in their own language. Isn't that an extraordinarily strong message that God sends us? It means that God's message is for the whole world! When Jesus was walking the earth, to know Him, you had to be where He was, geographically. After the Day of Pentecost, Jesus is present wherever the Holy Spirit is present. Jesus is no longer bound to a geographic location, and He is knowable from the time of Pentecost to the present day, personally knowable through His Holy Spirit. This is a HUGE deal. This is the ticket to our salvation! This is so important that, St. Seraphim of Sarov taught that the acquisition of the Holy Spirit was the single most important aim of the Christian Life. And of course it is, because it is only through the Holy Spirit that we can know Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

As Orthodox, we sometimes are guilty of forgetting Pentecost because the strength and beauty of the Paschal season is so strong in our minds and hearts, so prominent in our culture. We have been saying 'Christos Anesti' every day and maybe we want Pascha not to come to an end. But it is crucial to our salvation, to our understanding of God, to our spiritual lives that we understand how Pentecost completes what was accomplished on Pascha. Just think, when we receive communion, the Holy Spirit changes bread and wine into the Body of Blood of Christ. It is the Holy Spirit that brings the physical presence of the living and risen Lord into the Eucharist, and in to our very bodies.

With the vespers of kneeling, we offer prayers for the Holy Spirit to come down upon us and to live in us and to lead us to do God's will. Today, as we commemorate Pentecost, we also ask God to give us a Pentecost. We ask Him to send His Holy Spirit down upon us anew, as He did with the Disciples 2,000 years ago. More accurately, we ask God to make us aware of, to attune our hearts to the reality of the presence of the Holy Spirit who is "everywhere present and filling all things."

At our baptism, we received the Holy Spirit. In Holy Communion, the Holy Spirit brings Christ into our hearts. The Holy Spirit gives life to all living things, so let us open our hearts and our minds to God's Spirit, and let the presence of the Holy Spirit be the guiding and determining factor in our lives. Amen

*Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of Truth,
Who are ever present and fillest all things.
Come and dwell within us and cleanse us from every stain,
And save our souls, O Blessed One!*