



Parish Information Bulletin

Program for 23 - 29 June 2024

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.

SUNDAY 23 JUNE	PENTECOST SUNDAY, John 7: 37-52; 8:12 <ul style="list-style-type: none">7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
2024 SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES FOR ALL AGES (A free voluntary program organised by the Church) Lessons take place in the building behind the church and begin at 10.30am until Church dismissal. We have classes for ages ranging from Syrs to teenage years. Lessons are taught in a relaxed, friendly environment. Please bring your children along to learn of their rich Orthodox faith and come close to God and His Love.	
MONDAY 24 JUNE Monday of the Holy Spirit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy10.00am Meeting of Elderly Citizens in Church Hall
WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">5.00pm Paraklesis to the Theotokos
THURSDAY 27 JUNE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">8.00—9.00pm ➔ TEENAGE YOUTH GROUP 2024 ALL TEENAGERS WELCOME Join the group and learn about your faith, make friends, enjoy refreshments, in a friendly, relaxing environment. * In Church Hall, upstairs behind the Church
SATURDAY 29 JUNE <i>Saints Peter and Paul, the Holy Glorious Leaders of the Apostles</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">7.30am Orthros and Divine Liturgy
SUNDAY 30 JUNE	GOSPEL READING: Matthew 9: 36, 10: 1-8 EPISTLE READING: Hebrews 11: 33-40; 12: 1-2

Homily on Pentecost by St. John Chrysostom

Let us spiritually extol the grace of the Holy Spirit in spiritual hymns, since spiritual grace has on this day shown upon us from heaven. Though our words are too weak to express adequately the greatness of this [grace], we shall praise its power and activity to the extent of our abilities; for the Holy Spirit probes all things, even the depths of divinity.

We are celebrating the day of Pentecost, the day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, [the day of] the hope of perfection, the end of expectation, the longing for salvation, the fulfilment of prayer and the image of patience. Today the Spirit Who acted [to scatter] the nations in the time of Heber has formed tongues of fire among the Apostles. His action [of old] led to the confusion of the nations, in order to restrain the will of man from its brazenness and [consequent] chastisement; on this occasion, however, amidst fiery tongues, the deeds wrought by the activity of the Holy Spirit [served] to preserve us [as] recipients of preaching, [in] fulfilment of the will of God.

In the beginning the Spirit of God moved over the water, and later, in the time of Christ, the same Holy Spirit of God rested [upon him]. Then He moved, and now He rested, as being one in essence, equal in honour, ever-existent and unoriginate together with the Father and the Son. He Who by the flight of a dove over the waters of the Flood heralded fair weather to Noah, the same Holy Spirit, by the sight of a dove at the waters of the Jordan, showed the world the Sonship of Him Who was baptized. Moreover, the Lord had a terrifying answer for those who dared to utter blasphemy against the Holy Spirit: "Whosoever speaketh [blasphemy] against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." David, declaring his desire for this Holy Spirit, prayed to God, saying: "Cast me not away from Thy presence, O Lord; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

As is well known, where He is absent, every sort of corruption sets in. Thus, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit entered into him, wherefore [David] said, "Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." This same Holy Spirit sanctified the prophets, instructed the apostles and empowered the martyrs. This same Holy Spirit consecrated Isaiah, taught Ezekiel and revealed the resurrection of the dead. As he says, "The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord." This same Holy Spirit chose Jeremiah from his mother's womb, and raised up Daniel to deliver Susanna. As it is written, "God raised up by the Holy Spirit a young youth, whose name was Daniel." David so loved the presence of this same Holy Spirit that he prayed to God, saying, "Thy Holy Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness."

This same Holy Spirit of God came to dwell in the holy Virgin Mary, embracing her with the communion of the Divine Word at the good pleasure of the Father, and making her the Theotokos. Elizabeth, being filled with this same Holy Spirit, understood that the Lord had come to her by means of the Virgin; wherefore she said, "And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" Zachariah, the father of John, was filled with the same Holy Spirit, whereby he declared that the son born to him would be the prophet and forerunner of the King Who was to come. John himself was also filled with the same Holy Spirit; the eyes of his intellect were given light, and he beheld the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit hovering over Him Who was being bap-tized, Him Who baptized with the Spirit and fire.

By the action of the same Holy Spirit, the Lord Himself, when He was giving His Apostles His teaching in detail and strengthening their minds for the time of His Passion, said to them: "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." Moreover, revealing to them the Spirit's consubstantial power, He said: "When the Holy Spirit is come, Which proceedeth from the Father, He will guide you into all truth." The holy Apostles waited expectantly for the coming of the power of this same Holy Spirit; they waited together to be clothed with power from on high, according to the commandment of the Lord, Who had said: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high; for, behold, I shall send the promise of My Father upon you." And, as it is written, "when the day of Pentecost was fully come, all the holy Apostles were assembled with one accord in one place, and the Paraclete was sent to them under the appearance of tongues of fire." Having received the abundant promise of the Father and the Holy Spirit, they were strengthened, and they manifested Him Who was sent to them, His grace and His power. The martyr and protodeacon Stephen, filled with the same Holy Spirit, Whom he received by the laying-on of hands of the Apostles, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Being full of the Holy Spirit, he saw the doors of heaven opened and the Only-begotten [Son] and Word of God standing in the flesh at the right hand of the power of God. Filled with this same Holy Spirit, Paul became the preacher of divine mysteries. As Ananias said to him: "The Lord, even the Saviour, hath sent me to thee, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And [Paul afterwards] said with assurance: "And I think also that I have the Spirit of God." The same Holy Spirit came to Cornelius and those that were to be baptized with him, and each of them spoke in his own tongue and magnified God. This same Holy Spirit came upon the Ethiopian eunuch after he went down into the water [of baptism], and he was filled with joy, and he went on his way rejoicing.

This [is] the same Holy Spirit Who preached by the prophets, Who gave understanding to the apostles, Who spoke to men. He was given to them by the Lord, and all their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist Him. For, as [the Lord] said, "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you."

This Holy Spirit [also] ordains priests, consecrates churches, purifies altars, perfects sacrifices and cleanses people of their sins. This Holy Spirit abides with the godly, refines the righteous and guides kings. This same Holy Spirit preserved the soul of Simeon, lengthening the time of his life and re-versing the rules of death, until the day when he beheld Him Who is the Redeemer of life and death; for it had been promised unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. It was the same Holy Spirit Who gave strength to Elijah, and Whose power Elisha desired when he asked of Elijah: "Let there be, I pray thee, a double portion of thy spirit upon me."

This Holy Spirit enlightens souls and sanctifies bodies. It was the same Holy Spirit Who descended upon the Apostles and filled them with divine wisdom. Having received His gifts, they were all filled with the knowledge of God; not only [were they given] divine knowledge, but also spiritual gifts. Simon Magus, being a stranger to the Holy Spirit, fell to his perdition. As Peter said to Simon: "Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast desired to purchase the priceless grace of the Holy Spirit with money."

Therefore, beloved, let us strive to keep our bodies uncorrupted; for one who has acquired a new body, which is a temple of the Holy Spirit, has become a true victor over the devil. What the Spirit of God has said, may it be done unto me.

Many are the gifts of the Holy Spirit; many and all-powerful are His gifts. As it says in a certain place: By the Word of the Lord were the heavens established, and all the might of them by the Spirit of His mouth. And Isaiah says: "The Spirit of God [shall rest upon him], the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and godliness." And Paul adds, "The Spirit of adoption and of grace." He Who is equally ever-existent, and equally unoriginate, and Who shares the throne and the honour of God, [His] Son and Word, called this Spirit the Spirit Who is our Comforter.

He is one in essence, one in principle and one in counsel [with the Father and the Son.] Wouldst thou believe? Listen to what the Scriptures say of Him: "When He prepared the heaven, I was present with Him." The prophet further says: "The Lord, and His Spirit hath sent me." Lest anyone think, from what was said, that this new Spirit would come from any creatures living or yet to come, or from any other person, He says: "And I will put My Spirit in you;" inasmuch as He said, "A new Spirit."

In the Acts of the holy Apostles, this was expressed in commandments: "The Holy Spirit said, 'Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.'" And again, "It seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us;" even as it had been said, "I will put My Spirit in you." Wouldst thou demonstrate that this was indeed His coming, as was foretold in parables, and that it was His grace [acting upon] the holy Apostles? Wilt thou believe what was said? Listen to [Saint] John the Evangelist, who says: "The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Paul called this Spirit the Spirit of adoption and the Spirit of grace, inasmuch as in the waters of the baptismal font men are born again of water and the Spirit, and we receive the adoption of sons. In the same way, the Lord said to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Thus, [the Holy Spirit] is the Spirit of sonship and the Spirit of grace; for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, [for those who have been born] by the power of God.

Moreover, the Spirit [is called] the Comforter, because He is also our advocate with the Father. And not only is He with the Father, but He is always with us also as a gift. "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever," comforting your hearts and making them steadfast in divine patience and trust in Christ. Whereas the holy Apostles received this testament after [Christ's] holy Rising from the dead, and were sent forth to teach and to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and whereas we have already been vouchsafed this true washing by the Holy Spirit, let us strive to keep our souls and our bodies undefiled as we glorify the Most holy and consubstantial Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.