

## The first and necessary gift

It is amazing that the first thing which the fire of the Holy Spirit burned up, was the confusion of the tongues, in other words, the fruit of the egotistical “daring to make the tower”. The first manifest expression, that witnessed that the Apostles “were filled with the Holy Spirit” was the gift of tongues. This means that also the first manifest gift of the Holy Spirit to people was a “translating center”, with which each one was given the ability to hear in his language, the divine truths. The Comforter, consequently, before asking us to become able to contain his light and grace, humbled Himself, “emptied Himself” and He became first “containable”, comprehensible and approachable to the human mind of each one, speaking in our daily language.

The cooperation of pastors and those pastored is wished for, so that with “kenotic” energies of both, the tragic ecclesiastical pathology can be cured, that was expressed with the painful realistic ascertainment of the blessed Fr. John Romanides: “In a congregation of 300 individuals, only five understand what is taking place there”. Thus there will exist the hope that “the agreement can be made new for the salvation of our souls”.

Archim. B. L

**SUNDAY, JUNE, 16, 2019 HOLY PENTECOST** *Tychon the Wonderworker, 40 Martyrs of Rome, Mark the Just of Apollonia*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :**

**EOTHINON :**

**EPISTLE READING:** *Acts of the Apostles 2:1 - 11*

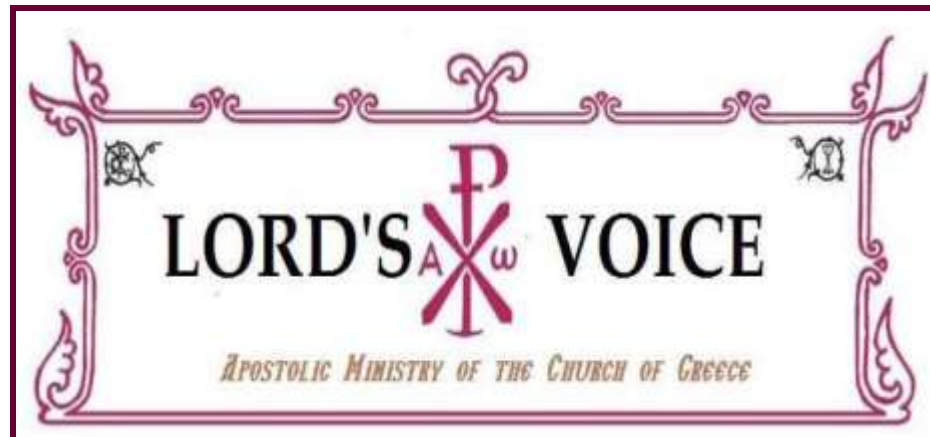
**GOSPEL READING:** *John 7:37-52; 8:12*

**NEXT SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 2019 THE SUNDAY OF ALL**

**SAINTS**, *Agrippina the Martyr of Rome, Holy Martyrs Aristocleus the Priest, Demetrius the Deacon and Athanasius the Reader, The Holy New Archpriest Martyrs Gerasimus of Crete, Neophytos of Knossos, Joachim of Cherronisos, Hierotheos of Lampi, Zachariah of Sitia, Joachim of Petra, Gerasimos of Rethymno, Kallinikos of Kydonia, Melchizedek of Kissamos, Kallinikos of Diopolos, and those Martyred with Them (1821-1822)*

**EPISTLE READING:** *St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 11:33-40; 12:1-2*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 10:32-33; 37-38; 19:27-30*



67<sup>TH</sup> YEAR    JUNE 16, 2019    PAMPHLET # 24 (3446)

## “EACH ONE HEARD THEM SPEAKING IN HIS OWN LANGUAGE”

A very busy person visited a holy hermit. He wanted to calm down a bit from his anxiety and he sought his counsels. “Bless”, he said, greeting him. “You know, I went a long way to come here”. “Sit down”, the elder interrupted him, “and allow me to put you a little tea”. “I have studied abroad...”, the visitor began introducing himself. “Let’s drink a little tea first”, the elder insisted. “Now, I direct a big business”, the foreigner continued talking about himself. “I believe that you will like the tea”, the hermit said, continuing to fill his visitor’s cup. “But you made it overflow, father” the foreigner observed, bothered. “And you resemble this overflowing cup”, the wise elder then answered. If you don’t empty yourself a little of your ego, how will you allow something from the few things I know, to drip into you?”

### How we become containing vessels of the Spirit

The disciples of Christ were gathered in the upper room, having emptied themselves of every type of self-sufficiencies, self references and excessive self admirations. And they were awaiting, not simply for some wise counsel to “drip” inside them, but

## ACTS OF THE APOSTLES 2:1 - 11

WHEN THE DAY of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

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to be filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Christ had told them to stay in Jerusalem and to await the "promise" of His Father, in other words, to be garbed with "power from on high". Naturally, it was not just a few days after His Resurrection and Ascension that prepared them, in order to receive and to "contain" the Comforter. Their formulation into vessels that could contain the Holy Spirit passed through many stages: for three years they had disciples near the chief Teacher, but also the model of kenotic humility. Their faith was "shaken" living the amazing events of His Passion. And the "despair of darkness almost devoured them" and for them to live the "dread of emptiness", finding the tomb also empty, which contained their hope. However, they obtained their faith in Him, touching Him, and eating together with Him after His Resurrection. And they finally learned to

not boast and to not be supported in anything else "except in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ" and "in His Resurrection".

Thus they became the most receptive vessels, ready to overflow with "the power of God from on high" which was not an impersonal energy, but the "fullness" of the gift of the Holy Spirit, of the third person of the Holy Trinity. And that which strengthened their receptivity was that "they were all together in one place". They had harmony and oneness of mind. If the first fruit of the Holy Spirit, according to the Apostle Paul, is love, then it is natural that this is not able to inhabit people who are not eager to have "one heart and soul".

### **The preparation with the Law**

However, whichever Jews had not managed to come to know Christ, did not have any justification, that they ended up unprepared on the day of Pentecost. The double meaning of the Jewish feast ought to have prepared them. On the one hand, it was called the "feast of the harvest". They celebrated the harvest of the fruits. And just as the sensorial sickle was threshing the stalks, thus also the Holy Spirit "sharpened was above", according to the sacred Chrysostom, ready to thresh with the word, the souls of people, who would believe in the apostolic preaching, and to offer them as ripe fruits to the Lord of the field of the Church.

On the other hand, on the day of Pentecost, the remembrance of the handing down of the Law by God to Moses on Mount Sinai was celebrated. So on this day, God pours out on his disciples, the Holy Spirit. God the Word Himself, who gave the Law to Moses, now sends the Comforter to His disciples. Then He gave the "typos and shadow of the letter", now He sends the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

The first sign of this Theophany was a "sound like the thunder of a strong wind, which is moving with a drive and violence". This sign of divine power assures, according to the interpreters, that nothing henceforth will be able to resist the power of the apostolic preaching. The second sign was, the tongues divided to each one as flames of fire. Fire has, on the one hand, illuminating energy, on the other hand, burning energy. It illumines those who want to believe and to obey God, and it burns up everything egotistical which "boasts" and opposes the saving divine will.