



73rd Year

June 8, 2025

Pamphlet #23 (3758)

THE SUNDAY EPISTLE (Acts 2:1-11)

The gifts of the Holy Spirit

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, Pontos 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."

THE LIFE-GIVING POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Today, we honor the birthday of the Church, on which the All-Holy Spirit, in the form of fiery tongues (Acts 2:3), as preserved in today's Epistle reading, descended upon the Holy

Apostles, making them Spirit-bearers and establishing the body of the Church, which it gathers and enlivens since then.

The presence of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is invisible to the physical eye, yet at the same time, it is an evident force of life that enlivens the world, humanity, and the Church. Just as Christ, who is the Head and Savior of the Church's body, is always present, enlivening and building it up, so too does the Holy Spirit always dwell within it, cultivating it through its holy spiritual grace and granting it life. "The divine grace of the Spirit cultivates this Church," writes the sacred Chrysostom. Thus, from the day of Pentecost, when it descended upon the body of the Church, the Holy Spirit became and remains the soul of this Theanthropic body.

"Come and dwell within us"

All of us who constitute the body of the Church are called to live within the Holy Spirit so that it may also dwell within us. Certainly, this sacred purpose cannot be achieved in a magical manner, nor is it simply granted by God. It requires a lifelong spiritual struggle. We can receive the grace of the Holy Spirit and become Spirit-bearers when we possess right faith – true and saving faith. For there also exists faith that does not save – the faith of the demons.

We receive the grace of the Holy Spirit when we participate in the sacred Mysteries of the Church, especially in sacred Confession and the divine Eucharist; when we pray and worship God with a spirit of humility and a contrite heart; when we constantly struggle against sin and impassioned thoughts; when we labor to fulfill God's commandments, keep His will, and strive for the fruit of the Holy Spirit to bear within us, which, according to the Apostle Paul, is "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Gal. 5:22-23); when we have our life's journey oriented toward heaven, renouncing the destructive attachment to the perishable and

temporary things of this life. People who live their lives in this way are spiritually alive, for they are constantly animated by the life-giving grace of the Holy Spirit.

The unenlightened

What, however, happens with those who choose to live outside the presence of the Holy Spirit, displaying denial and unbelief toward God? As has been pointed out, without the Holy Spirit, the person is of human likeness – with highly developed, often exceptional talents in academia, art, philosophy – however, not, in humaneness, in that which truly makes a person a genuine human being, formed in the image of Christ.

According to the teaching of Scripture and the Fathers, the Holy Spirit dwelling within a person signifies a relationship and reference, a substantive orientation, and a total dependence on God. Moreover, the Holy Spirit within a person signifies an illuminating and sanctifying power that guides and propels the individual toward his true destiny – in Christ. When a person lacks the Holy Spirit within him, his existence aligns with forces opposing God and harbors in him the spirit of the evil one.

At the very same time, the absence of the Holy Spirit leads to the deadening of the soul. Saint Isidore of Pelusium categorically observes: “Death in Adam occurred not as the separation of the soul from the body, but as the withdrawal, the departure, of the Holy Spirit from the immortal soul.”

After all the above, it is clear that the absence of the All-Holy Spirit constitutes a spiritual death that leads to the loss of the soul, whereas His presence in our life comprises true life, a foreshadowing and foretaste of eternal life, which we can attain “in the Holy Spirit.” May it happen!

Archimandrite E. Oik.

June 8, 2025: 8th Sunday of Pascha: The Feast of Pentecost

Exhumation of the holy relics of the Great Martyr Theodore the Commander († 319); Martyr Kalliope.

Epistle: Acts 2:1-11 – Gospel: John 7:37-52, 8:12

NEXT SUNDAY: June 15, All Saints

Epistle: Hebrews 11:33-12:2 – Gospel: Matthew 10:32-33; 19:27-30

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