

Epiphany of Our Lord Byzantine Catholic Church

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June 4, 2017 + Pentecost: The Descent of the Holy Spirit

Divine Liturgy	Saturday, 5:30 PM · Sunday, 10:00 AM · Holy Days, 7:30 PM
Confessions	Saturday, 4:30-5:00 PM · Sunday, 9:00-9:30 AM
Collection	Last week: \$1,826.00 . God bless you for your continued generosity.
Sunday Readings	Apostolic Letter: Acts 2:1-11 + Gospel: John 7:37-52; 8:12
Sacramental Needs	Please call Fr. Deacon James 770-993-0973 or 404-227-5401



The Light of the East ...

"Through the Holy Spirit comes our restoration to paradise, our ascension into the kingdom of heaven, our return to the adoption of sons, our liberty to call God our Father, our being made partakers of the grace of Christ, our being called children of light, our sharing in eternal glory, and, in a word, our being brought into a state of all "fullness of blessing," both in this world and in the world to come, of all the good gifts that are in store for us, by promise hereof, through faith, beholding the reflection of their grace as though they were already present, we await the full enjoyment."

St. Basil the Great, "On the Holy Spirit"

Eternal Memory. On Sunday, June 4, a *Panachida* will be served after Liturgy for the blessed repose of +Curt Wilson, the young cousin of Joshua and Elizabeth Hood, who died tragically in a recent automobile accident. Please keep Curt's family in your prayers during this time of their loss.

Altar Lamp. During the month of June, the Divine Presence Altar Lamp burns continuously before Our Lord in memory of +Ernest and +Irene Russo, the parents of Nick Russo. If you wish to have the Altar Lamp burn for your intentions, please see Father Deacon Michael.

The Great Feast of Pentecost



In the Church's annual liturgical cycle, Pentecost is "the last and great day." It is the celebration by the Church of the coming of the Holy Spirit as the end—the achievement and fulfillment—of the entire history of salvation. For the same reason, it is also the celebration of the beginning: it is the "birthday" of the Church as the presence among us of the Holy Spirit, of the new life in Christ, of grace, knowledge, adoption to God and holiness.

This double meaning and double joy is revealed to us, first of all, in the very name of the feast. Pentecost in Greek means fifty, and in the sacred biblical symbolism of numbers, the number fifty symbolizes both the fullness of time and that which is beyond time: the Kingdom of God itself. It symbolizes the fullness of time by its first component: 49, which is the fullness of seven (7 x 7): the number of time. And, it symbolizes that which is beyond time by its second component: 49 + 1, this one being the new day, the "day without evening" of God's eternal Kingdom. With the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples, the time of salvation, the Divine work of redemption has been completed, the fullness revealed, all gifts bestowed: it belongs to us now to "appropriate" these gifts, to be that which we have become in Christ: participants and citizens of His Kingdom.

At Pentecost we decorate our churches with flowers and green branches—for the Church "never grows old, but is always young." It is an evergreen, ever-living Tree of grace and life, of joy and comfort. For the Holy Spirit—"the Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life—comes and abides in us, and cleanses us from all impurity," and fills our life with meaning, love, faith and hope.

+ Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann

The Icon of the Feast



At the top of the icon is a semicircle, with rays coming from it. The rays are pointing toward the Apostles, and the "tongues of fire" are upon each one of them signifying the descent of the Holy Spirit. At the center of the Apostles, there is a place which is unoccupied. It is reserved for Christ, the invisible head of the Church. The Apostles receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, the inner life of grace, the gift to the Church. The group of twelve represents not just the Apostles but the entire Church. It also includes Paul, who became an Apostle of the Church and the greatest missionary and the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, who are shown holding the not yet written books of the Gospel. The other Apostles are holding scrolls that represent the teaching authority given to them by Christ. In a semicircle at the bottom of the icon is a symbolic figure of a king. He is in a dark place enveloped by sin since he represents the whole world that had formerly been without the light of faith. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the Church brings light to the whole world by her teaching.

Together in the Holy Trinity ... One Faith, One Church, One Future!