

JUNE 20, 2021

ST. GEORGE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE DESERT

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THE LADDER

PENTECOST SUNDAY

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**– Fr. Theodore Pantels,
Proistamenos (Pastor)**

**– Deacon Euthym Kontaxis,
M.D.**

Holy Communion Order

1. Please remain standing while following the directions of our ushers.
2. Ladies, kindly remove lipstick before receiving.
3. When receiving Holy Communion, make the Sign of the Cross, state your name (baptismal name), and naturally receive as if being fed.
4. Non-Orthodox Christians may not receive Holy Communion, but they may receive the Holy Bread at the end of the service.
5. *All Orthodox Christians must be spiritually prepared to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion. Please see the priest if you have any questions.*

“FOR THE UNITY OF ALL”

Comparing the narrative in the Book of Genesis (chapter 11:1-9) with the narrative in today’s reading from the Book of Acts (chapter 2:1-12) we note a big difference in terms of the motives for seeking the unity of all people in the world.

Genesis 11:1-9 explains that everyone once spoke one language. They came together with the motive of reaching heaven by way of a high tower, the Tower of Babel, that they tried to build out of pride for themselves as a community in case they would be scattered (vs. 5). This tower would remind them of their unity.

However, the truth is that the unity of all

people in the world is not accomplished by building a tower, even if such a “tower” is today’s technology. Unity of the people in the world is not accomplished by human efforts alone. Instead, this is what we learn from today’s Epistle reading: our unity as persons is accomplished by our unity with Christ our God.

As the Tower of Babel was being built, the language of people was that of pride, devoid of love for God. Pride undermines efforts to have unity in the world and it deceives us into seeking false unity, filled with confusion and, ultimately, sins. The Lord caused them to speak in dif-

LIFE WITH THE GRACE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Before the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Apostles only gave themselves over to “prayer and supplication” (Acts 1: 14). However, after the Descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday, they persevered in “the breaking of the bread” - i.e., the celebration of the Holy Sacrament. Hence, Pentecost is the beginning of the Holy Priesthood of the whole Church, whereby the Apostles celebrated the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Holy Baptism and they imparted the ordained Priesthood to those who would be celebrants of the Sacraments. However, the Sacraments are not to be celebrated only by the celebrant; the whole Body of the Church celebrates (for, a single celebrant does not make for a celebration). This means that all baptized and chrismated people of the Church are members of the Royal Priesthood of the Church. The Holy Spirit, then, dwells in each parishioner, individually, and all the faithful, collectively, making it possible for all people to become Saints (The Holy People) of God, giving full meaning to the words of the celebrant during the Divine Liturgy: “The Holy Gifts for the Holy People of God.” +FR. THEODORE



Καθώς συγκρίνουμε την αφήγηση της Γενέσεως (κεφάλαιο 11: 1-9) με την αφήγηση της σημερινής ανανέωσης εκ των Πράξεων (κεφάλαιο 2: 1-12) παρατηρούμε μια μεγάλη διαφορά όσον αφορά τα κίνητρα της αναζητήσεως για την ανθρώπινη ενότητα όλων.

Η αφήγησης της Γεν. 11: 1-9 εξηγεί ότι όλοι κάποτε ομιλούσαν μία γλώσσα. Εσυγκεντρώθηκαν με το κίνητρο να φθάσουν στον παράδεισο μέσω ενός υψηλού πύργου, του Πύργου της Βαβέλ, που προσπάθησαν να κτίσουν από υπερηφάνεια για τον εαυτό τους ως κοινότητα σε περίπτωση που θα ήσαν διασκορπισμένοι (στιχ. 5). Αυτός ο πύργος θα τους θύμιζε την ενότητα τους.

Ωστόσο, η αλήθεια είναι ότι η ενότητα του κόσμου δεν επιτυγχάνεται με την οικοδόμηση ενός πύργου - και, ειδικά, δεν επιτυγχάνεται μόνο με ανθρώπινες προσπάθειες. Μάλιστα, μαθαίνουμε από τη σημερινή ανάγνωση εκ των Πράξεων ότι η ενότητα του κόσμου επιτυγχάνεται με την ενότητά μας με τον Χριστό.

Καθώς εκτίσθηκε ο Πύργος της Βαβέλ, η γλώσσα των ανθρώπων ήταν «η γλώσσα υπερηφάνειας,» χωρίς αγάπη για τον Θεό. Η υπερηφάνεια υποσκάπτει τις προσπάθειες για την ενότητα του κόσμου και μας εξαιτά να αναζητήσουμε μια ψεύτικη ενότητα γεμάτη με σύγχυση και, τελικά, με αμαρτίες. Η γλώσσα του Κυρίου είναι η «γλώσσα της Θεϊκής αγάπης,» η οποία είναι θεμέλιον της ενότητος.

Που εορτάζουμε την Πεντηκοστή σήμερα, ας μετανοήσουμε με αγάπη για τον Χριστό και για όλον τον κόσμο.

+Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ΘΕΟΔΩΡΟΣ

ferent languages, because they lacked the “language of God’s love” as the foundation for unity.

Now, with the Resurrection of Christ from the dead, the “language” of God’s Love, spoken by the Holy Spirit, can be understood. The problem that arose with the building of the Tower of Babel was solved. As Christ promised His Apostles, the Holy Spirit will bring Christ’s presence into the lives of all people at all times and in every place. This is the true unity that is accomplished in the Person of our Savior. It is unity not only in the “here and now,” but in the grand scope of eternity, as we are united with our ancestors who dwell with the Saints in heaven, as well as the faithful of future generations.

Thus, with the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles, people of all languages were baptized in the Name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. This Holy Baptism continues to be performed even today. Through Holy Baptism, people are united in Christ as members of His Church, through the Sacrament of the Holy Priesthood of the Apostles, whereby we all receive the presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit by way of Holy Chrismation, Holy Confession, Holy Communion, Holy Unction, Holy Matrimony. This is the Sacramental Life of the Orthodox Church!

As we celebrate the Feast of Pentecost today, let us beware of false unity that comes through human ideologies that are devoid of the saving ministry of our Savior Jesus Christ and His Apostolic Tradition. Such ideologies can even cause a persecution against His Church. With love for Christ, let us embrace repentance of sins in order to become living examples of His love for all people.

+FR. THEODORE

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Monday, June 21st.....FEAST DAY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
Orthros-8:30 a.m. /Divine Liturgy-9:30 a.m.

Tuesday, June 22nd.....Bible Study - 10:00 a.m.

AHEPA NEWS

George G. Horaites, the Supreme President of the **American Hellenic Educational Progressive Association** (Order of AHEPA) announced that most recently **AHEPA became a Founding Member** of the *Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Foundation: For the Sacred See of Saint Andrew*. The **Order of Saint Andrew the Apostle**, Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, initiated the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew Foundation for the purpose of achieving economic independence for the Ecumenical Patriarchate, so that it may fulfill its Apostolic mission well into the future. For details about AHEPA’s support for the Ecumenical Patriarchate, and to offer personal support, go to the website: www.ahepa.org.



"Shine within our hearts, loving Master, the pure light of Your divine knowledge and open the eyes of our minds that we may comprehend the message of Your Gospel. Instill in us, also, reverence for Your blessed commandments, so that having conquered sinful desires, we may pursue a spiritual life, thinking and doing all these things that are pleasing to You. For You are the Light of our souls and bodies and to You we give glory together with Your Father Who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen"

EPISTLE -- Acts 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."

GOSPEL - St. John 7:37-52; 8:12

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This is really the prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. The officers then went back to the chief priest and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this man!" The Pharisees answered them, "Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed." Nikodemos, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee." Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Help Our Young Adults Stay Connected to the Church

Thousands of our Orthodox youth have graduated from High School and have gone away to schools and places of employment across our country. While blessed with great educational and career opportunities, at the same time, many face difficult challenges in the environments of college campuses and their surrounding communities. The **Greek Orthodox Metropolis of San Francisco** wants to help maintain their connection to the Church! Complete the [Online Form](#) or visit www.gosfyouth.org. The Metropolis will make sure that an Orthodox Priest and Church community connects with your loved one.

Metropolis of San Francisco Summer Camp

Youth ages 8 - 18 can enjoy virtual Summer Camp with daily worship, cabin talks, arts and crafts, evening activities, and more! The program will be held **July 19 - 30, 2021, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 10:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.**, and **Monday and Wednesday evenings from 6:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.** Register online at www.gosfyouth.org.



THE GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
ARCHIEPISCOPAL ENCYCLICAL

Prot. No. 149/2021

Archiepiscopal Encyclical for Father's Day

Pentecost Sunday
June 20, 2021

Unto the Most Reverend and Right Reverend Hierarchs, Pious Priests and Deacons, the Monks and Nuns, Presidents and Members of Parish Councils, Honorable Archons of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, Members of Leadership 100, the Day and Afternoon Schools, Philoptochos Societies, the Youth, Greek Orthodox Organizations, and the entirety of the Christ-named Plenitude of the Holy Archdiocese of America.

My Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This Father's Day, which auspiciously falls on Holy Pentecost, I am writing to every member of our Sacred Archdiocese, on behalf of a very special group of "fathers" in the Church — our clergy. Their dedication and devotion to the ministry of their flocks is worthy of every token of gratitude, but also of the support they merit for their years of service.

Recognizing that the Clergy Pension Fund was severely underfunded for many years, we have been working diligently and tirelessly with all the affected constituencies to find a solution. At the beginning of this year, we implemented provisions to fund the shortfall over a 30-year period. However, we can reduce this time period to less than 30 years, through voluntary charitable giving by our faithful.

Therefore, beginning with this year's celebration of Father's Day, our Archdiocese will officially commence efforts across the Nation to raise funds in order to reach our goal, by welcoming contributions from every family in every parish toward this end. Some will give more; others not as much, but together everyone can make a difference.



With my heartfelt appreciation for all our clergy, and with abiding thankfulness for the sacrificial giving of the laity, I encourage all of you to do your best, and as a family in Christ, to honor the "fathers" in our midst, by making this Father's Day and every Father's Day an opportunity for generosity.

With Paternal Blessings in Christ,

† Ἐπιδοφῶρος

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America