

Pastoral Reflection: June 2023 – Selections from St John Chrysostom's *Homily for Pentecost*

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 fulfillment of prayer and the image of patience... 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 honor, 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 speaks [blasphemy] against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." As is well known, where He is absent, every sort of corruption sets in. David, however, 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... 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."...

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. ..Many are the gifts of the Holy Spirit; many and all-powerful are His gifts... He is one in essence, one in principle and one in counsel with the Father and the Son...

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... Let us strive to keep our souls and our bodies undefiled as we glorify the Most holy and coessential Trinity, the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

(abbreviated from <https://www.acrod.org/orthodox-christianity/articles/patristics/10868#:~:text=In%20the%20same%20way%2C%20the,Amen.>)