

My Beloved Ones,

This coming Sunday, we are blessed to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit comes to rest upon the Disciples, and consequently upon the entire Church. Our Lord Himself told His Disciples, *“I will not leave you desolate... the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”* (John 14:18; 26)

The Disciples, and the many women who followed Jesus throughout His Ministry were gathered together on Mount Zion in a state of constant prayer. The time was about nine in the morning during the Jewish feast of Pentecost (that is, 50 days after the end of Passover) when the pilgrims were going to the Temple to pray, or to make offerings. The Book of Acts tells us that *“Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting”* (Acts 2:2)

If all those present were surprised before, they were soon greeted by something more mysterious: tongues descended from Heaven, onto the Disciples. Of course, the Book of Acts tells us that these were not in fact tongues of fire, but only had the appearance of fire—for they shone brightly, but did not burn. According to Sergei Bulgakov, *“Directly behind these, or even together with these external appearances, the event followed the internal, completing in the souls of the believers: ‘all were filled with the Holy Spirit.’”*

As a result of this divine gift, the Disciples went out, and began to speak of God’s Word to the pilgrims, all in different tongues. As poor laborers, they had not studied these languages, but this miraculous ability was necessary to help the Disciples fulfill Christ’s Commission to preach to all the nations, all over the world. The Disciples carefully explained that Christ, the Redeemer of our sins, is the Son of God, of whom the Prophets had spoken, and that through Christ’s life, death, Resurrection, and His Ascension to sit at the right hand of the Father, man has been reconciled with God. They inform the people that God has sent His Holy Spirit to give them the knowledge to preach in this way, thanking and praising God.

So astonished were many of these foreigners to hear their own languages being spoken, that they listened carefully, and came away believing in Jesus Christ, The Teacher of now Apostles.

Our Pentecost (now so named because it comes 50 days after Pascha) is special for us, not only because it allows us to commemorate this historical event, but because we ourselves have been blessed to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. If we permit Him (that is, through proper living), the Holy Spirit will continue to dwell in each and every one of us. Let us pray that *we* be made worthy of the Wisdom, power, and strength from Above to have God’s Spirit abide in us, forever.

+ALEXIOS
Metropolitan of Atlanta

