

MONDAY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AT THE RUSSIAN SPIRITUAL MISSION (MISSIA) IN JERUSALEM

On Monday of the Holy Spirit, May 15/28, 2018, according to the Pentecostarion, the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated, namely the coming down of the Holy Spirit, at the Holy Church of the Holy Trinity of the Moscow Patriarchate in West Jerusalem.

This event was celebrated by the Divine Liturgy which was officiated by H.H.B. our Father and Patriarch of Jerusalem Theophilos, with co-celebrant the Most Reverend Archbishops Aristarchos of Constantina, Theodosios of Sebastia and Aristovoulos of Madaba, the Head of the Russian Mission Archimandrite Alexander and the other Priests of the Mission, as well as Priests from our Patriarchate, Archimandrite Ieronymos, Archdeacon Mark and Deacon Anastasios, and other Deacons. The Choir of the Nuns sang, while the service was attended by a large Russian congregation.

His Beatitude delivered a Sermon to this congregation as follows;

“God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth” (John 4.24).

Your Grace Archimandrite Alexander, representative in Jerusalem of H.H.B. the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia Cyril, and Hegoumen of the Russian MISSIA here,

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Reverend Christians and pilgrims,

The grace of the Holy Spirit Who puts together all the

institution of the mystical body of Christ, in other words, our One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Orthodox Church, has gathered us all in order to celebrate in thanksgiving and doxology this life-giving and all-mighty Spirit, the One of the three Persons of the Trinitarian God, Who is of one honour, one substance and one glory with the Father and the Son.

The One of the Trinitarian God, of the same substance and glory with the Father and the Son is the Spirit of truth, the Comforter, for Whom Christ spoke about to His disciples: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14.26).

Today's feast is an extension of the great feast of Pentecost, as very clearly the hymn writer of the Church says: "Let us faithful celebrate this fair post-festal time with joy and the final festival: this is the day of Pentecost, which now fulfillleth the promise and time appointed. For on this day, the fire of the Good Comforter straightway came on earth, like unto tongues in form and it enlightened the disciples and made them Heaven's initiates. Behold, the Comforter's light hath come down and enlightened the whole world".

This light of the Comforter, which has enlightened the world is being evangelized by the Holy Church of the Orthodox faithful to all people who search for the light of truth, the Comforter Spirit, Who is shed to every person today.

The Holy Church of Jerusalem, having become a truthful witness of this paradox, this mystery, rejoices and is glad because it was in its holy bosom, in the Upper Room of the city of Jerusalem, where all the Apostles were gathered together, that tongues like fire were given to each of them and everybody was

filled with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2.3-4).

And the Holy Spirit, making a start from the chorea of the Holy Apostles: "from them He extended grace to the believers by participation. And he confirmeth His mighty descent by the distribution of tongues in the likeness of fire to the disciples, unto the praise and glory of God".

The extension or shedding of the grace of the Holy Spirit to the faithful, to the Holy Apostles, is the guarantee of the unshakable unity of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church of the Orthodox faithful.

And this means that the living and existing mystical body of Christ in the world, namely the Church, moves and works under the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ. This is what St. Paul says to his epistle to the Ephesians: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1.13-14).

This consignment of Paul is addressed to all of us, and especially to the brotherly Orthodox Churches, reminding us that the uprising canonical matters should be solved according to the Holy Spirit, and in conjunction with the decisions of the Ecumenical Synods, and of the Holy and Great Synod in Crete which was in session on the Holy day of Pentecost two years ago.

Today my dear brothers and sisters we celebrate not only the coming of the Comforter, the Holy Spirit in the world, Who has been granted unto us by the intercession of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, but also the unity of the brotherly Orthodox Churches, as the hymn writer of the Church says: "Of old the tongues were confounded because of the audacity in the building of the tower, but now the tongues are made wise for

the sake of the glory of Divine knowledge. At that time the confusion of tongues was wrought for punishment, but now the concord of tongues hath been inaugurated for the salvation of our souls”.

By the coming down of the Holy Spirit, through the intercessions of the Most-blessed our Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary, and those of the Holy and glorious Apostles, Christ our God, enlighten our souls, have mercy on us and grant the world and our tested region peace. Amen.

At the end of the Sermon, He offered an icon of the renovated Edicule of the Holy Sepulchre to the Head of the Russian Mission Fr. Alexander, who offered His Beatitude an icon of Christ in return.

After the Divine Liturgy there was a reception and a monastic meal. There, His Beatitude addressed all present, saying among other things that today’s feast is the Feast of the Church and especially of Jerusalem. Through the coming down of the Holy Spirit, Christ’s mission on earth was sealed, the Church was founded and it continues His redeeming mission. For this reason all Church rejoices today, and of course the Church of Jerusalem. Even if it has been tested through persecutions and migrations, in Asia Minor, Serbia, and the Middle East, it has transplanted new parishes and it has been renewed. Despite the hardships, the Church remains steadfast, fighting for the unity against the schisms. The Holy Spirit puts together the whole constitution of the Church. The Holy Spirit led to the Great Synod of Crete in 2016.

Replying, Archimandrite Alexander thanked His Beatitude for His good support which Missia and its Orthodox pilgrims enjoy.

From Secretariat-General

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