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His Eminence Metropolitan Evangelos of New Jersey issues Pentecost Encyclical



Pentecost 2020

The Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy
Esteemed Members of the Metropolitan Council, Esteemed Members of the Parish Councils, Philoptochos Sisterhood, Faculty and Students of the Catechetical and Greek Afternoon Schools, Directors and Participants of all Youth Organizations, and all devout Orthodox Christians of the Communities of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of New Jersey

“When the Most High God came down and confused the tongues, He
divided the nations. When He distributed the tongues of fire, He called
all to unity. And with one voice we glorify the all-Holy Spirit.”

My Beloved in the Lord,

Having recently celebrated the conclusion of the Paschal feast as well as the feast of the Ascension in which our Lord promises to send us a Comforter, we find ourselves at the great feast of Pentecost. Fifty days after our Lord’s Resurrection, God manifests His love for us and for all people by sending down upon us the gift of the Holy Spirit. Today, we bear witness to the revelation of the Church in time and it is with the gift of the Holy Spirit that we are enabled to continue Christ’s earthly ministry as the One and undivided Body of Christ. We are given the commandment to ***“Go forth, therefore, and to make*** **disciples of all nations”** (Matt. 28:19) as an indication that the gift of salvation, which has already been extended to us, is to be shared with all people regardless of their race, age, background, nationality, or socio-economic status.

The command to *“Go forth”* is all the more precious to us this year as we continue to contend with the devastation of the Coronavirus Pandemic. By the Grace of God, some of our Ecclesiastical Communities have been able to open their doors to their parishioners. Like the Apostles 2,000 years ago who were ***“together in one place”*** (Acts 2:1), some devout faithful now have the opportunity to gather in one place as they prepare for the Holy Spirit to descend upon them.

Still, many other Communities have not yet been able to gather together within their Parish Communities. Yet, even in these circumstances, we are not separated from the Holy Spirit since the Holy Spirit is **“everywhere present and fills all things.”** Neitherare we separated from one another since through our common prayer we are spiritually united. Through our common goal as Orthodox Christians to fulfill the calling of our Lord when He commanded us to go forth and make disciples of all nations, we bridge the chasm of division and the Holy Spirit forges within our hearts, mind, and souls the spirit of unity. It is this spiritual unity created by the Holy Spirit amongst the members of the Body of Christ that has enabled the

devout faithful to continue our Lord’s ministry throughout the centuries. For it was the Holy Spirit that enabled the disciples to go forth and begin their apostolic mission. It is the Holy Spirit that guided the Fathers of the Church in ensuring the orthodoxy of our doctrine. It is the Holy Spirit that directed the saints over the centuries to pour down upon us their knowledge through their actions, their writings, and their lives so that we may partake of their wisdom. It is the Holy Spirit which accompanies each of us in our baptism as we shed the old self and we put on Christ. It is the Holy Spirit that at every Divine Liturgy consecrates our offering of bread and wine so that it may become the Body and Blood of Christ.

It is with these thoughts, my beloved in the Lord, that I implore you to go forth to all the nations by living a Christ-like life and being a witness to our Orthodox faith. Thus, we will be able to make disciples of all nations and the Holy Spirit will allow us to transcend the bounds of divided nations, transforming us into a united community of devout faithful in Christ. Praying that the Holy Spirit guides you to the ineffable glory of our Lord, I remain

With Paternal Love and Blessings,

† E V A N G E L O S

Metropolitan of New Jersey

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