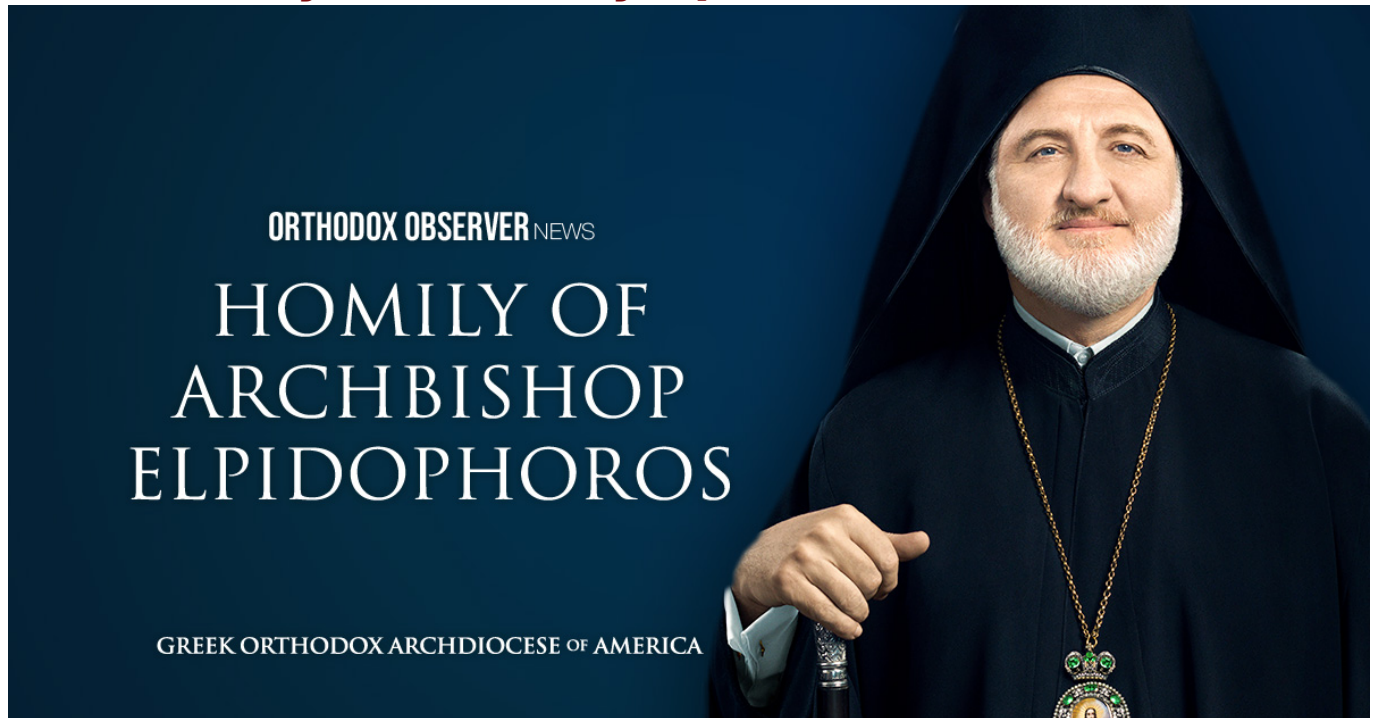


09/06/2020

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros Homily on the Monday of the Holy Spirit



Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Cathedral

New York, New York

Beloved Faithful,

Today, on this Monday following the Holy Pentecost, the Church celebrates in a special way the Third Person of the Holy Trinity.

For it is the Holy Spirit Whom we invoke upon the Holy Gifts of Bread and Wine, for them to become the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is the Holy Spirit Whom we invoke upon the waters of Baptism and the Ἁγιασμούς, to sanctify the most essential element of biological life and make of it the sustenance and foundation of our spiritual life.

It is the Holy Spirit Whose mercy we invoke upon the oil - ἔλεος ἐπί ἔλαιον, in order

to receive healing and forgiveness.

But Who is this Holy Spirit that we sing of today, and how do we know Him?

In the Hebrew language, we speak of the “spirit” or “ruach” as feminine, or a “She.” In Greek, πνεῦμα is neuter, or “It.” But in English, we use “He” because we know that the Holy Spirit is a Divine Person – of the Three Who are One and the One Who is Three. This is the Mystery of the Holy Trinity and the reason that the Monday of the Holy Spirit is the Name-Day of our Cathedral and every Church named for the Holy Trinity.

As a Person, we can come to know the Holy Spirit, just as we know the Father and the Son. But how?

Do you remember when Philip said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father and we will be satisfied.”[*]

Jesus replied to him:

“So much time am I with you, Philip and still you do not recognize Me? Those who have seen Me have seen the Father, so how can you say, ‘show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak of myself. It is the Father Who dwells in Me; the Father accomplishes the works. Believe Me, I am in the Father and the Father is in Me.”[†]

Therefore, we see that we know the Father – we learn about God, from the words and deeds of our Lord Jesus Christ. He reveals Who God truly is for all of us. There’s an old saying that the Old Testament is God’s truth about us, and the New Testament is God’s truth about Himself.

So who reveals our Lord Jesus Christ? None other than the Holy Spirit! Again, the Lord says:

“The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit Whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance everything I have told you.”[‡]

This is why we believe that the Gospels in particular and that Holy Scripture in general is inspired, because it is inspired by the Holy Spirit. The memory of the Church is informed by the Holy Spirit, as we chant in the Great Vespers of Pentecost:

The Holy Spirit provides all things; He gushes forth prophecy; He perfects the priesthood; He taught wisdom to the illiterate. He has shown forth the fishermen as

theologians. He holds together the whole institution of the Church. Wherefore, O Comforter, one in essence and throne with the Father and the Son, glory to You.[§]

But the question then remains; who reveals the Holy Spirit?

On the one hand you could say that the Holy Spirit is revealed in the Mysteries of the Church, and in all our acts of worship. And this is indeed true. Our Orthodox liturgical worship is energized by the Holy Spirit, such that we experience the grace of God through the Sacraments and other liturgical acts. But is this the only revelation of the Spirit?

I should hope not! We see the Holy Spirit - and not just the indication of His presence, but the results, the very harvest of His presence in one another:

“Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.”[**]

These are the fruits of the Holy Spirit that manifest in our lives through our living a godly life. And like the many natural fruits that grow in orchards across the land, they are meant to be shared with one another as they ripen to perfection. They are meant to nourish the Body of Christ and the whole world. And this indeed a form of communion, because through the sharing of these fruits, we nourish one another in our hearts and souls.

Thus, we must conclude that the Holy Spirit is also revealed in us - in our actions, our words, our dispositions, and our intentions. Would that we would always be conscious of this great gift and responsibility to be living icons, living reflections of God. Then is our song true to our nature, and we rightly praise Him:

Wherefore, O Comforter, one in essence and throne with the Father and the Son, glory to You!

Amen.

[*] John 14:8.

[†] John 14:9-11.

[‡] John 14:26.

[§] Sticheron of the Great Vespers of Pentecost: Πάντα χορηγεῖ τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, βρῦει προφητείας, ἱερέας τελειοῖ, ἀγραμμάτους σοφίαν ἐδίδαξεν, ἀλιεῖς θεολόγους ἀνέδειξεν, ὅλον συγκροτεῖ τὸν θεσμόν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ὁμοούσιε καὶ

Ὁμόθρονε, τῷ Πατρὶ καὶ τῷ Υἱῷ, Παράκλητε, δόξα σοι.

[**] Galatians 5:22,23.

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