22/06/2021

Patriarch Daniel on Pentecost: The Church is not founded by human agreement. It is the extension of Christ’s life



The Church is not founded by a human agreement, but it is the extension of the life of Christ in humanity, in those who believe in Him, are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and fulfil the will of God in their lives by co-working with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Patriarch Daniel said during his homily on Pentecost Day at St. George’s Chapel of the Patriarchal Residence.

In his speech, the Patriarch of Romania explained why the Feast of Pentecost is of notable importance in the Orthodox Church.

“The Feast of Pentecost or the Descent of the Holy Spirit, also called Rosalia, is the feast of the founding or establishment of the Church of Christ as a human community that gathers different peoples, through the work of the Holy Spirit, through the love of the Most Holy Trinity, and which is extended through Baptism and grows in number.”

“This descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire has a special significance, and this means the sanctification of the disciples to go on a mission, to proclaim the Gospel of Christ to all nations. Therefore, when they spoke, those who spoke other languages heard them speaking in their own tongue.”

“This miracle was performed to show that all nations are blessed, all ethnic groups under the sun are blessed by God and called to repentance and baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity.”

“Therefore, after the speech of the Holy Apostle Peter, as reported in the book of Acts, approximately 3000 souls were baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit and thus the Church of Christ was constituted, which mystically begins with the Incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ through the work of the Holy Spirit as we confess in the Creed,” His Beatitude Patriarch Daniel said.

The Mystery of the Church

He also pointed out that at Pentecost, the divine-human community is established or constituted in a visible form.

“As St. John Chrysostom tells us, the Holy Spirit descended only after the Ascension of the Saviour Jesus Christ, when God the Son reconciled us with God the Father by placing on the throne of the Holy Trinity the human nature cleansed and sanctified by obedience unto death, even to the death of the cross.”

The descent of the Holy Spirit is the work by which the divine-human life of the crucified, risen, and glorified Christ is shared with humans, His Beatitudes noted.

“The Holy Spirit shares Christ with humans; the life of Christ is shared, communicated, extended in humanity. This is the great mystery of Christ in His Church.”

“Until His ascension into heaven, Christ the Lord was humans. After the Descent of the Holy Spirit, He becomes interior to humans. That is why the Holy Apostle Paul says: I no longer live, but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20). This indwelling of Christ and the Most Holy Trinity in humans through the work of the Holy Spirit is

the mystery of the Church."

Burning fire as love

The Patriarch also stressed that "the Holy Spirit has no countenance."

"He is mysteriously present in the human soul, and mysteriously together with the human will, He shapes the life of the Christian so that it may be like the image of Christ. So, the longing or desire of the Holy Spirit is to make every Christian a spiritual icon of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of freedom and the Spirit of communion."

The Patriarch referred to the words of St. Gregory the Theologian, who said that the Holy Spirit shows Himself in the form of tongues of fire to show that He is a consuming fire that cleanses people from sins. He is a consuming fire as love, but also as holiness, and He cleanses humans from selfish passions, sins. He renews them through the bath of baptism.

The Holy Spirit, illumining and warming fire

The Holy Spirit is also an illumining and warming fire. "Fire is cleansing when it burns slag from metals and makes them clean, malleable, incandescent so that they can take a new form, a form of renewal, of improvement."

"But He is also illumining. He illuminates the minds of the disciples and Christians to understand the Scriptures, to serve the Church, to help their fellows in trials."

"The Holy Spirit who descended upon the disciples of the Lord in the form of tongues of fire shows us that He is also a warming fire. He warms the hearts for people to pray with fervent prayer, to seek with merciful love those in need, but also with much love and joy of praise to God."

It is the Holy Spirit who gives life to all creation, as Psalms tell us.

"When God sends His Spirit, the face of the earth is renewed. He gives life to the kingdom Plantae and the kingdom Animalia. In particular, He gives life to all people, but especially to those who believe in Christ. He gives the forgiveness of sins and the gift of spiritual adoption for the resurrection of the soul from the death of sin and the resurrection of the body from corruption at the end of the ages. Therefore, He is the treasurer of good things and the giver of life."

Brief history

The Patriarch specified that the name Pentecost comes from the fact that the number 50 consists of 7 x 7, i.e. 49, to which is added another day, the 8th day,

from the age to come or the first day of eternity.

“The number 7 in the Old Testament meant a symbol of perfection, as it is possible in this world. Therefore, the week was seven days, and the 7th was the rest day, Saturday, the Sabbath. And the Week of Weeks was 7 x 7 weeks to which was added a day as a fulfilment.”

“Pentecost shows us that the number 7 had symbolic value. 7 x 7 years means 49 to which is added another figure and 50 was the jubilee year, which symbolized a work of God’s grace in the lives of people, especially the Jewish people.”

“When the Jews were gathered to Jerusalem on this feast of Pentecost, they remembered the law given by Moses on Mount Sinai, but they also experienced the joy of the Jews in the Holy Land with the Jews in the diaspora, with those who were scattered among the Gentiles,” the Patriarch of the Romanian Orthodox Church explained June 20, 2021.

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