



ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA
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**ARCHPASTORAL LETTER
FOR THE FEAST OF HOLY PENTECOST 2026**

Protocol Number 01-003/2026
Pentecost Sunday, May 31, 2026

**Beloved Members of our Diocesan Family:
*Christ is in our midst! – He is and ever shall be!***

“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever, the Spirit of Truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you.”

(John 14:15-17)

On the glorious Feast of Pentecost, we commemorate the fulfillment of our Lord's promise to send the Advocate, the Spirit of Truth. As recorded in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 2:1-4), while the disciples were gathered together in the Upper Room, a sudden sound like a mighty rushing wind filled the house, and divided tongues of fire came to rest upon each of them. Immediately, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, boldly proclaiming the Gospel to the diverse multitudes gathered in Jerusalem.

The Spirit's presence transformed the fearful apostles into bold witnesses, willing to live their lives and give their lives for their Master, Jesus Christ. This sacred event marks the Birth of the Orthodox Christian Church and the complete revelation of the Holy Trinity.

But what does this monumental scriptural event mean for us today, centuries later? The Holy Spirit is not merely an abstract historical force; He is the personal, active, and life-creating presence of God Himself in our everyday existence. The Holy Fathers remind us that the grace given to the first disciples in the Upper Room is the very same grace poured out upon us in the Holy Mysteries – the Sacraments – of the Church.

Just as the Apostles received the “breath” of the Spirit, Saint Symeon the New Theologian teaches that the Holy Spirit becomes active within us as we partake in the sacramental life of the Church. The Spirit connects our hearts to God, making us conscious of our adoption as sons and daughters of the Father. He is the divine breath by Whom we draw the life of heaven into our souls.

The Holy Spirit was manifested at Pentecost as *fire*. Saint Seraphim of Sarov famously taught that the true aim of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit. In everyday life, this divine Spirit acts as a refining fire. When we invite Him into our struggles, He burns away our passions, our anxieties, and

our selfishness. He replaces our fear with courage, and He transforms our worldly sorrow into the quiet, unshakable joy of Christ.

Given to each of us personally at our Chrismation, our personal Pentecost, the fire of the Holy Spirit remains in each of us like the pilot light in our stove. It is always lit, but we must fan the flame! Before we do anything – not only in our spiritual lives but in our everyday duties and choices – we must call upon the Holy Spirit, in the prayer to Him that opens most of our daily prayers and Divine Services – “*O Heavenly King*” – and invite Him to “*come and abide in us, cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.*”

Saint Paul tells us that “*the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*” (Galatians 5:22-23). The Holy Spirit becomes active in our daily life in the most ordinary of moments: when we choose patience over anger in our home, when we offer forgiveness to those who have wronged us, and when we extend love to the stranger or the suffering neighbor, whom we encounter in seemingly random, but truly God-sent, events. Through the Holy Spirit, our daily labor and our personal relationships become opportunities for sanctification.

As we celebrate this joyous feast, let us open our hearts to the Advocate. Let us allow the Holy Spirit to guide our minds, warm our hearts, and empower us to be living witnesses of the Gospel in our families, our workplaces, and our communities.

Upon you all, I invoke “*the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit*” (II Corinthians 13:14).

With my humble prayers, my archpastoral blessing, and my sincere love,

+ Archbishop Michael

Archbishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey