



Sunday, June 12, 2011

**PENTECOST SUNDAY:
THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**

FIRST ANTIPHON:

The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims His handiwork.

REFRAIN: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth and their words to the ends of the universe.

REFRAIN

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

REFRAIN

SECOND ANTIPHON:

The Lord answer you in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob protect you.

REFRAIN: O Gracious Comforter, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

May He send you help from the sanctuary, and give you support from Zion!

REFRAIN

May He remember all your offerings, and fulfill all your plans.

REFRAIN

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. Only-begotten Son and Immortal Word of God...

THIRD ANTIPHON:

In Your strength the King rejoices, O Lord, and exults greatly in Your salvation.

PENTECOST TROPARION - TONE EIGHT:

Blessed are You, O Christ our God, who has revealed the fishermen as most wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit; through them You did draw the world into Your net. O Lover of Mankind, Glory to You!

You have given him his heart's desire, and have not withheld the request from his lips.

PENTECOST TROPARION

For You meet him with goodly blessing; You set a crown of fine gold upon his head.

PENTECOST TROPARION

INTROIT OF THE LITTLE ENTRANCE:

Be exalted, O Lord, in Your strength! We will sing and praise Your power!

PENTECOST TROPARION

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

PENTECOST KONTAKION - TONE EIGHT:

When the Most High came down and confused the tongues, He divided the nations; but when He distributed the tongues of fire, He called all to unity. Therefore, with one voice, we glorify the All-holy Spirit!

INSTEAD OF "HOLY GOD...":

As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. Alleluia!

INSTEAD OF "IT IS TRULY MEET...":

Rejoice, O Queen! Glory of mothers and virgins! No mouth, however sweet or fluent, is eloquent enough to praise you worthily! Every mind is overawed by your childbearing. Therefore with one voice we glorify you!



EPISTLE & COMMENTARY

THE PROKIMENON IN THE 8TH TONE:

Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth; and their words to the ends of the universe.

ACTS 2: 1-11

In those days, when the day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs -- we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God."

THE ALLELUIA VERSES:

By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made; and all their host by the Spirit of His mouth. The Lord looked down from heaven, and saw all the sons of men.

COMMENTARY ON ACTS 2: 1-11

Our Lord Jesus Christ promised that He would send the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth; today that promise is fulfilled. Also fulfilled is the prophecy of Saint John the Baptist: "...He [the Christ] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3: 16). The gift of the Holy Spirit allows the Apostles to be simultaneously understood by people of many different languages, in contrast to the events at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11: 1-9). Instead of the peoples' pride causing division, the humility of the Apostles unites in love, even in diversity.



GOSPEL & COMMENTARY

JOHN 7: 37-52; 8: 12

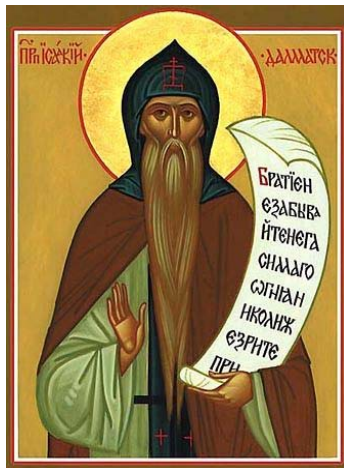
At that time, on the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, "Truly this is the Prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Will the Christ come out of Galilee? Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" So there was a division among the people because of Him. Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him. Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why have you not brought Him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this Man!" Then the Pharisees answered them, "Are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers or the Pharisees believed in Him? But this crowd that does not know the law is accursed." Nicodemus (he who came to Jesus by night, being one of them) said to them, "Does our law judge a man before it hears him and knows what he is doing?" They answered and said to him, "Are you also from Galilee? Search and look, for no prophet has arisen out of Galilee." Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life."

COMMENTARY ON JOHN 7: 37-52; 8: 12

God gives His love to us freely. We freely receive it and are called to freely give it as well. This is also true of the gift of the Holy Spirit. We are called to share in love the gifts and talents we have received from God. The outpouring of love through the gifts of the Holy Spirit is one of the ways in which Jesus Christ redeems all of creation.

SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From The Prologue for May 30/June 12 by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:



The Venerable Isaac the Confessor

During the reign of Emperor Valens, the Arians, with the emperor's assistance, vehemently persecuted the Orthodox. Hearing of this persecution, Isaac, a hermit somewhere in the east, left the wilderness and came to Constantinople to encourage the faithful and denounce the heretics. At the same time, the Emperor Valens departed to the north with his army against the Goths, who had come down from the Danube toward Thrace. Isaac came before the emperor and said to him: "O Emperor, open the churches of the Orthodox, and God will bless your path." The emperor ignored the elder and proceeded on his way. The following day, Isaac ran out again before the emperor, and again he repeated his warning. The emperor almost heeded the elder, but a certain advisor of his, a follower of the Arian heresy, prevented him. Isaac ran out before the emperor on the third day, grabbed the emperor's horse by the reins, begged the emperor to grant freedom to the Church of God, and threatened him with divine retribution if he acted contrary to his petition. The enraged emperor ordered that the elder be thrown into a chasm of mud and thorns. However, three angels appeared and pulled the elder out of the chasm. On the fourth day Isaac came before the emperor and prophesied a terrible death for him if he did not grant freedom to the Orthodox: "I am speaking to you, O Emperor. You will lead the army against the barbarians, but you will not be able to endure their attack. You will flee from them, but you will be captured and burned alive." Thus it happened. The barbarians cut down the Greek army like grass, but the emperor, with his Arian advisor, fled and hid in a basket. The barbarians arrived at that place and, learning where the emperor was, surrounded the basket and set it afire. Both the emperor and his advisor were burned alive. Following this, Theodosius the Great was crowned emperor. Theodosius, who heard about the prophecy of Isaac and its fulfillment, summoned Isaac and prostrated himself before him. Since peace reigned in the Church and the Arians were exiled, Isaac wanted to return to his wilderness, but he was persuaded to remain in Constantinople. An aristocrat, Saturninus by name, built a monastery for the Elder Isaac, where he lived a life of asceticism until his death, working many miracles. The monastery overflowed with monks and became a great monastery. Before his death, Isaac appointed his disciple Dalmatus as abbot, after whom this monastery was later named. The God-pleasing Elder Isaac entered into eternity in the year 383, to rejoice in the vision of the face of God.



Saint Macrina

Macrina was the grandmother of St. Basil the Great. She was exceptional for her intelligence and piety. She was a disciple of St. Gregory the Wonderworker of Neocaesarea. During the reign of Diocletian, Macrina abandoned her home, and she and her husband Basil hid themselves in the forests and wilderness. Their property was confiscated but they did not grieve over it. Deprived of everything except their love for God, they settled in a primeval forest, where they spent seven years. By God's providence, goats descended from the mountains, providing them with food. They both reposed peacefully in the fourth century, following great suffering for the Christian Faith.

HYMN OF PRAISE: The Venerable Isaac the Confessor

Isaac, like the Prophet Elijah,
Shines with virtue like the sun.
He begs the emperor, he warns the evil emperor,
Because the emperor defies the great God:
“O my emperor, against Whom have you risen up?
Your kingdom will be left desolate,
Because you wage war against the Most-high God.
Under His feet, dust and ashes!
You set out with an army against the cruel barbarians;
In your own strength you hope, O Emperor!
Your strength is like that of a tiny ant;
He who is with God has true strength.
Your foot has started out in two wars:
Against men, and against God.
Everything will go easily with poor men,
But make peace with the invincible God.
Hold to Orthodoxy, reject heresy,
For otherwise the cruel fire will burn you.
The fire here, and the fire yonder:
Both worlds you will shamefully forfeit.”
The emperor does not heed the warnings of the saint.
He enters into battle; he does not remember God.
He enters into battle; from which he does not return.
Like a foul smell, Valens was and passes away.
But God frees His Church,
And Isaac is made worthy of Paradise.

REFLECTION

The word of God is food for the soul. The word of God is both power and light for the soul. He who reads the word of God gives food, power and light to his soul. He who can, should read the word of God in Holy Scripture, and he who cannot should listen to him who reads Holy Scripture. All the saints emphasized the benefit of reading Holy Scripture. St. Seraphim of Sarov says: “The soul should be provided with the word of God. For the word of God, as Gregory the Theologian says, is the bread of angels, which feeds the soul that is hungry for God. But, above all, one should read the New Testament

and the Psalter. From this proceeds illumination of the mind.... It is very beneficial to read the word of God in solitude and to read the entire Bible with understanding. The Lord gives His mercy to a man for endeavoring to do this, more than for other good deeds, and fills him with the gift of understanding. When a man provides his soul with the word of God, then he is filled with the understanding of good and evil.”

CONTEMPLATION

Contemplate the grace of God the Holy Spirit in the Mystery of the Priesthood:

1. How grace sanctifies, illumines and enables a man to serve as shepherd and teacher;
2. How it empowers the priest to celebrate the other Mysteries.

HOMILY

on the Mystery of Ordination

And when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them (Acts 6:6).

By laying their hands on the chosen faithful, the apostles consecrated bishops, priests and deacons. It is apparent from this that the Christian Faith is not only a teaching but also a power. It is not enough merely to know; it is also necessary to have power. It is not enough merely to be chosen by men; one must also be confirmed by God. If power were not necessary for the priestly vocation, neither would the laying on of hands be necessary; only teaching passed from mouth to ear would be needed. The laying on of hands, therefore, signifies the transfer of authority and the descent of power on the chosen one. The power is in the grace of God, Who strengthens man, sanctifies and illumines him. Truly, the grace of God is that which teaches, leads, shepherds, and through the Sacraments strengthens the flock of Christ. A priest is the vessel of this inexpressible, awesome and all-sufficient power of grace. Blessed is that priest who understands what a precious treasury he has become! Blessed is he if the fear of God does not leave him day and night until his last breath! There is no greater honor on earth, no greater responsibility than the calling of the priesthood. By the laying on of hands by the bishop, the priest has come into contact with the heavenly and eternal source of grace and with the authority of the apostles. By this, the priest has become a companion in grace and a concelebrant with all the Orthodox priests from apostolic times until today, with the great hierarchs, with the countless number of saints, confessors, miracle-workers, ascetics and martyrs. He is gently adorned by their dignity, but he bears the burden of their merit, their example, and their reproach. O my brethren, great and most great is the ministry of a shepherd of Christ's rational flock. He is responsible to pray to God for all, and all the faithful are required to pray to God for him. O Lord, Supreme Hierarch, sustain the Orthodox priests in strength, in wisdom, in purity, in zeal, in meekness and in every apostolic virtue by the grace of Thy Holy Spirit. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

DIOCESAN EVENTS

2011 Dates to Remember

July 17 – August 6

Diocesan Summer Camp

Saint Sava Mission, Jackson, California

Registration Form available at <http://www.campstsava.org>

Week One begins July 17, 2011 - Week Two begins July 24, 2011 -

Week Three begins July 31, 2011

Friday, September 2nd

Annual Diocesan Assembly

Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra, CA

Friday, September 2nd – Sunday, September 4th

15th Annual Diocesan Days Gathering

Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra, CA

October 7th

Cathedral Slava,

Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, Alhambra, CA

December 4, 2011

Diocesan KSS Slava,

Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos



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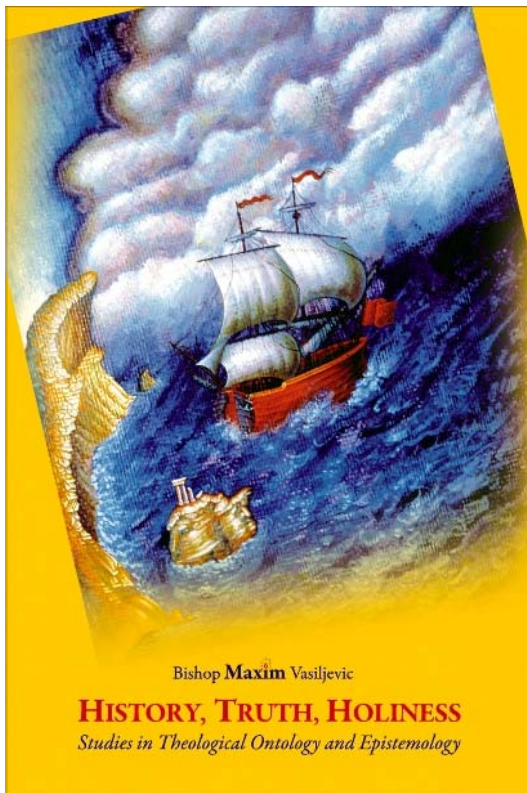
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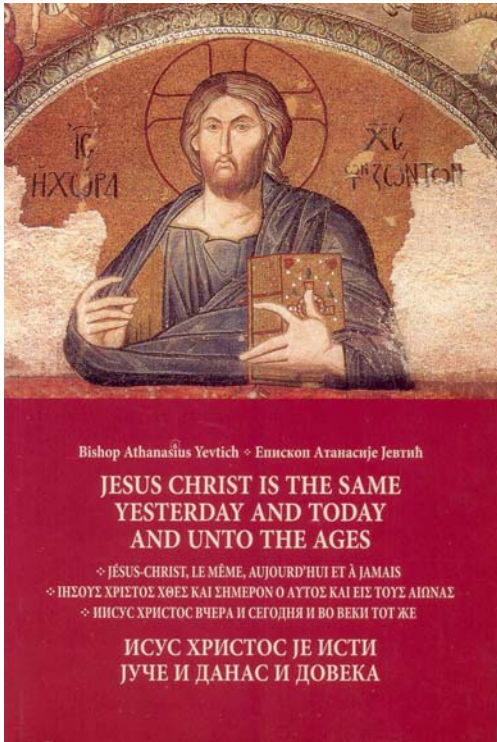
The first half of the book consists of studies concerned with theological ontology and gnoseology, while the second half is dedicated to the theological questions posed by modern theology. The first part includes studies on holiness as otherness, truth and history, as with the biochemistry of freedom, while the second half contains studies which consider the existential actuality of dogma and various Christological questions, along with a study in ecclesiology, another in liturgics, and a number dealing with the theology of icons.

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JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAME YESTERDAY AND TODAY AND UNTO THE AGES

Bishop Athanasius Yevtich



In this latest and, in every respect, meaningful study, Bishop Athanasius, in the manner of the Holy Fathers, and firmly relying upon the Apostles John and Paul, argues that the Old Testament name of God, “YHWH,” a revealed to Moses at Sinai, was translated by both Apostles (both being Hebrews) into the language of the New Testament in a completely original and articulate manner. In this sense, they do not follow the Septuagint, in which the name, “YHWH,” appears together with the phrase “the one who is”, a word which is, in a certain sense, a philosophical-ontological translation

(that term would undoubtedly become significant for the conversion of the Greeks in the Gospels). The two Apostles, rather, translate this in a providential, historical-eschatological, i.e. in a specifically Christological sense. Thus, John carries the word “YHWH” over with “the One Who Is, Who was and Who is to Come” (Rev. 1:8 & 22...), while for Paul “Jesus Christ is the Same Yesterday, Today and Unto the Ages” (Heb. 13:8).

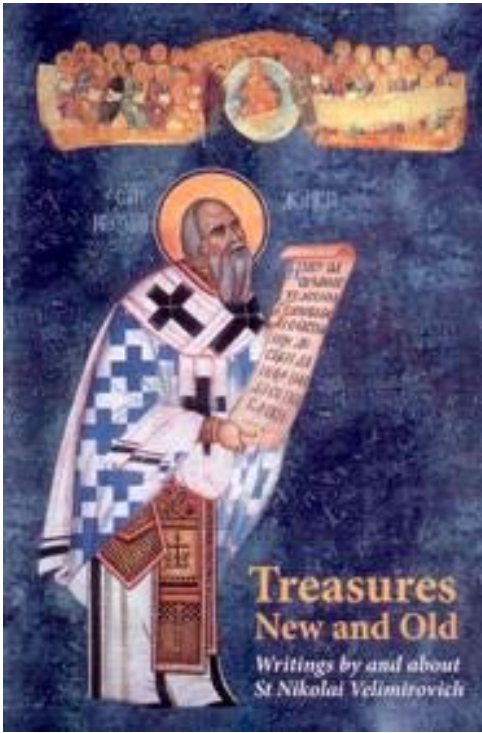
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Writing by and about St. Nikolai Velimirovich

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St. Nikolai Velimirovich, Bishop of Ohrid and Zhicha (1880 - 1956), who along with his many other attributes is regarded, with good reason, as an Enlightener of the Americas. The renewed interest in this man and his works has resulted in the materialization of this book for English-speaking readers who wish to become acquainted with this extraordinary person. The collected texts provide an extensive overview of his life, present important testimonies about his personality, and offer essential insights into his theology. The authors penetrate the depths of his thought with remarkable precision and also

elucidate his actions. The authors agree that the appearance of Nikolai Velimirovich marks an era of change in the ecclesiastical and theological paradigm as a result of his spirituality, ecclesiastical work, and theological position.

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