



May 23, 2010
FEAST OF PENTECOST:
THE DESCENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

PENTECOST TROPARION - TONE EIGHT:

Blessed are You, O Christ our God, You have revealed the fishermen as most wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit; through them you drew the world into Your net. O Lover of Man, glory to You!

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 THE TRISAGION we sing:

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

INSTEAD OF 'IT IS TRULY MEET...' we sing in TONE FOUR:

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."

ALLELUIA

*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

Our Lord Jesus Christ promised that He would send the Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth. Today, that promise is fulfilled. The Prophecy of St. John the Baptist is also fulfilled on this day, "...He [the Christ] will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Luke 3:16). The Gift of the Holy Spirit teaches the Apostles to speak in tongues. This is a significant reversal of the events at the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11: 1-9). Instead of the people's pride displaying the power to divide, the humility of the Apostles reception of the Holy Spirit has the overwhelming power to unite in Love, even in diversity. May the Holy Spirit comfort and strengthen all of us today, enabling us, through sacrificial love, to help unite God's people!



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

The coming of the Holy Spirit is professed by Christ in these words "...out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." God gives His Love to us freely. We freely receive it, and are called to freely give it as well. So too are we to freely give of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are plentiful. Whatever talents we are given by God, we are then called to share them in love, not bury them in the hopes that we will not be held accountable for them. The outpouring of love through the Gifts of the Holy Spirit is one of the ways in which Jesus Christ redeems all of creation. May the Holy Spirit inspire us to love one another, and so fulfill the Law of Christ!



SPIRITUAL ARTICLES

From *The Prologue for May 10/May 23* by St. Nikolai Velimirovic:

The Holy Apostle Simon the Zealot

Simon was one of the Twelve Great Apostles. He was born in Cana of Galilee. The Lord Jesus, with His Mother and His disciples, came to his marriage feast. When the wine ran out, the Lord changed water into wine (John 2: 1-11). Witnessing this miracle, Simon the groom left his home, parents and bride and followed after Christ. Simon was called the Zealot because of his great and fiery zeal for the Savior and His Gospel. After receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, Simon went to preach the Gospel in Mauritania in Africa. Because he succeeded in converting many to the Christian Faith, Simon was tortured and finally crucified, as had been his Lord, Who prepared for him a wreath of glory in the Immortal Kingdom.

The Holy Martyrs Alphaeus, Philadelphus, and Cyprinus

The three were brothers and the sons of Prince Vitalis in southern Italy. They were men of nobility and strong in faith. Condemned for their faith in Christ, they were led from one judge to another, from one torturer to another. They were taken to Sicily and slain there during the reign of Emperor Licinius. Alphaeus's tongue was severed and, having shed much blood, he died. Philadelphus was burned on an iron grate, and Cyprinus in a fire. Their incorrupt relics were discovered in 1517. The three brothers appeared to St. Euthalia (March 2).

The Venerable Isidora, Fool-for-Christ

Isidora lived in the fourth century and was a nun in a convent in Tabennisi. She pretended insanity to conceal her virtues and her asceticism. Isidora performed the most menial tasks, ate leftovers from plates, served all and everyone, and was despised by all and everyone. At that time, an angel of God revealed Isidora's secret to the great ascetic Pitirim. Pitirim came to the convent, and when he saw Isidora he bowed down to the ground before her, and she did the same before him. Then the sisters informed Pitirim that she was insane. "All of you are insane," replied Pitirim, "and this one is greater before the Lord than I and all of you; I only pray that God will render to me that which is intended for her at the Dreadful Judgment!" Then the sisters became ashamed and begged both Pitirim and Isidora for forgiveness. From that time everyone began to show respect for Isidora. And she, to escape this honor, fled the convent to a place unknown, and reposed in about the year 365.

The Blessed Thais

Thais was a wealthy Christian maiden in Egypt. She decided not to enter into marriage and instead distributed her property to the monks of the desert. After she gave away all of her possessions, she began to live a life of debauchery. Learning of this, the hermits begged Abba John the Dwarf to go to Alexandria. This he did and began to weep before Thais. When she heard that the elder was crying because of her sins, she repented immediately, left home and everything she owned, and withdrew into the wilderness with the saint. One night while Thais was sleeping and John stood at prayer, he saw angels descend in a great

light and take the soul of Thais. John learned that her instantaneous but warm repentance was more pleasing to God than the long years of external repentance of many hermits.

HYMN OF PRAISE

The Venerable Isidora
In the desert, the ascetic Pitirim
Prayed to God and asked himself:
“In the world, is there anyone equal to me?”
Then appeared an angel of God,
Who gently reproached Pitirim:
“You magnify yourself in your thoughts, O Elder,
As though in the world there is no one better than you!
Come, follow me, O Elder Pitirim,
Come, follow me to see an aged woman.
Isidora made herself a fool-for-Christ:
See her, and be amazed.
She does not separate her heart from God,
And all her thoughts she binds to God;
Not like you, who in the body are here,
But in your thoughts are at the ends of the world!
Then you shall see all of her ascetic labors,
That to your shame, you might be put to shame by a woman!
And that you might glorify the wisdom of God,
That, in the midst of weeds, grows roses!”

REFLECTION

In one of his prayers, St. Ephraim the Syrian turns to God with these words: “Lord, in that awesome and dreadful day Thou wilt say to us sinners: ‘You men know very well what I have endured for you. What have you endured for Me?’ How will I, the wretched, cunning, sinful and foul one, respond to that? The martyrs will then point to their wounds of torture, the severed parts of their bodies and their endurance to the end. The ascetics will point to their ascetic labors, extended fasts, long vigils, almsgiving and tears, and their endurance to the end. And I, the slothful, sinful, and lawless one, to what will I point? Spare me, O Lord! Spare me, O Merciful One! Spare me, O Lover of mankind!”

IMPORTANT REMINDERS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Iconography Workshop - June 10-25, 2010

This two week course will be held at the Saint Steven's Serbian Orthodox Cathedral, 1621 West Garvey Avenue, Alhambra, California 91803. The V. Rev. Stamatis Skliris from Athens has returned to the United States for another workshop to teach all those interested in learning and understanding Iconography. Please visit our website at http://www.westsrbdio.org/iconography_studio/june_2010_course/index.html for more information and for an application form.

SAVE THE DATE!

His Grace, Bishop Maxim cordially invites you to the
14th ANNUAL DIOCESAN DAYS GATHERING
Saint Sava Mission
Jackson, California
September 3-5, 2010

Ad/Greeting for the Annual 2010 Publication
Full-page \$150, Half-page \$75, Quarter-page \$50

Sponsorship Categories: Gold \$1,000, Silver \$500

More information will become available on our Diocesan Website in the coming weeks. Please visit www.westsrbdio.org.

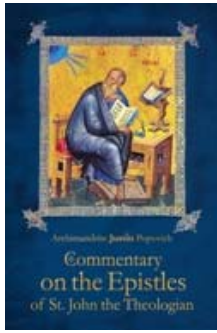
FROM SEBASTIAN PRESS:



Sebastian Press Special
**Spend \$50 or more on our Sebastian Press Titles
and receive a FREE Wall Calendar!**
2010 Wall Calendar
adorned with icons by Fr. Stamatis Skliris

The Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Western America is pleased to announce the publication of a beautiful, full-color, trilingual (English, Serbian and Greek) Wall Calendar, which has been compiled and designed by Bishop Maxim and Interklima (Vrnjci), and printed in Serbia. This high quality, trilingual (English, Serbian and Greek) Calendar is adorned with striking full-color icons by Fr. Stamatis Skliris, a parish priest in Athens who is renowned as an iconographer and as a writer and lecturer on Byzantine iconography. Highly recommended! 27 pages
For a complete list of Sebastian Press Titles please visit:

http://www.westsrbdio.org/SEBASTIAN_PRESS/Sebastian_Press.html

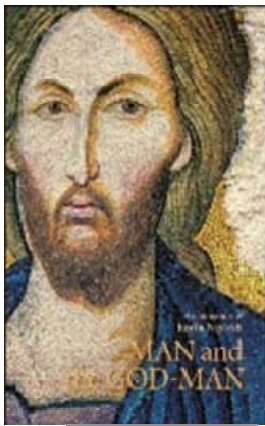


Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian

By Archimandrite Justin Popovic

This Commentary on the Epistles of St. John the Theologian - published now, three years after the blessed repose of Venerable Fr. Justin (on the Feast of the Annunciation, 1979) - was written by the tireless Messenger of Christ forty years ago, in circumstances similar to those in which Christ's Holy Evangelist John wrote his sacred Epistles. The text of this 93-page soft-bound book has been translated from the Serbian by Radomir M. Plavsic. Published by Sebastian Press, Western American

Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Contemporary Christian Thought Series, number 5, First Edition *Retail price: \$10.*

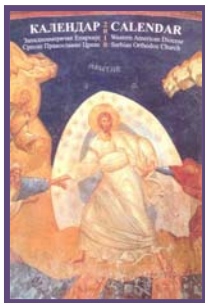


MAN AND THE GOD-MAN by Archimandrite Justin Popovic

This newest publication of our Sebastian Press Publishing House is now available for purchase online at:

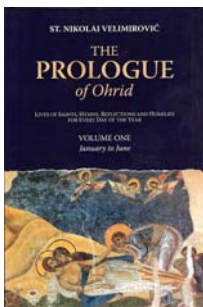
http://www.westsrbdio.org/ads/man_and_the_godman.html

Retail Price: \$15.00



2010 POCKET DIOCESAN CALENDARS NOW AVAILABLE - Be sure to watch for your order in the mail. If you have not already received them, you will shortly! Contact the Diocesan office if you have any questions.

Retail Price: \$5.00



THE PROLOGUE OF OHRID - St Nikolai of Zica (Velimirovic) (1880-1956) has been called the "Serbian Chrysostom" for his theological depth and golden-tongued eloquence. Now for the first time, a complete and unabridged English translation of St. Nikolai's Prologue of Ohrid has been made available. St. Nikolai's Prologue has become a much-loved spiritual classic for Orthodox Christians worldwide. An inspirational source-book of the Orthodox Faith, it contains within its pages a summation of the Church's wisdom and Her experience of sanctity through the Grace of Jesus Christ. Lives of Saints, Hymns, Reflections and Homilies are presented for every day of the year. St.

Nikolai's beautiful Hymns have never before appeared in English.
– Retail \$120 per set

