

JUNE 2016 CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN! "Spiritual," but not Religious?

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

“And to the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write,

“These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True Witness, the Beginning of the creation of God: “I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. I could wish you were cold or hot. So then, because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will vomit you out of My mouth.... Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”

(Revelation 3:14-16, 20-21)

A relatively recent phenomenon in American culture (within about the last five years) is that a great number of Americans (mostly the so-called “millenials”), when asked about their religious preferences, respond that they are “spiritual but not religious.” In news articles, they are even referred to as “SBNRs.” They find “spirituality” wherever they choose to find it, but refuse to participate in a church. They say things like, “I find spirituality in the sunset,” “I find spirituality when I walk along the beach,” etc.

Is this even possible?

We are now in the middle of our Paschal celebration, but the Church has already pointed us to the coming of Pentecost. When Jesus ascended to His Father from the mountain, it was with the promise that He would send the Holy Spirit to be poured out upon the Apostles. Then, the Spirit-filled Apostles would go to the ends of the earth, preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ risen from the dead and establishing the Church in places that come down to Las Vegas, Nevada today. He established the **Church** when He sent the Holy Spirit.

To be “spiritual” for anyone who knows and follows Jesus Christ is to belong to His Holy Church. Now, I am in total agreement with Fr. Alexander Schmemmann of blessed memory when he said, “No to religion.” But what he meant wasn’t “no” to the Church. It was an emphatic “no” to the dead falsehood of empty ritual and the preaching of and adherence to the forms of religion and not substance. But that is not the “religion” that today’s “spiritual” people reject. They reject the Church.

Orthodox Christians are not called to be “religious.” We are called to be faithful, Spirit-filled followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. That means, first and foremost, that we belong to His Body – the Church. But the rituals of the Church (including the Sacraments and the liturgical life of the Church), the rules and guidelines for living (fasting, prayer and almsgiving), the moral compass that we are to receive from our families and by the grace of Baptism, are meaningful and powerful only in so far as we ourselves receive the Spirit given by God through His Son. In other words, only in so far as we ourselves **live** Pentecost.

JUNE 2016

St. Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church • Las Vegas, Nevada

<p style="text-align: center;">GREETERS</p> <p>JUNE 5: WHEELER/DEMKO JUNE 12: STAFFORD/CAMPBELL JUNE 19: MASON/CHONG JUNE 26: MCAULEY/OSBURN</p>	1		2		3	4
			<p style="text-align: center;">ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>			<p style="text-align: center;">FEEDING THE HOMELESS, 10:30 AM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: DEMKO EPISTLE: HOOD POST-COMM: PARKER</p>	6	7	8	<p style="text-align: center;">9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM ASCENSION OF THE LORD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ERITREAN SERVICE, 9:30 AM</p>	10	<p style="text-align: center;">11</p> <p style="text-align: center;">RUSSIAN CONFESSIONS, 9 AM SLAVONIC LITURGY, 10 AM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
			<p style="text-align: center;">VESPERS/LITIYA, 6:30 PM</p>			
<p style="text-align: center;">12</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: HOOD EPISTLE: HUFFMAN POST-COMM: WHEELER</p>	13	14	15	<p style="text-align: center;">16</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	17	<p style="text-align: center;">18</p> <p style="text-align: center;">VESPERS/LITIYA, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">19</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: ABRAHAM EPISTLE: STRANSKY POST-COMM: KNEELING VESPERS PENTECOST FATHERS DAY - PICNIC</p>	20	21	22	<p style="text-align: center;">23</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	24	<p style="text-align: center;">25</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
	NO FAST	NO FAST	NO FAST		NO FAST	NO FAST
		<p style="text-align: center;">PARISH COUNCIL, 6:00 PM</p>				
<p style="text-align: center;">26</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM HOURS: TESFAY EPISTLE: BITSKO POST-COMM: BROOKS ALL SAINTS</p>	27	28	29	<p style="text-align: center;">30</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ERITREAN SERVICE, 8:00 AM COFFEE CHAT, 10:00 AM</p>	July 1	<p style="text-align: center;">July 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">GREAT VESPERS, 5:00 PM CONFESSIONS</p>
	APOSTLES FAST		<p style="text-align: center;">DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM SS. PETER AND PAUL PARISH FEASTDAY</p>			
		<p style="text-align: center;">VESPERS/LITIYA, 6:30 PM</p>				

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But what does that mean for me? Today? It means we go back to the beginning. When the priest placed each of us in the baptismal font, the Rite was not completed until he gave us “the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.” We each received our own personal Pentecost.

That gift is what gives us the assistance, the ability and the power to live out the Christian life in the Church. To understand and proclaim the words of the Creed. To pray with faith and assurance not only to God, but to the Saints and His Mother, for their intercessions and prayers. To see Grace being given to each of us through the Sacraments of the Church. To be able to crucify ourselves with Him and live for the Other. Saint Paul says that we cannot even call God “Abba! Father” unless the Holy Spirit gives us the words (cf. Galatians 4).

It is a miracle to live a Christian life and it is impossible to do so without the Holy Spirit making us “spiritual.” To truly be spiritual, we cannot be like those who claim to be “spiritual but not religious.” As a matter of fact, if we hear the Word of God, we know

that it is exactly the opposite. We must lose ourselves and our wants and desires and seek the one good thing – the Lord Jesus Christ. Our path is not an individual path of ease and comfort. It is the path that is narrow and hard.

The proclamation of so many today that they are proudly “SBNR” is the ultimate in selfishness. I will be the first to say that I find serenity and peace, even good feelings, in a beautiful sunset or a walk along the beach, but that is not living a Spirit-filled life. A Spirit-filled life leads me to my knees and to the Church. To find “spirituality” in whatever so moves us while ignoring God’s Word, His commandments, and His Church is neither hot nor cold. It is lukewarm. And we see above what God does to the lukewarm.

We have the great blessing of entering once again into the Great Feast of Pentecost. Let us not denigrate it by neutering the Spirit with our own ideas and images of “spirituality.” The Spirit will guide us to all Truth if we let Him. Let’s!

Father John

MARK THE DATES

June 4: Feeding the Homeless, 10:30 AM

June 9: Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM; ASCENSION OF THE LORD

June 11: Russian Confessions, 9:00 AM; Slavonic Liturgy, 10:00 AM

June 19: HOLY PENTECOST, KNEELING VESPERS AFTER LITURGY

PARISH/CHURCH SCHOOL PICNIC AFTER SERVICES

June 19-26: FAST-FREE WEEK

June 26: All Saints Sunday

June 21: Parish Council Meeting, 6:00 PM

June 24: Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM; NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

June 27-28: APOSTLES FAST

June 29: Divine Liturgy, 8:00 AM; SS. PETER AND PAUL

July 3: All Saints of North America

Send email addresses and corrections to:
fatherjohn@lasvegasorthodox.com

FEASTDAYS

During June, we celebrate the following feasts:

ASCENSION OF THE LORD

June 9

VESPERS/LITIYA, 6:30 PM (WED)

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (THUR)

HOLY PENTECOST

June 19

VESPERS/LITIYA, 5:00 PM (SAT)

DIVINE LITURGY, 9:00 AM (SUN)

KNEELING VESPERS

NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

(37TH ORDINATION ANNIV. - FR. JOHN)

June 24

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (FRI)

HOLY APOSTLES PETER & PAUL (PARISH PATRONAL FEASTDAY)

JUNE 29

VESPERS/LITIYA, 6:30 PM (TUES)

DIVINE LITURGY, 8:00 AM (WED)

PROJECT MEXICO

Our Project Mexico team has been preparing for their trip for a year now and the time is almost here for their mission! They will be leaving for Project Mexico the first week of July, where 13 youths and 3 adults will spend five days building a house from the ground up for a family that currently has none.

We are in the final phase of our fundraising for the trip. The youth group will host two more coffee hour fundraisers (June 5 and 26) and will hold a car wash. Please be generous in your support of this admirable endeavor — it will change the lives of those involved.

You can still designate St. Paul Orthodox Church on Amazon.com when you make a purchase and we received a portion back to the project. So before you order anything from Amazon online, type in the link and thank you for your support.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/88-0242982>

IT'S BEEN BUSY!

Just before Pascha, we had the floors in the hall stripped and waxed with a beautiful finish (which we promptly messed up on Pascha!).

In the past month since Pascha, we have had the church, both interior and exterior painted. The carpets in the church were de-waxed and cleaned. The old unsightly cabinet in the hall has been removed and replaced with beautiful new cabinets and countertops.

There is much that needs to be cared for and maintained in our physical structures. We ask your cooperation in helping us keep our property neat, clean and well-managed.

ICONOGRAPHY

Our iconographer, Vladimir Krassovsky, was here May 23-24, and installed the gorgeous and inspiring icons along the sanctuary wall which will complete the iconography in the sanctuary after all these years. There were a few hiccups due to the curvature of the wall, so a little final finishing remains. But please make sure you take a look!

The next phase of our iconography project will be to complete the east walls of the church (to the left and right of the sanctuary). Renderings are available in the church hall and you are urged to take a look. This is a MAJOR project which will require substantial funding. **We are once again accepting donations to the Icon Fund. Please consider making an offering above and beyond your normal support of the parish!**

FEEDING THE HOMELESS

Our next Feeding the Homeless project will be held on Saturday, June 4. We will begin to construct the

lunches and bag all of the items which we distribute at 10:30 AM. We then take them downtown and distribute them and are usually done by 1:00 PM. Please join us! If you can donate any of the items needed for the lunches (or funds to provide such), it would be appreciated.

SLAVONIC SERVICE

Father Alexander will be here on the customary second Saturday of the month (June 11). Russian language confessions begin at 9:00 AM. Slavonic Liturgy is scheduled for 10:00 AM.

PARISH/CHURCH SCHOOL PICNIC

As has become our custom, we will have a parish picnic following Divine Liturgy and Kneeling Vespers on Pentecost Sunday, June 19. The parish will provide hot dogs and hamburgers, along with the side items for those meats. A pot-luck sign-up list is available to volunteers for the side dishes, salads and desserts. Please bring something and join us!

FASTING NOTES

The week following Pentecost (June 19-26) is a **fast-free week** in the Orthodox Church.

The **Apostles Fast** begins on the day after All Saints Sunday and ends with our parish patronal feastday of Ss. Peter and Paul (June 29). Due to the very late Pascha this year, the Apostles Fast is only two days long (June 27-28)!

PARISH FEASTDAY

Our parish will celebrate our patronal feastday of Ss. Peter and Paul with Vespers and Litiya on June 28 at 6:30 PM, and the Divine Liturgy on June 29 at 8:00 AM. Everyone should try to come and celebrate this special day in the life of our parish!

CHARITY

Our normal collections of food for Friends of the Desert continue. Needs: jelly, jam, peanut butter, canned fruit, canned tuna/chicken. Thank you!

ORTHODOX VENDORS

A list of businesses that our parish uses or are owned and operated by Orthodox Christians (some parishioners). We provide this information for you to consider if you need services.

CB Air Conditioning
Cedomir Blagojevic
(702) 493-0295

Dolphin Court Salon & Day Spa
7581 W. Lake Mead Blvd.
(702) 946-6000
Kyklos Café (Greek food)
Galleria Mall
Sophocles Frangakis
(702) 450-1515

Makeup and Hair Artist
Natalia Kasimtseva (Baker)
(I travel to client location)
Text or call: (702) 336-8300
View portfolio at:
www.facebook.com/NataliaKasBeauty

Westfield Eye Center
C. Edward Yee, MD
2575 Lindell Road
(702) 362-3937

PRAYER FOR OUR PARISH

We ask everyone to remember our parish in daily prayer:
Lord, God and Savior of all, we thank You for the blessing of St. Paul parish in our lives. May Your word become alive in each and every one of us who strive to follow You. Please bless and multiply all the gifts – time, talent and treasure – which are given in thanks to benefit our mission and glorify Your name. Bless and multiply the givers and help us all to make present Your

Kingdom. For You are the Giver of all that is good, O Christ our God, and to You we give glory, together with Your Father who is without beginning and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

SACRAMENTS/SPECIAL SERVICES

Please follow these guidelines.

- Baptisms. A personal meeting scheduled with Fr. John will be necessary to schedule any baptism requested.
- Matrimony. A date and time for weddings must be requested at least six months (preferably twelve) in advance. There will be premarital sessions for both bride and groom to attend.
- Memorials (Panikhida). Requests for a memorial must be made at least one week in advance. If possible, the service should be served on Saturday. Other requests will be met as pastorally possible.

PARISH COUNCIL SYNOPSIS

MAY 17, 2016 MEETING

Rector's Report: Father John was on vacation, but left a written report with Father Stephen.

Thanked everyone in all sorts of various jobs and duties around Holy Week and Pascha. Everything was beautiful.

Father John will return on May 19.

Associate Priest's Report: Fr. Stephen will be Hesperia serving on Sunday, May 22. He reported that the Hesperia parish has a new acting rector who will be starting in August.

Fr Stephen reported that his first Holy Week and Pascha as a priest went very well. He thanks the parish for their support during that time.

The Agape meal was success-

fully served on Sunday, May 8th. Chef Viorel Ionescu received generous compliments on his dishes. Fr Stephen noted that the Egg Hunt could have been better organized.

Vice President's Report: Ginny noted that Holy Pascha this year was beautiful and went very well. Luis cleaned the carpet following Pascha, and Ginny mentioned that the carpet had more wax on it than usual. The carpet cleaning was a more extensive job.

Commented that her school room has become the repository for the salt bins used during Pascha. Fr Stephen said he would look into that.

Treasurer's Report: Karen Short distributed our financials before the meeting:

Capital Fund: \$311.80
Rainy Day: \$30,082.29
Icon Fund: \$10,357.35

Income for April was \$30,724.16, with expenses of \$20,630.37 for a surplus of \$10,093.79.

YEAR-TO-DATE

2016 Inc	\$ 100,080.74
2016 Exp	\$ 83,893.43
Inc over Exp	\$ 16,187.31

All parish finances including accounts payable are totally current.

Karen commented on the attempt to pay down the church's bond issue \$9500, and how Gold Star's fees rendered that amount not cost-effective. Karen will continue working with them to facilitate reimbursement of \$5000 for capital improvements. She noted that the painting expenses of \$12,400 should also be eligible for reimbursement.

Karen would like to see checks made out to both the contractor doing the job and the church rather than the current process of reimbursement.

COMMITTEES

Buildings and Grounds:

Church paint: The project was successfully completed after Pascha. Ginny noted that some paint was misapplied to one of the walls in her school room. Kevin will check into that.

Church and parish hall doors: Kevin will meet with the door installation technician next week; he needs to double check the measurements and make sure the doors are labeled. All doors will be replaced in Church except for the side entrance door to the church. Office door will also be replaced.

Parish hall cabinets: The project was completed this week with the installation of the countertops. Kevin reported that the countertops were donated.

Miscellaneous repairs: The hole in one classroom has been patched, maintenance of the air vents is being performed by Kevin.

Icon installation: Iconographer Vladimir (Vova) Krassovsky may require a rolling scaffold or other equipment to complete the installation of Icons in the sanctuary. Kevin will communicate those needs to the Treasurer to obtain funds to complete the work.

Next Project: The purchase and installation of sound absorbing panels for the hall will be the next capital improvement project.

Charity: Nothing to report. The next Feeding the Homeless will be Saturday, June 4, per last meeting's minutes.

Rae's IOCC "School Bags for Syria" project remains a work-in-progress. She expects to finish sewing the remaining 10 bags, continue decorating, and will start to collect donations for school supplies.

IOCC: no report.

Church School/Youth: Ginny asked

about the annual Picnic for the school-children. She will speak with Fr John about it.

Project Mexico: Father Stephen reported on status of Project Mexico: Currently 10 youths and 3 adults are confirmed participants. All have passports or are awaiting receipt. Two more fundraisers are planned; a carwash and coffee hours on June 5 and 26. Fr Stephen reported that he is able to rent a 15-passenger van for \$1573 including insurance, and will keep the council informed on the project's status and funding. Kids will be given packets with a list of items they will need. Three adults will attend; Fr. Stephen, Jamie Campbell, James West.

Eritrean/Ethiopian: no report.

Fellowship: International Dinner fundraiser, including a Silent Auction, planned for May 28. Lindsey Osburn is working on gathering items for the Silent Auction. The tickets for the International Dinner went on sale last Sunday and will remain on sale until the event. Tickets are also available for purchase online though PayPal.

Outreach/website: The Facebook page is growing, with downloads of the weekly sermons showing strong interest.

Russian: During Russian service on Saturday, May 14, one of the classrooms was accessed and some items disturbed. Fr Stephen will discuss it with Natalia.

Stewardship: no report.

OLD BUSINESS

Iconography: Fr John informed the council that Vladimir (Vova) Krassovsky is now planning to come on May 22 to install the Icons in the sanctuary. Both Fr. John and Vova preferred that he come while Father was able to be present. He will begin the work on

May 23 and will stay with Fr John.

Greeters Training: status quo.

NEW BUSINESS

None

Next Council Meeting:
Tuesday, June 21, 2016.

PARISH DIPTYCHS

This list of parish departed is to remind us all of those whom we love and miss and to spur us to remember them in our daily prayers. They will be remembered in the proskomedia before each liturgy.

MONTH OF JUNE

Alexandra Allred
June 12, 2002

Alexei Kaganovitch
June 12, 2007

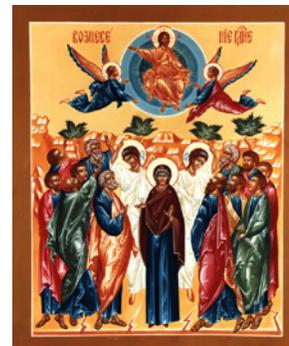
Girmai Johannes
June 15, 1999

Amelia Vranesh
June 17, 1991

John Vishnevsky
June 19, 2007

Dorin Mihai Gutu
June 21, 1989

Rose Silecky
June 22, 2007



FATHER STEPHEN'S CORNER YouOS

Christ is Risen!

I have always been fascinated in some shape or form by our (humanity's) relationship or rather dependency to technology. In today's society, technology is so advanced that it has become something that is completely taken for granted in our daily lives.

Throughout our history, we have created all kinds of tools to ease our comfort, to enhance our lives, and in many ways, to even help in glorifying God. Today, we have smartphones/tablets with the power of a personal computer, which can do everything from playing games to doing all our work with, smartwatches that can monitor our entire health routines, TVs with voice command that allow us to control whatever we want to watch without even moving a finger, AI that can drive cars autonomously, mobile/phone software that can control entire houses from light bulbs to the temperature of each room, and biggest goliath of them all, the Internet, where all the world's information is present, easily available at our fingertips, and the thing that gives us complete

control over Creation.

This is where a new sin/evil is revealed to us which we may not have realized before: dependency. Our current society has been conditioned and nurtured to be completely reliant on these new technologies. As Tim Cook, CEO of Apple said in March, "We build the iPhone for you, our customers, and we know that it is a deeply personal device... the iPhone is an extension of ourselves." This dependency is one that can lead to obsessiveness with newer, more efficient tech, a substitution for morality with the aid of AI to guide in our decision making, and even a cult-like enslavement to certain tech companies and product-lines.

Now this isn't to say that all technology is bad for us. On the contrary, there is much good that can be utilized in these things. In my case, my iPad aids me in a variety of tasks from writing my sermons to storing a copy of various liturgical texts/services in cases of emergencies when I do not have books available. Yet, for us as Orthodox and Christians, we have to treat technology's dependent nature the way we do with everything else in our Christian

lives; we have to pull away when it becomes overbearing, too much for us to control, and damaging to our salvation.

We want technology to help us get things done more quickly and efficiently but these devices do not replace Christ in our lives. The danger for us comes when we allow it to be unrestrained and unchecked. St. Peter the Damascan once said, "For everything which does not serve a pressing need, becomes an obstacle to those who would be saved."

There is tranquility in St. Peter's words. Technology makes for an excellent servant but ultimately we do not serve it. The Christian life is one where we inhabit Christ's teachings, harnessing, when necessary, the power of technology to spread the message of the Gospel. So with all this in mind, the danger for us is the absence of our accountability in the way we use technology. If we are not using it for the betterment of Christ and His Glory, then we simply should not use it at all.

Indeed He is Risen!

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ON THE FEAST OF PENTECOST

Let us spiritually extol the grace of the Holy Spirit in spiritual hymns, since spiritual grace has on this day shown upon us from heaven. Though our words are too weak to express adequately the greatness of this grace, we shall praise its power and activity to the extent of our abilities; for the Holy Spirit probes all things, even the depths of divinity.

We are celebrating the day of

Pentecost, the day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, the day of the hope of perfection, the end of expectation, the longing for salvation, the fulfillment of prayer and the image of patience. Today the Spirit Who acted to scatter the nations in the time of Heber has formed tongues of fire among the Apostles. His action of old led to the confusion of the nations, in order to restrain the will of man from its brazenness and consequent chastisement; on this occasion, however, amidst fiery tongues, the

deeds wrought by the activity of the Holy Spirit served to preserve us as recipients of preaching, in fulfillment of the will of God.

In the beginning the Spirit of God moved over the water, and later, in the time of Christ, the same Holy Spirit of God rested upon him. Then He moved, and now He rested, as being one in essence, equal in honor, ever-existent and unoriginate together with the Father and the Son.

He Who by the flight of a dove over the waters of the Flood her-

alded fair weather to Noah, the same Holy Spirit, by the sight of a dove at the waters of the Jordan, showed the world the Sonship of Him Who was baptized. Moreover, the Lord had a terrifying answer for those who dared to utter blasphemy against the Holy Spirit:

“Whoever speaks blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.”

David, declaring his desire for this Holy Spirit, prayed to God, saying: “Cast me not away from Thy presence, O Lord; and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.”

As is well known, where He is absent, every sort of corruption sets in. Thus, the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit entered into him, wherefore David said,

“Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.”

This same Holy Spirit sanctified the prophets, instructed the apostles and empowered the martyrs. This same Holy Spirit consecrated Isaiah, taught Ezekiel and revealed the resurrection of the dead. As he says,

“The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord.”

This same Holy Spirit chose Jeremiah from his mother’s womb, and raised up Daniel to deliver Susanna. As it is written,

“God raised up by the Holy Spirit a young youth, whose name was Daniel.”

David so loved the presence of this same Holy Spirit that he prayed to God, saying,

“Thy Holy Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness.”

This same Holy Spirit of God came to dwell in the holy Virgin Mary, embracing her with the communion of the Divine Word at the good pleasure of the Father, and making her the Theotokos. Elizabeth, being filled with this same Holy Spirit, understood that the Lord had come to her by means of the Virgin; wherefore she said,

“And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?”

Zachariah, the father of John, was filled with the same Holy Spirit, whereby he declared that the son born to him would be the prophet and forerunner of the King Who was to come. John himself was also filled with the same Holy Spirit; the eyes of his intellect were given light, and he beheld the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit hovering over Him Who was being baptized, Him Who baptized with the Spirit and fire.

By the action of the same Holy Spirit, the Lord Himself, when He was giving His Apostles His teaching in detail and strengthening their minds for the time of His Passion, said to them:

“If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you.”

Moreover, revealing to them the Spirit’s consubstantial power, He said:

“When the Holy Spirit is come, Which proceedeth from the Father, He will guide you into all truth.”

The holy Apostles waited expectantly for the coming of the power of this same Holy Spirit; they waited together to be clothed with

power from on high, according to the commandment of the Lord, Who had said:

“Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high; for, behold, I shall send the promise of My Father upon you.”

And, as it is written,

“when the day of Pentecost was fully come, all the holy Apostles were assembled with one accord in one place, and the Paraclete was sent to them under the appearance of tongues of fire.”

Having received the abundant promise of the Father and the Holy Spirit, they were strengthened, and they manifested Him Who was sent to them, His grace and His power. The martyr and protodeacon Stephen, filled with the same Holy Spirit, Whom he received by the laying-on of hands of the Apostles, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Being full of the Holy Spirit, he saw the doors of heaven opened and the Only-begotten Son and Word of God standing in the flesh at the right hand of the power of God. Filled with this same Holy Spirit, Paul became the preacher of divine mysteries. As Ananias said to him:

“The Lord, even the Savior, hath sent me to thee, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

...This Holy Spirit also ordains priests, consecrates churches, purifies altars, perfects sacrifices and cleanses people of their sins. This Holy Spirit abides with the godly, refines the righteous and guides kings....