

St. Nikolai Orthodox Mission of Alliance, Divine Liturgy, 9:00 am.
Worship site: Rainbow's End Nursery, 10079 State Street, Louisville, Ohio 44641
Very Reverend Father Joseph Cervo, Archpriest (AOCANA-retired)
Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, Mission Administrator (Bulgarian Diocese OCA)
June 23, 2013: Holy Pentecost



The description and Theology of the Icon of Pentecost.

The icon: Shows the Apostles sitting, as on Mount Zion, representing the first Church community, the beginning of the Christian Church. They form a semicircle to express the unity of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. The icon is not a depiction of the historical events of Pentecost, but it signifies that this is a great event for all time.

As with many icons, the Apostles are pictured in an inverse perspective, the figures grow larger as they recede into the background. Also, the building that the Apostles are in is shown as background.

The Holy Spirit: At the top of the icon is another semicircle, with rays coming from it. The rays are pointing toward the Apostles, and the "tongues of fire" are seen descending upon each one of them signifying the descent of the Holy Spirit.

Christ: At the center of the group of Apostles, there is a place which is unoccupied. It is reserved for Christ, the invisible head of the Church. Some ancient icons symbolize Christ's invisible presence with an altar, the throne of His glory. Clearly, no one else can be depicted here.

The Apostles: The Apostles sit orderly, unlike the Ascension icon where they seem confused. This is to show the gift of the Holy Spirit, the inner life of grace. The gift to the Church.

The group of twelve represent the Church, not just those mentioned in the book of Acts as being with the others on the day of Pentecost. Pictured in the icon is Paul, who became an Apostle of the Church and the greatest missionary. The four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are shown holding the not yet written books of the Gospel. Other Apostles are holding scrolls that represent the teaching authority given to them by Christ.

Cosmos: In yet another semicircle, at the bottom of the icon, is a symbolic figure of a king. He is in a dark place that represents the world enveloped by sin. This one person represents the whole world that had formerly been without the light of faith. He is bent over to show he was made old by the sin of Adam. Through the power of the Holy Spirit the Church brings light to the whole world by her teaching. Sometimes, the figure is shown coming out, into the light, having a cloth containing scrolls which represent the teaching of the Apostles.

The 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!

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

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: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

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

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!

The Second Antiphon

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

Refrain: O Good Comforter, save us who sing to You: "Alleluia!"

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

Refrain: O Good Comforter, save us who sing to You: "Alleluia!"

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

Refrain: O Good Comforter, save us who sing to You: "Alleluia!"

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 Word.....

The Third Antiphon

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

Tone 8 Troparion

Blessed are You, O Christ our God;
for You have shown the fishermen to be most wise
by sending down on them the Holy Spirit
and through them catching all the world in Your net.//
Glory to You, O good God Who love mankind!

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

Troparion of the Feast

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

Troparion of the Feast

Entrance Verse

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

Tone 8 Troparion

Blessed are You, O Christ our God;
for You have shown the fishermen to be most wise
by sending down on them the Holy Spirit
and through them catching all the world in Your net.//
Glory to You, O good God Who love mankind!

Tone 8 Kontakion

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

(Instead of the Trisagion, we sing:)

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

Epistle: Acts 2:1-11

Tone 8 Prokeimenon

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

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

Tone 1: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made; and all their host by the Spirit of His mouth.

v: The Lord looked down from heaven, and saw all the sons of men.

Gospel: John 7:37-52; 8:12

(Instead of "It is truly meet ...," we sing:)

Rejoice, O Queen, glory of mothers and virgins!

No tongue, however sweet or fluent, is eloquent enough to praise you worthily.

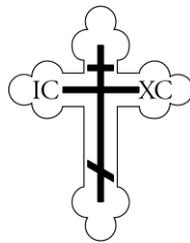
Every mind is overawed by your childbearing.

Therefore, with one voice, we glorify you.

Communion Hymn

Let Your good Spirit lead me on a level path!

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



Donation Requests:

Icon of St. Nikolai of Zica: Our mission is commissioning a handwritten icon of St. Nikolai. It will depict our mission patron saint with prominent scenes from his life and it will also house his holy "relics." We are humbly accepting donations towards the icon which will cost \$1500. If you would like to make a contribution, please make your check payable to "St. Nikolai Orthodox Mission of Alliance" make a notation that it is for the Icon of St. Nikolai.

New Mission worship site items of need: We are working diligently to make the environment conducive to “the holy work of the people of God” and to make accommodations as comfortable as possible. There are some initial added expenses and items of need to accomplish this transformation from ordinary space to “holy space.” Folding chairs, room size remnant carpeting, folding tables are needed. Also, in the works are items needed to make a portable Iconostas, which includes the purchase of the framework and large Icons. Any donations specially earmarked for this very important project would be greatly appreciated.

Class: We will continue class this week and continue with Part 2, Chapter 1 The Interior of an Orthodox Church and Chapter 2 The Preparation Service.

Feast of Pentecost

Fifty days after the Resurrection, on the exciting Jewish feast of Pentecost, while the disciples and many other followers of Jesus Christ were gathered together to pray, the Holy Spirit descended upon them in the form of "cloven tongues of fire," with the sound of a mighty rushing wind, and they began to speak in languages that they did not know. There were many visitors from the dispersion of the Jews (known as the “diaspora”) to Jerusalem at that time for the Jewish observance of the feast, and they were astonished to hear these uneducated fisherman speaking praises to God in their alien tongues. This account is detailed in the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 2.

The number fifty, as in the fiftieth day after Pascha, stands for eternal and heavenly fulfillment, seven times seven, plus one.

The Orthodox Church sees Pentecost as the final fulfillment of the mission of Jesus Christ and the initiation of the age of the Messiah’s Kingdom, mystically present through His Church. It is traditionally called the “birthday” of the One Holy Catholic & Apostolic Church (which means the Church which is whole & unbroken and adheres to the teachings and of the Apostles and directly receives the Grace of the Holy Spirit from their successors, who are the bishops).

Besides celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit, the feast also celebrates the full revelation of the divine Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Hymns of the Church, celebrate the sign of the final act of God’s self-disclosure to the world of His creation.

To Orthodox Christians, the feast of Pentecost is not just a celebration of an event in history. It is also a celebration of their membership in the Church. For they too have experienced Pentecost and received "*the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit*" in the Sacrament of Chrismation.

Among Slavic Orthodox Christians, it is customary for the church building to be decorated with flowers and the green vegetation of the summer to show that God's divine breath comes to renew all creation. Green vestments and coverings are commonly used for the same reason while some use red vestments and coverings to symbolize the descent of the **Holy Spirit** in the form of "tongues of fire."

St. Nikolai of Zica Orthodox Mission of Alliance
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