

# SAINT LUKE THE EVANGELIST GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH

---



## MAY 23, 2010

### HOLY PENTECOST

*In the Church's annual liturgical cycle*, Pentecost is “the last and great day.” It is the celebration by the Church of the coming of the Holy Spirit as the end - the achievement and fulfillment - of the entire history of salvation. For the same reason, however, it is also the celebration of the beginning: it is the “birthday” of the Church as the presence among us of the Holy Spirit, of the new life in Christ, of grace, knowledge, adoption to God and holiness.

This double meaning and double joy is revealed to us, first of all, in the very name of the feast. Pentecost in Greek means fifty, and in the sacred biblical symbolism of numbers, the number fifty symbolizes both the fulness of time and that which is beyond time: the Kingdom of God itself. It symbolizes the fulness of time by its first component: 49, which is the fulness of seven ( $7 \times 7$ ): the number of time. And, it symbolizes that which is beyond time by its second component:  $49 + 1$ , this one being the new day, the “day without evening” of God’s eternal Kingdom. With the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ’s disciples, the time of salvation, the Divine work of redemption has been completed, the fulness revealed, all gifts bestowed: it belongs to us now to “appropriate” these gifts, to be that which we have become in Christ: participants and citizens of His Kingdom.

*Saint Michael the Confessor* From his youth he longed for the monastic life and was sent by Patriarch Tarasius (784-806) to a monastery on the coast of the Black Sea. St Theophylactus (March 8), the future Bishop of Nicomedia also entered the monastery together with him.

At the monastery both monks engaged in spiritual struggles and were soon glorified by gifts from the Lord. Once, during a harvest, when the people were weakened by thirst, an empty metal vessel was filled with water by the prayer of the monks.

Patriarch Tarasius consecrated St Michael as bishop of the city of Synada. Through his holy life and wisdom, St Michael won the love of believers, and the notice of the emperors Nicephorus I (802-811) and Michael I Rangabe (811-813). St Michael was present at the Seventh Ecumenical Council at Nicea in 787.

When the Iconoclast heretic Leo the Armenian (813-820) assumed the throne, he began to expel Orthodox hierarchs from their Sees, appointing heretics in their place.

*Continued on page 5...*

# 1<sup>ST</sup> & 2<sup>ND</sup> & 3<sup>RD</sup> ANTIPHONS

## FIRST ANTIPHON.

**VERSE:** *The heavens declare the glory of God: the firmament proclaims the work of his hands.*

By the intercessions of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.

**VERSE:** *Day to day utters the word: and night to night proclaims knowledge*

Ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, Σῶτερ, σῶσον ἡμᾶς.

**VERSE:** *There is no speech or language: where their voices are not heard.*

By the intercessions of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.

**VERSE:** *Their sound has gone out into all the earth: and their words to the ends of the world.*

Ταῖς πρεσβείαις τῆς Θεοτόκου, Σῶτερ, σῶσον ἡμᾶς.

**VERSE:** *Glory...Both now...*

By the intercessions of the Theotokos, Savior, save us.

## SECOND ANTIPHON.

**VERSE:** *The Lord hear you in the day of trouble: the name of the God of Jacob shield you.*

Save us, O good Comforter, we sing to you alleluia.

**VERSE:** *May he send you help from the sanctuary: and support you out of Sion.*

Save us, O good Comforter, we sing to you alleluia.

**VERSE:** *May he remember your every sacrifice: and accept your burnt offering.*

Save us, O good Comforter, we sing to you alleluia.

**VERSE:** *Glory... Both now...*

Ὁ Μονογενῆς Υἱός.

## THIRD ANTIPHON.

**VERSE:** *The king will rejoice in your strength, O Lord: he will exult exceedingly in your salvation.*

### APOLYTIKION OF THE FEAST. MODE 8.

**B**lessed are You, O Christ our God. You made the fishermen all-wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit, and so through them You drew the world into Your net. O Lover of mankind, glory to You.

**VERSE:** *You have given him his heart's desire: you have not denied him the request of his lips.*

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν, ὁ πανσόφους τοὺς ἀλιεῖς ἀναδείξας, καταπέμψας αὐτοῖς τὸ Πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, καὶ δι' αὐτῶν τὴν οἰκουμένην σαγηνεύσας, φιλάνθρωπε, δόξα σοι.

**VERSE:** *For you came to meet him with blessings of goodness: and placed a crown of precious stones upon his head.*

Blessed are You, O Christ our God...

**VERSE:** *He asked you for life: and you gave him length of days for ever and ever.*

Εὐλογητὸς εἶ, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεὸς ἡμῶν...

### ENTRANCE... THEN...

Blessed are You, O Christ our God...

### KONTAKION. MODE 8.

**W**hen the Most High God came down and confused the tongues,\* He divided the nations.\* When He distributed the tongues of fire,\* He called all to unity.\* And with one voice we glorify the all-holy Spirit.

### KONTAKION. ΗΧΟΣ ΠΑ. Δ'.

**Ο**τε καταβὰς τὰς γλώσσας συνέχεε, διεμέριζεν ἔθνη ὁ Ὑψιστος, ὅτε τοῦ πυρὸς τὰς γλώσσας διένειμεν, εἰς ἐνότητα πάντας ἐκάλεσε, καὶ συμφώνως δοξάζομεν τὸ πανάγιον Πνεῦμα.

### INSTEAD OF TRISAGION...

All those who have been baptized...

# THE READINGS OF THE DAY

## EPISTLE READING

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES ACTS 2:1-11

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

## GOSPEL READING

JOHN 7:37-52; 8:12

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, "If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.'" Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

When they heard these words, some of the people said, "This is really the prophet." Others said, "This is the Christ." But some said, "Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was?" So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him.

The officers then went back to the chief priest and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" The officers answered, "No man ever spoke like this man!" The Pharisees answered them, "Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed." Nikodemos, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, "Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does?" They replied, "Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee." Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, "I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

---

## UPCOMING CHURCH SERVICES:

May 24, Monday of the Holy Spirit, Orthros / Div. Lit., 8:30am

May 29, Great Vespers, 6pm

## UPCOMING CLASSES:

May 25, Tuesday, Catechism, 6pm

May 27, Thursday, Catechism, 6:30pm

### LONG-RANGE PLANNING STATUS

We have now received donations of \$3925 for the long-range planning study – gifts of any amount are greatly appreciated towards the completion of this project. Your generosity is greatly appreciated!

### KNEELING VESPERS

Immediately following the Divine Liturgy today, we will celebrate the Vespers of Kneeling. “This is our first kneeling since Easter. It signifies that after these fifty days of Paschal joy and fullness, of experiencing the Kingdom of God, the Church now is about to begin her pilgrimage through time and history. It is evening again, and the night approaches, during which temptations and failures await us, when, more than anything else, we need Divine help, that presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who has already revealed to us the joyful End, who now will help us in our effort towards fulfillment and salvation.”

### SUNDAY SCHOOL GRADUATION

Following Divine Services, we will distribute completion certificates to our Sunday School students.

### STEWARDSHIP STATISTICS

We have received 63 pledge cards totalling \$86,840. Thank you to all who have generously committed to the future of our parish!

### FOOD BANK

The Parish always accepts donations on non-perishable food items for distribution by the Mid-Missouri Food Bank. Please place items in the purple barrel in the narthex. We also accept donations of butter / margarine for St. Francis House.

### REMEMBER THE CHURCH THIS SUMMER

If you are planning to travel during the summer months, do not forget the needs of the Church. Our financial obligations continue, even when you are traveling. Prior to leaving town, please remember to send your stewardship offerings to the Church.

“Therefore, the first and only commandment by God is to love God Himself with all our heart. Subsequently, whatever we do in church, has that precise purpose. And that is why we go to pilgrimages, why we fast, why we pray, why we go to confession, why we light candles, why we read the lives of saints, why we do everything: it is our way of loving Christ.”

—METROPOLITAN ATHANASIUS  
OF LIMASSOL, CYPRUS

## SYNAXARION

*Continued*

St Michael defended Orthodoxy, bravely opposing the heretics and denouncing their error. Leo the Armenian brought St Michael to trial, but not fearing torture he answered resolutely, “I venerate the holy icons of my Savior Jesus Christ and the All-Pure Virgin, His Mother, and all the saints, and it is to them I bow down. I shall not obey your decrees to remove icons from churches.”

Leo then banished St Michael to the city of Eudokiada, where the confessor died about the year 821. The head of St Michael is preserved in the Great Lavra of St Athanasius on Mount Athos, and part of the relics are at the Iveron monastery.

**Saint Damiane** (in the world King Demetre I) was the son of Holy King Davit the Restorer.

King Davit proclaimed his son co-ruler of Georgia and crowned him with his own hands. He declared that his son Demetre, through his wisdom, chastity, bravery, and handsome appearance, would rule Georgia better than he himself had. Demetre acquired great glory while his father was still alive. In 1117 Davit sent him to Shirvan to fight, and the young commander astonished the people with his deftness in battle. Demetre seized Kaladzori Castle and returned home with many captives and much wealth.

King Demetre I struggled tirelessly to protect the inheritance he had received from his father: he guarded Georgia’s borders and fought to enlarge its frontiers. Many regions, including Hereti, Somkhiti, Tashiri, Javakheti, Artaani and the Tao border, were repopulated during King Demetre’s rule. These regions had been largely deserted after King Davit joined Tbilisi to the region of Heret-Kakheti.

King Demetre was never shaken by the evil intrigues plotted against him. First his noblemen revolted, demanding that his stepbrother, Vakhtang (Tsua-

ta), replace him as king. (Ioane of Abuleti was the leader of this conspiracy.) Then Demetre’s own son Davit rebelled against him. Deeply disturbed by the behavior of his first-born son, the pious king could no longer bear the vanity of the world—he was tonsured a monk in the Davit-Gareji Wilderness and given the new name Damiane. He abdicated to his son, but Davit ruled just six months before he reposed.

While laboring at Davit-Gareji Monastery, Damiane composed many great hymns for the Church. His hymn to the Theotokos, “Thou Art the Vineyard,” is outstanding among these works. In order to protect the interests of the Georgian kingdom after his son’s death, Damiane was obliged to leave the monastery. He returned to the throne and intervened in the affairs of the government. At the same time he named another of his sons, George, co-ruler.

King Damiane-Demetre completed construction of Gelati Monastery, which had been started by his father, Holy King Davit the Restorer.

St. Damiane reposed in 1157; he was buried at Gelati Monastery. A 12th-century image of St. Damiane-Demetre was among the frescoes at the Davit-Gareji Monastery. In the 19th century the Russian traveler Andrew Muraviev reported seeing the fresco intact, but today only a narrow upper band of the image remains. A fresco of the pious king and monk Demetre has been preserved in the church at Matskhvarishi (now Latali) in the Svaneti region.

# **DOGMA AND DOGMATICS: THE AFFILIATION OF DOGMAS TO THE HOLY SCRIPTURES**

*By Metropolitan John of Pergamus*

**T**he affiliation of dogmas to the Scriptures is a hermeneutic one. The problem posed by Western theologians, after the Reform Era, as to whether we have one or two “sources of divine revelation” as they were named, denotes the specific concern between Roman Catholics and Protestants, given that the latter had rejected the authority of the Tradition of the Church, and had introduced the principle of “sola scriptura” (=only the scripture). In Orthodox Theology, the problem was posed through the so-called “Orthodox Confessions” of the 17th century (prev.ref.). Thus, depending on the deviation of these “confessions” (Mogilas=Roman Catholicism, Cyril Loukaris=Calvinism, etc.), the answer was – and continues to be– provided by the Orthodox. The West was led into this concern for two reasons, which do not apply in Orthodoxy:

1. The West lacked the element that a revelation is always something personal, and never something logical or intellectual. God revealed Himself to Abraham, to Moses, to Paul, to the Fathers, etc.. Consequently, it is never an issue of a “new” revelation, or an “addition” to a revelation, or even a case of John’s Revelations being “incremented”, as suggested even by Orthodox theologians.

2. In the West, an objectification of the Scriptures and the Church had become prevalent to such an extent, that expressions such as “treasuries” of the truth were coined. But in Orthodox tradition, both the Scripture and

the Church are considered to be testimonies of experience of the truth, and not merely “masterminds” that perceive, record and transmit truths. This is because the truth in Orthodox Tradition is not a matter of objective, logical proposals; the truth consists of (personal) stances and relations between God, mankind and the world. (For example, I do not become acquainted with the truth by intellectually knowing and finally accepting that God is Triune; it is only when I am personally involved existentially in the Triadic existence of God, through which my entire being –as well as the world’s– acquires a meaning. In this way, any ordinary, everyday woman who is however a proper member of the Church, can “know” the dogma of the Trinity. The same applies for Christology etc.). But we shall go into this topic of Gnosiology in more detail, later.

Consequently, if the Revelation of God is a matter of personal experience and a broader implication of man in a lattice of relations with God, with fellow-man and the world, and if it pours new light onto overall existence, then the Scripture that testifies to this Revelation is considered complete, both from the aspect of the Revelation’s content, as well as for every other similar kind Revelation pursuant to the composing of the Bible’s Canon. We must add the following clarifications here:

Even though in every case of such personal and existential revelations, the revelations are of the One and Only God, the means by which

they are revealed differ; for instance, on Mount Sinai we have a revelation of God Himself, which is revealed to us in Christ, but not in the same way. With Christ, we are enabled not only to see or hear God, but to actually touch Him, to feel Him, to commune with Him physically: “Who was from the beginning, Whom we heard, Whom we saw and Whom our hands touched”. (John I, 1:1). The divine epiphanies of the Old Testament, and subsequently in the New Testament, while having the same content, are not revealed in the same way. And, because a Revelation –as we said– is not a matter of objective knowledge but a personal relationship, the form of a Revelation is of vital importance because it introduces new relationships, or in other words, new existential ways.

(The matter of relations between Old and New Testaments is historically very old in Patristic Theology, and it was solved through the Theology of saint Irineos, who dramatically corrected Justin’s teaching on the Logos, and was later formulated excellently by Saint Maximus the Confessor, in his principle that stated: “the contents of the Old Testament are the shadow, the contents of the New Testament are the image, and the (contents of) the things to come is the truth.”)

Consequently, in the person of Christ we have a unique form of revelation that is characterized by communion with the senses (vision, touch, taste, etc., as per the passage of John I, 1:1 where we read: «and Whom our hands touched»), and not only with the mind or the heart. This is why this way was judged by the Fathers as being the supreme and fullest way. Nothing is superior to Christophany (Christ being revealed): “Whomsoever has seen me,

has seen the Father”. Thus, the New Testament –in which is recorded the experience of those people who had this physical communion with God (“Whom we saw and Whom our hands touched”) – gives meaning to both the Theophanies (God being revealed) in the Old Testament, as well as those that followed, after the Bible. In fact, the Fathers (Irineos and others) maintain that after the Incarnation of the Logos, we have a fuller and newer form of revelation than that of the Old Testament. In respect to the Disciples, this superiority is attributed to their tangible and physical association with Christ; in respect to the subsequent Church, this superiority is attributed to the Sacraments and especially in the Eucharist, which has preserved this physical communion (see Ignatius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Cyril of Alexandria etc.). Those who participate deservedly in the Divine Eucharist, can “see” God much better than Moses.

Thus, the entire life of the Church draws the revelation of God from the event of the historical Christ, as recorded in the New Testament. And that is why the New Testament has the status of an exceptional and primeval dogma, compared to which, all other revelatory means (including the Old Testament and subsequent dogmas) comprise renditions of it, in the more profound, existential sense of the word, i.e. the means of experiencing existence, as a new relationship between God, mankind and the world.

Conclusion: Neither the rendering of the New Testament or the dogmas can circumvent the event and the person of Christ, because that would require the insertion of a new kind of revelation, fuller and superior to that of

Christ. We can draw a great number of individual conclusions from this, but I will note only the following:

A. The Divine Eucharist, as the exceptional form of tangible communion –and therefore cognizance- of God, remains forever the highest and most perfect form of God’s revelation, in its personal, existential sense (“and Whom our hands touched”).

B. The viewings of God (every form of Theophany), whether through holy icons or through the ascetic experience, are viewings of the Uncreated Light, always in the form that it is revealed in Christ, and not independent of it; in other words, they are essentially Christophanies. (This should be stressed, in order to avoid misunderstandings that are unfortunately beginning to increase in number). As proof of this, it suffices to mention that, as regards the icons, the entire argumentation of saints John the Damascene, Theodore the Studite etc Iconophiles is: that Christ’s incarnation imposes the veneration of icons as forms of God’s revelation; and as for the Uncreated Light, that this light was understood by the holy Esychasts to be the Taborian Light, in other words, as a partaking of the light that radiated from the historical body of Christ.

Getting back to the association between Scripture and dogmas, we therefore note that every dogma, regardless to what it pertains (even the issue of the Holy Trinity), is essentially a memorandum to the event of Christ, through which God is revealed as an existential experience of a relationship, in other words, as truth. It is not by chance, that, for instance, the 1st Ecumenical Council (Synod), while founding the Trinitarian theology, also did this

on the pretext and the basis of the truth regarding the Persona of Christ. The same was done by all the pursuant Ecumenical Councils, even though they were also preoccupied with all other issues.

This indicates that the Apostolic experience that is recorded in the Bible comprises the first dogma, which is then interpreted by all the other dogmas. It is therefore impossible for any dogma to impinge on this experience; it can only interpret it. The Apostolic experience and tradition is of decisive importance for the dogma. In this way, we have a consecutiveness of dogmas, a sequence of dogmas, which resemble icons of Christ that are painted by different people in different eras, and with the means that every era had at its disposal.

This sequence is both external (= a fidelity to the preceding tradition and finally to the Bible), and also internal (= a preservation of the same existential relationship between God, mankind and the world, as fulfilled and revealed in Christ).

*To Be Continued...*

“Therefore, we should all pay close attention and understand that the church is a hospital that cures us and helps us to love Christ, and our love for Christ is a flame that ignites inside our heart so that we can examine ourselves, to see if we are within God’s love..

—METROPOLITAN ATHANASIUS  
OF LIMASSOL, CYPRUS

