

RELEASE NUMBER 2012.15.1

ARCHPASTORAL LETTER FOR THE

**Feast of Pentecost**

Sunday, June 3, 2012

Beloved in the Lord:

*Glory to Jesus Christ!*

Like the changing of the seasons, our liturgical calendar of feast days of the Church follows an orderly progression, each one leading to the next. Not long ago we celebrated the Passion and Resurrection of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ and then His Ascension into Heaven. Today we have reached the final grace -- the actual fulfillment of the Lord's promise: the Descent of the Holy Spirit and the Birth of the Holy Church!

Indeed Pentecost is a great feast for us. Great beyond all description are the gifts which God gives to us in His love on this day. Let us then rejoice together and be glad as we give glory to our Lord for the fulfillment of His promise. We read in the Gospel of John that He said, *"I will not leave you as orphans ... if I go away, I will send you another Comforter."* Who cannot see His boundless love and care for us, His children? Yes, He ascended into Heaven to sit on His royal throne at the right hand of the Father ... but on this day, He has given to us the Holy Spirit and through Him sends us innumerable heavenly graces.

Saint John Chrysostom helps us to understand this ever more clearly when he writes in his commentary:

Indeed, which of the graces necessary for our salvation is not given us through the Holy Spirit? Through the Holy Spirit we are freed from slavery and called to liberty; we are raised to the status of sons and daughters; we are in a sense recreated and we lay down the heavy and foul burden of our sins. Through the Holy Spirit we are given priests and teachers; from the same source come revelations and the gift of healing; and all the other adornments of the Church have their origin in Him.

The golden-mouthed orator reminds us of the words of the "saint he loved the most" the blessed Paul: *"It is one and the same Spirit who does all this ... He divides His gifts among us as He wills"* (I Cor. 12:11). Great indeed is the power of the Holy Spirit, promised to us by Christ and fulfilled on Pentecost. Again, in the words of Saint John Chrysostom:

Through the Holy Spirit we have obtained the remission of our sins and we have washed away all defilement. By this gift, we who have had recourse to grace have been changed from human beings into angels. I do not mean that our nature has been changed, but



