

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 Pentecost Sunday! Matins 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00AM Vespers 6:30PM	June 1 Holy Spirit Monday Liturgy 9:00AM	2 Board Meeting 6:30PM	3 No Fasting Daily Vespers 6:30PM w/ Bible Study	4	5 No Service.	6
7 All Saints Sunday Baptism 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00AM	8 Clergy Family Camp @ Camp Nazareth Mercer, PA	9 Apostles Fast Begins today	10 Daily Vespers 6:30PM w/ Bible Study	11	12 No Service.	13
14 Matins 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00AM	15	16	17 Daily Vespers 6:30PM w/ Spirituality Class	18	19 Liturgy 9:00AM	20
21 Matins 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00AM	22	23	24 Divine Lit. 9:30AM Feast of St. John Bpt.	25	26	27
28 Matins 9:00AM Liturgy 10:00AM	29 Peter and Paul Liturgy 9:00AM	30	July 1 Daily Vespers 6:30PM w/ Spirituality Class	2	3	4

+CONFESSIONS: Please call Fr. Jonathan to make an appointment. Confession is a sacrament of the Church through which we receive the forgiveness of our sins. Understanding sin as an illness of the soul, in confession we share our sins like we would an illness to a doctor and the priest offers the prayer of forgiveness and at times a word to encourage hope and may prescribe / suggest ways to invite Christ into needed areas of our life.

+PASTORAL NEEDS, HOSPITAL CALLS, NURSING/REHAB AND HOME-BOUND PARISHIONERS: If you have a pastoral need or emergency and would like to speak to Fr. Jonathan or know of someone who cannot make it to church and would like to schedule a pastoral visit, please contact Father by phoning at 815.721.4852

+ BOOKSTORE NEWS: We have books for all ages for your Lenten reading or Pascha gifts. Additionally, new prayer books are available for purchase, plus icons, and more!



+ NEW PARISH WEBSITE



New Online Giving Platform.



CHRIST THE SAVIOUR



ORTHODOX CHURCH

May 31st 2026

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Pentecost Sunday:

- PENTECOST SUNDAY May 31st: Matins 9:00AM, Divine Liturgy 10:00PM
Vespers w/ Kneeling Prayers 6:30PM
- June 1st Holy Spirit Monday: Divine Liturgy 9:00AM
- Tuesday Board Meeting 6:30PM at Church (1 hour 15 Mins)
Theology on Tap at 8PM at Hangry Joes on East State
- Wednesday May 27th, Daily Vespers 6:30PM and Bible Study to follow, No Fasting.
Fr. Jonathan will be hearing 3 life confessions to follow the service.
- Friday June 5th No Service.
- **ALL SAINTS SUNDAY** May 31st: Baptism of Shelay, Michael, and Jaden at 9:00AM, Divine Liturgy 10:00PM
- June 8th through 11th Fr. Jonathan with his family will be attending Camp Nazareth's Clergy Family Camp at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA.

BOOK STUDY Update:

St. Sofian Boghiu The Urban Hesychast Pages 100 - 150

• EXPLORING ORTHODOXY?

We have an inquiring minds class on most Sundays following services around 12:30PM and on Wednesdays after our Bible Study. Please feel welcome to attend and bring any questions you may have. Enjoy the day of Pascha, and if you need a prayer rope or are interested in learning more about Cultivating a prayer routine, a heart of remembrance of God, Please feel confident to ask Fr. Jonathan. The name of The Lord is food and drink for the thirsty soul.

PARISH RULE OF PRAYER:

WHAT CAN WE DO TOGETHER?

15 MINUTES:

- 5 minutes - Scripture
- 5 minutes - Jesus Prayer
- 5 minutes - Stillness / Silence





Saint Paisios speaks the language of the Pentecost

It is well known that Saint Paisios the Hagiorite, besides Greek, did not know another language.

But as it happened multiple times, when there was a reason, conversed wonderfully in the language of the Pentecost with non-Greek speaking individuals. "I was present once," Mr. I.E.K states, "in the small hut of the Saint at Mount Athos with three other visitors, and a Frenchman who did not speak Greek. When his turn came to

spea k to the Saint, they moved further away and for fifteen minutes they conversed sitting on some wooden logs. We saw them that they were discussing with great interest. How did they communicate, since there was no common language of communication? The Frenchman left very happy. His satisfaction was clearly evident in his face."

Words which the Holy Spirit teaches.

By St Paisios of Mount Athos

"The true Fathers", the Saint would say, "do not say whatever thoughts enter their brains, but those which God sends down from on high or experiences from their lives. They talk about truths which they themselves lived, which have life and give life to people."

And he would speak simply, "not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches." (1st Corinthians, 2'13)

Many educated and intellectual people marvelled at his accurate answers and some, thinking that they were a result of study asked him where he had read them.

The professor of psychiatry, Aristos Aspiotis once asked him:

"Father, in which book is written what you told us?"

"Pentecost", the Saint answered, meaning the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

Tell Me About Sunday Matins (Orthros)

By Dr. Βασίλειος (William) Μπίτσας M.D.

Orthros (or Matins) is the Church's morning prayer service. Orthros is the richest and most varied of the daily services, as it contains hymns for the tone of the week (8 tones, 8 weeks), for the saint or feast of the day, and for the liturgical season. Sunday Orthros also includes resurrectional hymns related to the Gospel readings. This wealth of theology has led some to say that Orthros, along with Vespers, is the **adult education program** of the Orthodox church. A summary outline follows.

1. Opening prayers and hymns. (Lord's Prayer with others)
2. **Six Psalms**. This represents the Second Coming of Christ, and so we are to be still during this time, not even crossing ourselves.
3. "God is the Lord..." and associated hymns.
4. **Kathismata** (singular kathisma). Hymns which originally were chanted between kathismata, or blocks of Psalms. Parish practice is to just do the hymns but not the Psalms, in the interest of time.
5. Blessed are you O Lord; teach me your statutes" is sung at this point in Sunday Orthros. This is to the same melody as the funeral/memorial hymns by the same name, but these are resurrectional in content.
6. **Anabathmoi**. Hymns of ascent, in the tone of the week.
7. Reading of the kontakion and oikos hymns of the day.
8. **Synaxarion**, the list of saints of the day with some small story of their life.
9. **Katavasies**. Orthros has nine odes, which change from liturgical season. Each ode is a group of hymns. The Katavasies are the last hymn of each ode. In parish practice, just the katavasies are chanted, and not the whole ode. Each katavasia has a typical theme: The first, Moses at the Red sea; the 3rd or 4th, the prophet Habakkuk; the 6th, Jonah; the 7th and 8th, the three Youths in the Fire.
10. **Gospel Reading**. There are eleven Dawn Gospels, read in rotation on Sundays. These are read from the side of the altar, the priest representing the Angel at the tomb of Christ.
11. On Sundays is read "Having beheld the resurrection of Christ".
12. **The 50th Psalm**, chanted on Sundays, read at other times. On Sundays, the priest will come out with the Gospel at the verse "For you have loved truth". The Bishop (if present) followed by the congregation will venerate the Gospel, which then is taken in procession to the Narthex.
13. **"More honorable than the Cherubim"**, ending with the katavasia of the 9th Ode. . Sometimes the whole 9th ode is substituted here. 9th Ode always honors the Virgin Mary.
14. **Exapostilaria**, hymns related to the Gospel and to the feast.
15. **The Praises**, in the tone of the week, with some hymns related to the tone, others related to the saint or feast or liturgical season. The second to last hymn is the Doxastikon, or the "Glory", which typically relates to the theme of the Dawn Gospel, or to the feast of the day.
16. **Doxology**, which many think is the start of Liturgy, is actually the end of Orthros. In a full Orthros there are additional hymns and petitions that follow this; in typical parish practice, the Doxology leads into the start of Liturgy as the entire worship area is censed by the clergy.



Pentecost: The Descent of the Holy Spirit

In the Old Testament Pentecost was the feast which occurred fifty days after Passover. As the passover feast celebrated the exodus of the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt, so Pentecost celebrated God's gift of the ten commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai.

In the new covenant of the Messiah, the passover event takes on its new meaning as the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection, the "exodus" of men from this sinful world to the Kingdom of God. And in the New Testament as well, the pentecostal feast is fulfilled and made new by the coming of the "new law," the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Christ.

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 as resting upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit . . . (Acts 2.1–4).

The Holy Spirit that Christ had promised to his disciples came on the day of Pentecost (Jn 14.26, 15.26; Lk 24.49; Acts 1.5). The apostles received "the power from on high," and they began to preach and bear witness to Jesus as the risen Christ, the King and the Lord. This moment has traditionally been called the birthday of the Church.

In the liturgical services of the feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit is celebrated together with the full revelation of the divine Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The fullness of the Godhead is manifested with the Spirit's coming to man, and the Church hymns celebrate this manifestation as the final act of God's self-disclosure and self-donation to the world of His creation. For this reason Pentecost Sunday is also called Trinity Day in the Orthodox tradition. Often on this day the icon of the Holy Trinity—particularly that of the three angelic figures who appeared to Abraham, the forefather of the Christian faith—is placed in the center of the church. This icon is used with the traditional pentecostal icon which shows the tongues of fire hovering over Mary and the Twelve Apostles, the

original prototype of the Church, who are themselves sitting in unity surrounding a symbolic image of "cosmos," the world.

On Pentecost we have the final fulfillment of the mission of Jesus Christ and the first beginning of the messianic age of the Kingdom of God mystically present in this world in the Church of the Messiah. For this reason the fiftieth day stands as the beginning of the era which is beyond the limitations of this world, fifty being that number which stands for eternal and heavenly fulfillment in Jewish and Christian mystical piety: seven times seven, plus one.

Thus, Pentecost is called an apocalyptic day, which means the day of final revelation. It is also called an eschatological day, which means the day of the final and perfect end (in Greek eschaton means the end). For when the Messiah comes and the Lord's Day is at hand, the "last days" are inaugurated in which "God declares: . . . I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.;" This is the ancient prophecy to which the Apostle Peter refers in the first sermon of the Christian Church which was preached on the first Sunday of Pentecost (Acts 2: 17; Joel 2: 28–32).

Once again it must be noted that the feast of Pentecost is not simply the celebration of an event which took place centuries ago. It is the celebration of what must happen and does happen to us in the Church today. We all have died and risen with the Messiah-King, and we all have received his Most Holy Spirit. We are the "temples of the Holy Spirit." God's Spirit dwells in us (Rom 8; 1 Cor 2–3, 12; 2 Cor 3; Gal 5; Eph 2–3). We, by our own membership in the Church, have received "the seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit" in the sacrament of chrismation. Pentecost has happened to us.

The Divine Liturgy of Pentecost recalls our baptism into Christ with the verse from Galatians again replacing the Thrice-Holy Hymn. Special verses from the psalms also replace the usual antiphonal psalms of the liturgy. The epistle and gospel readings tell of the Spirit's coming to men. The kontakion sings of the reversal of Babel as God unites the nations into the unity of his Spirit. The troparion proclaims the gathering of the whole universe into God's net through the work of the inspired apostles. The hymns "O Heavenly King" and "We have seen the True Light" are sung for the first time since Easter, calling the Holy Spirit to "come and abide in us," and proclaiming that "we have received the heavenly Spirit." The church building is decorated with flowers and the green leaves of the summer to show that God's divine Breath comes to renew all creation as the "life-creating Spirit." In Hebrew the word for Spirit, breath and wind is the same word, ruah.

Blessed art Thou, O Christ our God, who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit: through them Thou didst draw the world into Thy net. O Lover of Man, Glory to Thee (Troparion).

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! (Kontakion).

The Great Vespers of Pentecost evening features three long prayers at which the faithful kneel for the first time since Easter. The Monday after Pentecost is the feast of the Holy Spirit in the Orthodox Church, and the Sunday after Pentecost is the feast of All Saints. This is the logical liturgical sequence since the coming of the Holy Spirit is fulfilled in men by their becoming saints, and this is the very purpose of the creation and salvation of the world. "Thus says the Lord: Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I your God am holy" (Lev 11.44–45, 1 Pet 1.15–16).



The Vision That Sustained St. Blandina in the Siberian Gulag

Blandina Gobjila, known as “Mother Blondina,” remained in the hearts of those who knew her as a confessor of Christ in our own times, a living example of kindness, faith, and self-sacrificial love.

Born in Bessarabia on February 24, 1906, and by profession a schoolteacher, Mother Blondina was deported to Siberia for fifteen years, where she experienced the harsh life of prisons and labor camps. She spent the last 24 years of her life in Romania, praying, translating and transcribing akathists, helping the poor and the clergy at the Metropolitan Cathedral in Iasi. She reposed in the Lord on May 24, 1971.

She was canonized as a saint by the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church at its session of July 1, 2025 (together with 15 other saintly Romanian women), with the title “Saint Confessor Blandina of Iasi,” and her feast day was established as May 24.

Here is an excerpt with St. Blandina’s words from the book “The Sufferings of Mother Blondina, a Martyr of Siberia,” published by Sihastria Monastery:

In the cell, there were 90 women crowded into a room meant for 60. An indescribable overcrowding. When we slept, we could only turn over all at once, for there were ten women on each bunk.

Our daily schedule was as follows: wake-up at 4 in the morning, so that we could receive 300 grams [approx. 10 ounces] of bread and a mug of boiled water. At 6 o’clock the inspection came to count us, to make sure no one had escaped during the night, and then until 5 in the afternoon no one came again. At 5 p.m., one cell at a time was taken out to the toilet; that was all the right a prisoner had for these natural necessities. At 7 p.m. there was another inspection, and with that our day ended. Indeed, we women were at least allowed to sleep as much as we wished, whereas the men were not given even this right.

We obtained permission to empty the cell’s waste bucket, but among all those women not one wished to carry it out, considering it degrading. Then my cousin, who had been arrested with me, and I offered to do this service, considering, according to Christ’s teaching, that “it is good to be the servant of your brother.”

In our cell there was hardly any light, for high up there was only a tiny window that cast a dim glow, so faint that we could barely see one another, and each prisoner was allowed only ten minutes of fresh air a day.

One night, I dreamed that in that little window the Savior appeared, crowned with thorns upon His head, crucified upon the Holy Cross. And from His head, around the crown, the blood was streaming down, while Jesus moved His head from side to side in pain, and then the blood flowed even more.

I wanted to go and wipe His wounds, to stop the bleeding, but Jesus said to me: **“Do you see how I too suffer unjustly, though innocent?”**

I awoke! Yes, I awoke from sleep, but I was no longer the same. Jesus had given me peace, strength, tranquility, and an indescribable consolation. This vision followed me through all the years of prison and Siberia, and throughout my whole life. And I say now, even after coming out of prison, that He, Jesus, upheld me and strengthened me through all the torments and sufferings I endured in prison and in the labor camp, and even after I came out from there.

And to another who asked the same question, he answered: “The lake of Tiberius”, meaning again the Holy Spirit, which “showed forth fishermen as theologians.”(Hymn of Pentecost Vespers).

One time a theologian introduced himself to Father Paisios as, “Mr so-and-so, theologian.” He jokingly replied: “What are you saying my child? I only know three theologians (St John, St Gregory and St Symeon the New Theologian). You must be the fourth!”

Afterwards he told him in seriousness:

“Look, you have a degree from the Theological College, but only your living of the life of the Orthodox Fathers will make you a theologian.” Because Father Paisios had practiced asceticism in the way of the fathers, he had become a “practical theologian” with the visitation of the Grace of the Holy Spirit.’

St. Paisios on the Delusions of Pentecostalism

Elder, the things that are said by those who go over to the Pentecostals, that is, about seeing visions, speaking in tongues, etc., are those things from their own imagination, or from demonic influences?

A: They are energies of demonic influences; because when they go over to the Pentecostals and are re-baptized, they are actually disregarding and denying Holy Baptism: “I confess one Baptism, for the remission of sins,” as the Creed declares. Thus, they un-baptize themselves and become susceptible to demonic influences and then they jabber-jabber, supposedly in tongues. “It is the Holy Spirit of Pentecost talking” they tell us. But it is not the Holy Spirit; it is a whole lot of unclean spirits. What tongues? They are merely uttering gibberish which not even they can comprehend. They even record that gibberish and then produce statistics and reach conclusions: “That tongue has so many ‘hallelujahs’ in it, and there are so many in the other tongue...” Well, it’s to be expected, among so much jabber-jabber, you will surely hear something that resembles the word ‘hallelujah’ in one of the languages of the world! And so you can see, while it is something demonic, they actually believe that which is demonic to be the energy of the Holy Spirit, and that they are supposedly experiencing what the Apostles had experienced on the day of the Pentecost! Blasphemies are the things they believe, which is why they become demon-possessed.

Elder, why are they re-baptized?

Because they claim: “When I was baptized I was young and didn’t know; now I am baptized and fully aware.” They are re-baptized, and thus justify their sins. If the Church didn’t have infant Baptism, what would happen to infants in case of death before their Baptism? That is why a godparent becomes the child’s guarantor and recites the Creed and bears responsibility for the child until it is of age. Is the child treated unfairly, simply for being Baptized young? No; on the contrary it is helped because it receives Holy Communion. And when the child has grown up and is baptized, even if any sin is committed, there is always repentance and confession, which can wash away that sin — not by going to be baptized again!