

May Notes: on Sunday the 6th, *Sarah Harrison* celebrates her birthday ... and **Parish Council** will meet after Liturgy that day ... Tuesday the 15th is the wedding anniversary of *Stas Lyubashin & Ruslana Apreleva* ... at 6:30 PM on Wednesday the 16th there will be **Great Vespers & Litya for the Ascension of Our Lord**, followed by **Divine Liturgy** the next morning at 7:00 AM ... **Church School** will meet on Sunday the 20th ... on Saturday the 26th there will be a **choir practice** at 4:00, followed by **Vigil for Pentecost** at 5:30 ... and after Divine Liturgy and fellowship the next day, there will be **Kneeling Vespers!**

Most Holy Trinity, Sovereign one in essence, Source of all good things: what will we give Thee for all that Thou hast given us sinners and unworthy ones, even before we came into this world, for all that Thou givest each of us every day, and for that which Thou hast prepared for all of us in the age to come? For it is fitting, for such blessings and mercies, to thank Thee not only in words, but also in deeds, keeping and fulfilling Thy commandments. From our youth, however, we have heeded our passions and evil habits and fallen into innumerable sins and transgressions. Therefore, being impure and defiled, we would not be able to appear without shame before Thy triluminary face; we would not even be able to pronounce Thy most holy name if Thou Thyself had not been pleased to proclaim for our consolation that, loving the pure and the righteous, Thou also hast mercy and compassionately receivest sinners who repent. O most divine Trinity, look down from the heights of Thy holy glory on us most sinful ones. Receive our good will in place of good deeds and grant us the spirit of true repentance, so that hating every sin we may live to the end of our days in purity and righteousness, performing Thy most holy will, and glorifying with pure thoughts and good works Thy most pure and majestic name. Amen.

 **ST TIKHON ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH** 
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MAY 2018

“Aslan is not a tame lion”

My grandmother long ago once wondered, “Why is the Holy Spirit never mentioned in sermons? Hearing of Him is like hearing news of an old friend one hasn’t heard of in a long time.” We will hear of news of this old friend today. St Symeon the New Theologian wrote this invocation to the Holy Spirit:

Come, true light.

Come, life eternal.

Come, hidden mystery.

Come, treasure without name.

Come, reality beyond all words.

Come, person beyond all understanding.

Come, rejoicing without end.

Come, light that knows no evening.

Come, unfailing expectation of the saved.

Come, raising of the fallen.

Come, resurrection of the dead.

Come, all-powerful, for unceasingly you create, refashion and change all things by your will alone.

Come, invisible whom none may touch and handle.

Come, for you continue always unmoved, yet at every instant you are wholly in movement; you draw near to us who lie in hell, yet you remain higher than the heavens.

Come, for your name fills our hearts with longing and is ever on our lips; yet who you are and what your nature is, we cannot say or know.

Come, alone to the alone.

Come, for you are yourself the desire that is within me.

Come, my breath and my life.

Come, the consolation of my humble soul.

Come, my joy, my glory, my endless delight.

Notice three things (keeping to my archbishop’s advice that every sermon have three points!) that St Symeon says regarding the Holy Spirit: (1) Symeon speaks of the Spirit as light, joy,

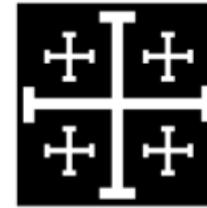
glory, endless delight, rejoicing without end, and so on. Saint Seraphim of Sarov said that the Holy Spirit fills with joy whatever he touches; (2) the Spirit is also full of hope, for he looks forward to the age to come; and (3) there is also the nearness yet otherness of the Spirit. He is “everywhere present” [from the prayer, O Heavenly King] yet mysterious and elusive.

Symeon calls him “my breath and my life,” “hidden mystery,” “beyond all words,” “beyond all understanding.” We know him, but we do not see his face, for he always shows us the face of Christ. Like the air around us, which enables us to see and be seen, he is transparent and enables us to see and hear Christ. He is not to be classified, baffling our computers and filing cabinets. As the Lord said, “The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes” [John 3.8]. As C.S. Lewis wrote in the first of his Narnia Chronicles books, Aslan “is not a tame lion.” The Holy Spirit is not a tame spirit, either. The Spirit makes Christ close to us, establishing that relationship. The Sistine Chapel image of creation depicts Adam just after his creation, with the finger of God and that of Adam just touching—an accurate depiction of the Holy Spirit who puts us in touch with God and with one another. The writer J.V. Taylor called the Holy Spirit “the go-between God.” The [] Patriarch of Antioch, Ignatius IV, wrote, “Without the Holy Spirit God is far away. Christ stays in the past. The Gospel is simply an organisation. Authority is a matter of propaganda. The Liturgy is no more than an evocation, Christian loving a slave mentality. But in the Holy Spirit, the cosmos is resurrected and grows with the birth pangs of the kingdom. The Risen Christ is there. The Gospel is the power of life. The Church shows forth the life of the Trinity. Authority is a liberating service. Mission is a Pentecost. The Liturgy is both renewal and anticipation. Human action is deified.”

The Spirit makes what is far to be near, the past present. Christ without the Holy Spirit is merely an historical figure in the distant past. With the Spirit, he is present. Without the Spirit, the Gospel is only words. With the Spirit, they have life-giving power. Without the Spirit, the Church is only an organization. With the Spirit, it is Communion. Without the Spirit, authority is slavish rule-following. With the Spirit, it is sharing in divine life, divinization. Without the Spirit, mission is propaganda. With the Spirit, it is Pentecostal tongues of fire. Without the Spirit, liturgy is merely recollection. With the Spirit, it is present reality. Through the Spirit, clock and calendar time is turned to sacred time: once upon a time becomes today. Note in our services in Holy Week approaching Pascha, how often “today” is used. “Today, I rise in your resurrection.” The devil says “yesterday,” and wants us to feel regret or nostalgia; and “future,” so that we might feel anxiety. But the Spirit says “today.” The Patriarch’s speech can be summed up in one word: *ζωοποιον*—the Life-giver who makes things alive for us.

~ excerpted from Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware), “Giver of Life: The Holy Spirit in our Daily Experience.”

Charity of the Month



NASR ORTHODOX FOUNDATION

Taybeh, Palestine

The Retreat of Jesus Christ before His Passion (John 11:54)

The Nasr Orthodox Foundation is a non-profit Orthodox Christian aid organization for Palestine. Founded and led by Fr. Constantine Nasr, Pastor Emeritus of St. Elijah Orthodox Church in Oklahoma City and native of Taybeh, Palestine, the foundation cooperates with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem in the support of various Palestinian causes. Most recently on their journey to the Holy Land, Fr. Alexander and Rick & Nina Sandbothe visited the Greek Orthodox School in Taybeh largely funded and supported by the foundation. Other projects include support of Taybeh Boy Scouts, the Women Benevolent Society of Taybeh, the House of Ephraim Nursing Home, publication/translation of books, and support of Palestinian students through registration and scholarships. The foundation aims to assist struggling Palestinian people, especially Orthodox, arguably the most rejected Christians in the world.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

(unaudited)

| | Mar. Actual | Mar. Budget | YTD Actual | YTD Budget |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|------------|
| Total Income | 5,003.44 | 4,245.00 | 17,141.87 | 13,035.00 |
| Total Expense | 3,972.16 | 3,915.35 | 13,937.91 | 13,650.41 |
| Cash Flow | 1,031.28 | 329.65 | 3,203.96 | (615.41) |
| Building Fund (Net of Rent Reserves) | | | 19,797.51 | |