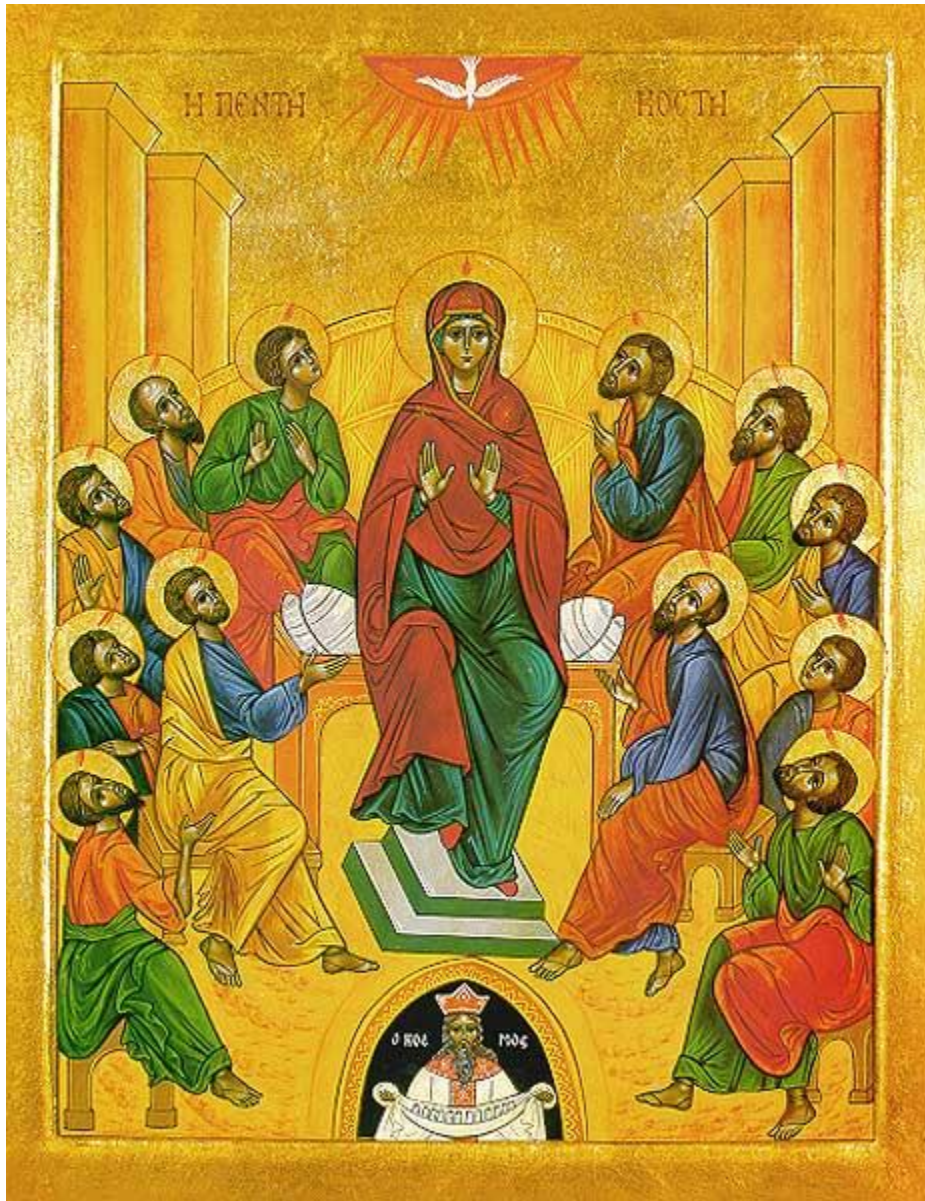


## Pentecost the indwelling of the Holy Spirit



On this day we recall that just 50 days after the Glorious Resurrection, the Holy Spirit came upon the Holy Apostles and all those gathered with them in a new and different way. For the first time, the Holy Spirit actually took up residence within the human soul.

Before this the Spirit of God would descend upon a person for various reasons – such as when one of the prophets was inspired to speak or write or act in a particular way so that God's will might be made known to His people, but He did not make His abode within their soul. But something new happened at Pentecost, something wondrous, something marvelous – God came and dwelt not only among us as

our Lord Jesus Christ, but within us through the Holy Spirit. The promise of our salvation that we would be united with God, began to be made manifest.

This indwelling of the Holy Spirit has a profound effect on the person, for by this action a transformation is begun. The soul has come into contact with God and cannot remain the same. Now it is simple to see how one's behavior might change when he has been joined to the Church. In his eagerness to learn and absorb all that our Holy Mother Church has to give us, he will follow her instructions concerning behavior and do things differently than he did before. But this change does not end there, for these new actions have an effect of their own; they begin to change the way that one thinks and perceives the world around him. If, for example, you wished to develop compassion for someone, then the best way to begin is to act as though you were compassionate and through consistent compassionate actions on the part of the body, the mind will begin to think in terms of compassion and the heart will begin to feel compassion. If you act towards someone in a loving manner, even though you may have no feeling or even feelings of dislike for them, then after even a short time, you will begin to love them in actual fact, for such is the effect of the body's action on the heart. (This truth, by the way, contradicts the idea in our society of "falling in or out of love" by demonstrating that love is not something that strikes out of the blue for some mysterious reason, rather it is the result of and is maintained by effort) But even here this change does not end, for once we develop new feelings and thoughts, then our spirit also changes and begins to develop in the soul the spiritual fruits of these changes, called virtues, and these virtues attract the grace of God. This grace then transforms our very nature so that we no longer have a nature of sin, but begin to develop a nature which has the likeness of God.

Pascha and Pentecost are about transformation. In Pascha, we are reborn; we die and are resurrected with Christ. This new resurrected nature is then shaped and molded by the Church and it is filled with the Holy Spirit. Our Lord spoke of an unclean spirit which had been cast out of a man, and finding no place to rest thought that it would return to its former host. "And when he comes, he finds it swept and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of the man is worse than the first." (Luke 11:25 &26). When at Pascha, we are reborn and our soul is "swept and put in order", then it is necessary for our soul to be occupied, so as to prevent the demons from taking advantage, and so God in His infinite love and mercy comes Himself to dwell in us through the Holy Spirit. This is the feast of Pentecost, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the transformation which was begun at Pascha is further fulfilled in the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. And the Holy Spirit within us, Himself, has the effect of transforming and shaping the soul into more perfectly taking on His own image and likeness.

But God does not act towards us as a tyrant, Who imposes His own will with no regard for our own desire, but rather He acts as a loving Father, Who enables us by our voluntary action, to submit to His will and Who works with us that we might be changed. It is therefore necessary for us to cooperate with God, to allow Him to work in us and to shape our own will to His will. If we resist Him and refuse to cooperate with His direction and His leading, then He will withdraw and will not force Himself upon us unwilling. Therefore we must develop within ourselves a desire for God which surpasses all other desire and a love for Him which is greater than any other love.

How do we develop this desire and this love? What did we just say? If you wish to love someone, then act as though you love them, and in a short time that love will begin to grow within your heart. And so if we wish to develop a supreme love for our Lord Jesus Christ, then we must begin to act as though we had such a love already. If we adjust our behavior to conform with a supreme desire and love for God, then that desire and love will grow within our heart and soul. When we desire Him, then He will fulfill our desire; when we love Him, then He will come to us. And when He comes, He will transform us into His own image and likeness and will dwell within us, uniting us to Himself.

Source: <http://www.orthodox.net/audio/pentecost-frdavidmoser.html>