



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA

June 5, 2009

HIS EMINENCE METROPOLITAN ALEXIOS` REFLECTIONS ON PENTECOST

"We are in position to always celebrate Pentecost..."

St. John Chrysostom

This Sunday we celebrate the true beginning of the history of the Church and its birth on the fiftieth day after Pascha. The Feast Day of Pentecost is the day of the appearance of the Spirit of God in the Church. That is why we call it the birthday of the Church, and the Feast Day of the Holy Trinity: the final fulfillment of the mission of Christ, and the full revelation of the Trinity: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Gospels tell us that all the Lord's disciples were together in one place, after His Ascension. Suddenly a noise from heaven like the sound of a mighty wind filled the place where they were meeting. They saw tongues of fire on each person's head as the Holy Spirit came into their hearts and minds. Then they understood that it was their sacred mission to spread the Good News of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ throughout the world with the promise that the gates of hell would not prevail against His Church.

You can imagine the day, my beloved ones. The city of Jerusalem was full of pilgrims who had come from all over the Roman Empire to celebrate the Jewish harvest festival of Shavuot, which commemorated God giving the Ten Commandments to Moses at Mount Sinai fifty days after the Exodus. Suddenly there is a commotion: a group of Galileans were speaking to the people

gathered outside the Temple. They were speaking so strongly and passionately that many people thought they were drunk, but oddly enough, even those who spoke other languages could understand their inspired words. On that day thousands of Jews were baptized in the name of Christ.

What happened to the disciples? They became totally different people. Those who only a short time ago had abandoned Christ and hid from the authorities began to preach the Gospel all over the world, unafraid and undeterred by the threats of the authorities, by torture, by imprisonment or even death!

All of us have also experienced our own Pentecost – when we were chrismated, we received the “seal of the gift of the Holy Spirit.” May the same Holy Spirit Who filled the first apostles with the fire of God’s presence and power fill us today so that we may experience the reality of God in our lives everyday.

+ALEXIOS

Metropolitan of Atlanta