



## Pentecost Archpastoral Letter

May 23, 2010

Beloved Concelebrants at the Holy Altar and Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord!  
Christ is in our midst!

On this joyous Feast of Holy Pentecost, we as Orthodox Christians re-live the coming down of the Most Holy Spirit and the Birth of our Holy Church. Today we are called to be as faithful to the Holy Spirit as were the apostles and disciples who received Him on Pentecost Sunday nearly 2,000 years ago.

In the Acts of the Apostles, St. Luke provides us with a description of life in the Early Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, one that our parishes should seek to emulate: *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of the Bread and in prayers ... praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved"* (Acts 2:42, 46-47).

Saint Seraphim of Sarov describes for us that the whole purpose of our life as individual Christians as nothing more than receiving the Holy Spirit: *"For the true aim of the Christian life is the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God."* He explains that our fasts, vigils, prayers and almsgiving, and other good works done in the name of Christ, are only the means of acquiring the Holy Spirit. It has been said that St. Seraphim summarizes the entire spiritual tradition of our Church in these words. For indeed, what is greater for us to possess than the Holy Spirit?

My prayer for the parishes in our Diocese, for all the faithful of our churches, is that, beginning anew with this Pentecost, we will focus our lives on acquiring the Holy Spirit and make the priority of our communities to imitate the marks of the Early Church -- to be faithful to our Tradition handed to us from the Apostles; to be steadfast in prayer, both private and liturgical; to be frequent in our reception of the Holy Mysteries, especially the Eucharist; and to permeate our parish lives with *koinonia* -- communion with one another in steadfast love. May the Lord help us to achieve these goals as we journey together to His Kingdom, guided by the Holy Spirit.

With love in Christ,

*+ Michael*

+ MICHAEL

+ Bishop of New York and the Diocese  
of New York and New Jersey