



The Tower

Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church

Sunday 31st May 2026

Sunday of the Pentecost

Issue 022



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This Sunday the Orthodox Church celebrates Pentecost. This is one of the biggest feasts in the liturgical year. The Feast marks the end of the Paschal cycle. At the end of the Liturgy we will have a kneeling prayer that is usually part of the Sunday Vespers service. This is ancient traditional prayers focused on repentance, salvation of souls and the gift of the Holy Spirit. In June we will enter a different period that is focused on the Holy Apostles. In June we will have another fasting period for the Feast of holy Apostles Peter and Paul. This year the fast is long. It starts on the 8th of June and will finish on the 28th of June. It is a 20 days fast but is very moderate because fish is allowed most of the time. It is strict fast only on Wednesdays and Fridays. I would like to encourage everyone to follow the fasting rules of the Orthodox church. Do your best. Last week on bank holiday Monday a group of people from our church participated in the pilgrimage to the well and the church of St. Melangell. At 11am we met at the carpark of Pennant Melangell, a beautiful mid Wales isolated region. It was the hottest day on record in the UK and even early in the morning was very hot. Surprisingly a large group of people arrived from as far as Cardiff. People from the church in Shrewsbury, Chester, Cardiff and many more arrived in the heat. Very quickly a group of about 40 people (twice as much as last year) joined and prepared for climbing to the well. It was very nice to see that the group was mainly young people some of them still catechumens and four priests, myself, Fr. Stephen Maxfield, Fr. Pantaleimon and Fr. Nicolas. In the heat in the middle of the day we walked for about 40 min. up the hill to the well. The walk is in

a very beautiful hill that opens up to a view of the valleys. At the well we served the blessing of the waters and after a short and refreshing rest we made our way back to the base around the church. In the church we set for Great Vespers and fr. Stephen Maxfield gave us a short speech about his first visit to the church. They came for the first time about 35 years ago with Fr. Barnabas and the church had been abandoned and neglected. It had been set for demolition but then the reliquarium with the relics have been found in the church and this is what we believe today to be the relics of St. Melangell. The relics today are in a concrete romanesk structure above the altar table. A large piece of the relics is in the church of Shrewsbury. We finished the Great Vespers with chanting many years to the people who adopted the name Melangell and venerated her relics.

It was and beautiful and amazing day. Next year we will be back there, Glory to God

Fr. John



Announcements

- On the 10th of June, Wednesday after the evening vespers at about 7pm, Theo Andreou will be guest in our church and will present his book "Temple of God An unbroken vision of the Virgin Mary". Please, come to this event.

Upcoming Services

31 May Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Pentecost
3 Jun Wed	6.30pm 7.15pm	Vespers Catechesis	Martha and Mary Sisters of Lazarus
6 Jun Sat	5.30pm	Great Vespers	All Saints
7 Jun Sun	10.00am 11.00am	Matins Divine Liturgy	Sunday of the All Saints

Announcement

Temple of God



Theo Andreou

Guest speaker: Theo Andreou - Wednesday 10th June 7.00pm

On Wednesday the 10th of June, after the evening vespers at about 7pm, Theo Andreou will be a guest speaker in our church and will present his book "Temple of God An unbroken vision of the Virgin Mary".

Please, come to this event!

The book "Temple of God: An Unbroken Vision of the Virgin Mary" by Theo Andreou delves into the veneration of the Virgin Mary in the early church and its significance in the Orthodox tradition. It explores the Scriptures, apocryphal material, the writings of Eastern and Western Church Fathers, and the ancient liturgical services and iconography of the Eastern Church.

Pictures from our Pilgrimage to the shrine of St Melangell



A story from GOARCH

The story of Pentecost is found in the book of The Acts of the Apostles. In Chapter two we are told that the Apostles of our Lord were gathered together in one place. Suddenly, a sound came from heaven like a rushing wind, filling the entire house where they were sitting. Then, tongues of fire appeared, and one sat upon each one of Apostles. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as directed by the Spirit (Acts 2:1-4).

This miraculous event occurred on the Jewish Feast of Pentecost, celebrated by the Jews on the fiftieth day after the Passover as the culmination of the Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22; Deuteronomy 16:10). The Feast of Weeks began on the third day after the Passover with the presentation of the first harvest sheaves to God, and it concluded on Pentecost with the offering of two loaves of unleavened bread, representing the first products of the harvest (Leviticus 23:17-20; Deuteronomy 16:9-10).

Since the Jewish Feast of Pentecost was a great pilgrimage feast, many people from throughout the Roman Empire were gathered in Jerusalem on this day. When the people in Jerusalem heard the sound, they came together and heard their own languages being spoken by the Apostles (Acts 2:5-6). The people were amazed, knowing that some of those speaking were Galileans, and not men who would normally speak many different languages. They wondered what this meant, and some even thought the Apostles were drunk (Acts 2:7-13). Peter, hearing these remarks, stood up and addressed the crowd. He preached to the people regarding the Old Testament prophecies about the coming of the Holy Spirit. He spoke about Jesus Christ and His death and glorious Resurrection. Great conviction fell upon the people, and they asked the Apostles, "What shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38-39).

The Bible records that on that day about three thousand were baptized. Following, the book of Acts states that the newly baptized continued daily to hear the teaching of the Apostles, as the early Christians met together for fellowship, the breaking of bread, and for prayer. Many wonderful signs and miracles were done through the Apostles, and the Lord added to the Church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47).

Icon of the Feast



The icon of the Feast of Pentecost is known as "The Descent of the Holy Spirit". It is an icon of bold colors of red and gold signifying that this is a great event. The movement of the icon is from the top to the bottom. At the top of the icon is

a semicircle with rays coming from it. The rays are pointing toward the Apostles, and the tongues of fire are seen descending upon each one of them signifying the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The building in the background of the icon represents the upper room where the Disciples of Christ gathered after the Ascension. The Apostles are shown seated in a semicircle which shows the unity of the Church. Included in the group of the Apostles is Saint Paul, who, though not present with the others on the day of Pentecost, became an Apostle of the Church and the greatest missionary. Also included are the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, holding books of the Gospel, while the other Apostles are holding scrolls that represent the teaching authority given to them by Christ. In the center of the icon below the Apostles, a royal figure is seen against a dark background. This is a symbolic figure, Cosmos, representing the people of the world living in darkness and sin, and involved in pagan worship. However, the figure carries in his hands a cloth containing scrolls which represent the teaching of the Apostles. The tradition of the Church holds that the Apostles carried the message of the Gospel to all parts of the world.

In the icon of Pentecost we see the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit, sent down upon the Apostles who will teach the nations and baptize them in the name of the Holy Trinity. Here we see that the Church is brought together and sustained in unity through the presence and work of the Holy Spirit, that the Spirit guides the Church in the missionary endeavor throughout the world, and that the Spirit nurtures the Body of Christ, the Church, in truth and love.

<https://www.goarch.org/pentecost?inheritRedirect=true&redirect=%2Fpentecost>



Synaxarion

On the Saturday before Pentecost we commemorate all departed pious Christians, with the idea that the occasion of the coming of the Holy Spirit not only consists of the economy of the salvation of man, but that the departed also participate in this salvation. Therefore, the Holy Church, sending up prayers on Pentecost for the enlivening of all the living through the Holy Spirit, petitions for grace of the Holy Spirit also for the departed, which they were granted while they were still living, and was the source of eternal blessedness, because 'all souls are enlivened through the Holy Spirit.'

The Holy Church appeals to us, 'Let all of us pray to Christ, today as we remember the dead of all ages': 'Your servants who rest in Your courtyard, and in the bosom of Abraham, from Adam even until today who have chastely served You, fathers, and our brothers, friends, together with relatives', 'forefathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers, from the first and even up to the last', every rank and generation', 'kings, priests, bishops, monks and novices', 'husbands together with wives', 'those departed at sea, or on land, or in the rivers, wells, or in the trenches', 'in the mountains, on travel', 'in the deserts, or in the cities', and 'any place', 'in vain pursuits, cut in half by lightning, both from deathly abomination, and any wound', 'dying from Divine foreboding, all mortal thunder sent down from Heaven, the cracking of the earth, the rising storms of the sea', 'to be carried away by hailstones, snow and increased clouds, or killed by a brick, or covered over with earth', 'unexpected death of the pious, and from every stream of fallen trees, iron, or rocks', 'was food for an animal, either birds, or reptiles', 'who died from poisonous bites by the enwrapping of snakes, from being trampled by horses, from strangling and hanging by the simple-hearted', 'who You have allowed, O Lord, to die from a sudden unexpected fall', 'all who repose, O Lord, piously repose', 'Our Savior, deliver all the faithful departed from the ever burning fire and the never ending darkness, the gnashing of teeth, and the unending torment of worms, and every torture', 'Arise on the Last Day with glory', 'grant me Your heavenly Kingdom'.

Book recommendation from the Parish Library

Since the earliest centuries of Christianity, Christians have been captivated by the Virgin Mary, treating her with great respect and honour. But what was the theological basis of this veneration, and how did it relate to the identity of her Son, Jesus Christ, the Word of God incarnate? This small book aims to answer this question, along with others frequently asked about the Eastern Orthodox perspective of the Mother of God. Our exploration includes the Scriptures, apocryphal material, the writings of Eastern and Western Church Fathers, and the ancient liturgical services and iconography of the Eastern Church. Navigating through this wide range of sources, it aims to preserve both readability and depth, clarity and mystery. It is hoped that by doing so, this book will be useful for enquirers and scholars alike.

It is also hoped that this text will be found useful by Roman Catholics and Protestants who desire to know more about the Orthodox vision of Mary, as well as Orthodox who wish to enter more deeply into their own tradition. Although it mainly concentrates on the patristic and liturgical testimony of the Eastern Church, it equally reflects the perception of Mary held by Christians in the West for the first millennium of Church history.

Temple of God



Theo Andreou

The following readings and sermon have been extracted from the Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain news bulletin.

To access the full bulleting, please visit: www.thyateira.org.uk.

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Πράξ. β', 1-11

Ἐν τῷ συμπληροῦσθαι τὴν ἡμέραν τῆς Πεντηκοστῆς, ἦσαν ἅπαντες ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτό. Καὶ ἐγένετο ἄφνω ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ ἦχος ὡσπερ φερομένης πνοῆς βιαίας, καὶ ἐπλήρωσεν ὅλον τὸν οἶκον οὗ ἦσαν καθήμενοι. Καὶ ὤφθησαν αὐτοῖς διαμεριζόμενα γλώσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός, ἐκάθισέν τε ἐφ' ἓνα ἕκαστον αὐτῶν. Καὶ ἐπλήσθησαν ἅπαντες Πνεύματος Ἁγίου, καὶ ἤρξαντο λαλεῖν ἐτέρως γλώσσαις, καθὼς τὸ Πνεῦμα ἐδίδου αὐτοῖς ἀποφθέγγεσθαι. Ἦσαν δὲ ἐν Ἱερουσαλὴμ κατοικοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι, ἄνδρες εὐλαβεῖς, ἀπὸ παντὸς ἔθνους τῶν ὑπὸ τὸν οὐρανόν. Γενομένης δὲ τῆς φωνῆς ταύτης, συνήλθεν τὸ πλήθος καὶ συνεχύθη, ὅτι ἤκουον εἷς ἕκαστος τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ λαλούντων αὐτῶν. Ἐξίσταντο δὲ πάντες καὶ ἐθαύμαζον, λέγοντες πρὸς ἀλλήλους, Οὐκ ἰδοῦ πάντες οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ λαλοῦντες Γαλιλαῖοι; Καὶ πῶς ἡμεῖς ἀκούομεν ἕκαστος τῆ ἰδίᾳ διαλέκτῳ ἡμῶν ἐν ᾗ ἐγεννήθημεν; Πάρθοι καὶ Μῆδοι καὶ Ἑλαμίται, καὶ οἱ κατοικοῦντες τὴν Μεσοποταμίαν, Ἰουδαίαν τε καὶ Καππαδοκίαν, Πόντον καὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν, Φρυγίαν τε καὶ Παμφυλίαν, Αἴγυπτον καὶ τὰ μέρη τῆς Λιβύης τῆς κατὰ Κυρήνην, καὶ οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες Ῥωμαῖοι, Ἰουδαῖοι τε καὶ προσήλυτοι, Κρήτες καὶ Ἄραβες, ἀκούομεν λαλούντων αὐτῶν ταῖς ἡμετέραις γλώσσαις τὰ μεγαλεῖα τοῦ Θεοῦ.

EPISTLE READING

Acts 2: 1-11

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 and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language. And they were amazed and wondered, saying, Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.



Christian Orthodox Thyateira Youth (COTY)
COTY is the official youth ministry of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, for ages 16-35.
To learn more visit: www.coty.org.uk.
Instagram: COTY_org



ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ἰωάν. ζ', 37-52, η', 12

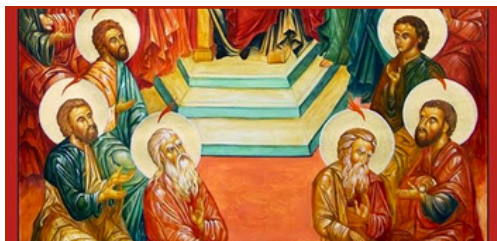
Ἐν τῇ ἐσχάτῃ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ μεγάλῃ τῆς ἑορτῆς εἰστήκει ὁ Ἰησοῦς καὶ ἔκραγε λέγων· ἔάν τις διψᾷ, ἔρχέσθω πρὸς με καὶ πινέτω. ὁ πιστεύων εἰς ἐμέ, καθὼς εἶπεν ἡ γραφή, ποταμοὶ ἐκ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ ῥευσουσιν ὕδατος ζῶντος. τοῦτο δὲ εἶπε περὶ τοῦ Πνεύματος οὗ ἔμελλον λαμβάνειν οἱ πιστεύοντες εἰς αὐτόν· οὕτω γὰρ ἦν Πνεῦμα Ἅγιον, ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐδέπω ἐδοξάσθη. Πολλοὶ οὖν ἐκ τοῦ ὄχλου ἀκούσαντες τὸν λόγον ἔλεγον· οὗτός ἐστιν ἀληθῶς ὁ προφήτης· ἄλλοι ἔλεγον· οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ Χριστός· ἄλλοι ἔλεγον· μὴ γὰρ ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας ὁ Χριστός ἔρχεται; οὐχὶ ἡ γραφή εἶπεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ σπέρματος Δαυὶδ καὶ ἀπὸ Βηθλεὲμ τῆς κώμης, ὅπου ἦν Δαυὶδ, ὁ Χριστός ἔρχεται; σχίσμα οὖν ἐν τῷ ὄχλῳ ἐγένετο δι' αὐτόν. τινὲς δὲ ἠθέλον ἐξ αὐτῶν πιᾶσαι αὐτόν, ἀλλ' οὐδεὶς ἐπέβαλεν ἐπ' αὐτόν τὰς χεῖρας. Ἦλθον οὖν οἱ ὑπηρέται πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς καὶ Φαρισαίους, καὶ εἶπον αὐτοῖς ἐκεῖνοι· διατί οὐκ ἠγάγετε αὐτόν; ἀπεκρίθησαν οἱ ὑπηρέται· οὐδέποτε οὕτως ἐλάλησεν ἄνθρωπος, ὡς οὗτος ὁ ἄνθρωπος· ἀπεκρίθησαν οὖν αὐτοῖς οἱ Φαρισαῖοι· μὴ καὶ ὑμεῖς πεπλάνησθε; μὴ τις ἐκ τῶν ἀρχόντων ἐπίστευσεν εἰς αὐτόν ἢ ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων; ἀλλ' ὁ ὄχλος οὗτος ὁ μὴ γινώσκων τὸν νόμον ἐπικατάρατοί εἰσι! λέγει Νικόδημος πρὸς αὐτούς, ὁ ἐλθὼν νυκτὸς πρὸς αὐτόν, εἰς ὧν ἐξ αὐτῶν· μὴ ὁ νόμος ἡμῶν κρίνει τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἐάν μὴ ἀκοῦσῃ παρ' αὐτοῦ πρότερον καὶ γινῶ τί ποιεῖ; ἀπεκρίθησαν καὶ εἶπον αὐτῷ· μὴ καὶ σὺ ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας εἶ; ἐρεύνησον καὶ ἴδε ὅτι προφήτης ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας οὐκ ἐγήγερται. Πάλιν οὖν αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐλάλησε λέγων· ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ φῶς τοῦ κόσμου· ὁ ἀκολουθῶν ἐμοὶ οὐ μὴ περιπατήσῃ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, ἀλλ' ἔξει τὸ φῶς τῆς ζωῆς.



GOSPEL READING

John 7: 37-52 ; 8: 12

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and proclaimed, If any one thirst, let him come to me and drink. He who believes in me, as the scripture has said, 'Out of his heart shall flow rivers of living water.' Now this he said about the Spirit, which those who believed in him were to receive; for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. When they heard these words, some of the people said, This is really the prophet. Others said, This is the Christ. But some said, Is the Christ to come from Galilee? Has not the scripture said that the Christ is descended from David, and comes from Bethlehem, the village where David was? So there was a division among the people over him. Some of them wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. The officers then went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, Why did you not bring him? The officers answered, No man ever spoke like this man! The Pharisees answered them, Are you led astray, you also? Have any of the authorities or of the Pharisees believed in him? But this crowd, who do not know the law, are accursed. Nikodemus, who had gone to him before, and who was one of them, said to them, Does our law judge a man without first giving him a hearing and learning what he does? They replied, Are you from Galilee too? Search and you will see that no prophet is to rise from Galilee. Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, I am the light of the world; he who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.



SERMON ON THE GOSPEL READING

"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water"
(John 7: 38)

Today is Sunday of Pentecost. The Church, fifty days after the Resurrection of the Lord from the dead and ten days after the Ascension to heaven, celebrates the descent of the Holy Spirit. The Third Person of the Holy, Undivided and Life-giving Trinity came to the world. This event took place, in accordance with the promise of the Lord to the Apostles prior to His departure from the world. The Lord spoke to the Apostles of the coming of "the other Paraclete", that is the coming of the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament there is a prefiguring of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity a number of times and at various events. What is "the pillar of light" which led the Israelites in the desert for forty odd years so that they could reach the Promised Land, without hesitation? The illumination of the seventy men assisting Moses, whom he elected following the divine instruction, was also the action of the Spirit of God.

Beyond this, all the prophets were inspired by the Holy Spirit. For this reason, the Church sings as follows: in the teachings of the prophets You announced to us the way of salvation. Additionally, in the Prophet Joel we read as follows: "After this it shall come to pass that I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions." (Joel 3: 1-3)

In the New Testament we have the presence of the Holy Spirit more apparent and more emphatically. For instance, at the baptism of the Lord in the River Jordan. Evangelist Luke writes: "And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him" (Luke 3: 22). Beyond this, we have the presence of the Holy Spirit at the Transfiguration of the Lord on mount Tabor. Matthew the evangelist recalls: "behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them" (Matthew 17: 5) The ecclesiastical hymn proclaims: "in the apostles our Saviour shone the grace of Your Spirit." In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke the Evangelist narrating the event of the descent of the Holy Spirit refers to the preaching of Peter and records of the first three thousand people who believed.

From the day of Pentecost onwards the action of the Holy Spirit becomes more obvious and more apparent. This happens both to the Apostles and their successors as receivers and transmitters of the charismata of the Holy Spirit. The same occurs to the rest of the members of the Church, who enjoy the many gifts of the Third Person of the Holy Trinity. The Church is permanently led towards the whole Truth.

In accordance with the Orthodox teaching *"The Holy Spirit provides every gift: He inspires prophecy, perfects the priesthood, grants wisdom to the illiterate, makes simple fishermen to become wise theologians, and establishes perfect order in the organisation of the Church. Wherefore, O Comforter, equal in nature and majesty with the Father and the Son, glory to You!"* Amen!

For your prayers

24 May	Kristiyan	Baptised this day in 2026
31 May	William	Baptised this day in 2026
May	Olivia-Nikoleta	Baptised in 2026
2026	Theodore	Laid to rest this time in 2022



Please consider donating!

Our parish is a self-supporting charitable community, relying solely on the generosity of our faithful, with no supplementary funding from external bodies. We rely on your donations for everything you see in the church including small salary for the priest, and don't forget all charitable work of the church and all the fundraisings organised from the Archdiocese. All our finances are in your hands. You are the owners of everything in the church including the building and all the bills.

Please consider supporting your Parish by donating monthly via standing order:
<https://www.stbarbara.org.uk/church-membership>

If you are a UK taxpayer, please complete the Gift Aid Form alongside each donation as this allows the church to receive an additional 25p for every £1 you donate, at no extra cost to you. Please use yellow envelopes located at the entrance of the church. If you use card payment for your donations, and you like to Gift aid your payment, please put your receipt in the yellow envelope and sign it.

Thank you for your support !



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