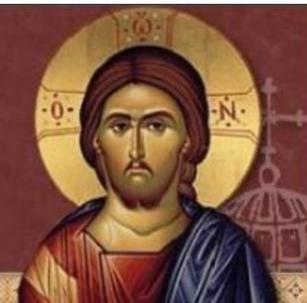


THE SPIRIT

HOLY PENTECOST EDITION

JUNE 2013



UPCOMING EVENTS

ACOY Retreat

26th -28th July

Mark | 0401 127 586

Youth Night

Every Thursday 7pm

Micha | 0403 277 488

PENTECOST PRAYER

We ask for your forgiveness,
Lord

when we forget
the power that lies within
and trust instead
upon our human strength.
Remind us of that glorious
day

when your Spirit
transformed the lives of
those

who hid in fear
into men of power

Renew these hearts which
have grown cold
with flames of fire
as on that Pentecost
that this might be
the church that you desire.

THE FEAST OF HOLY PENTECOST

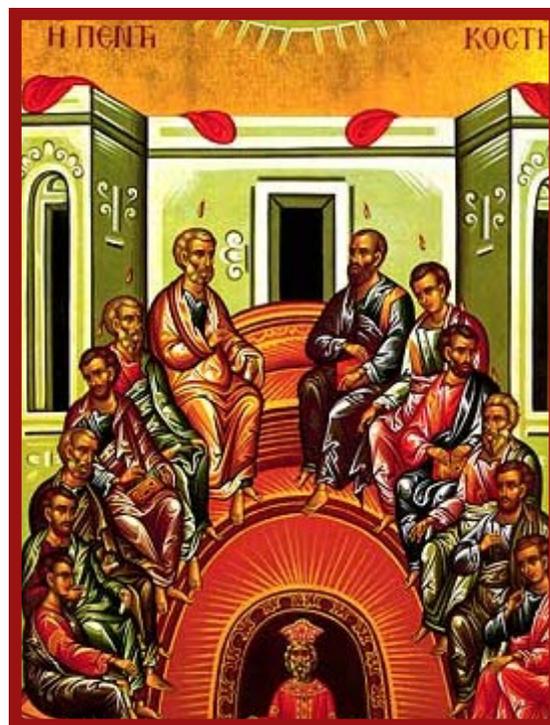
The Feast of the Holy Pentecost is celebrated 50 days after Holy Pascha (Easter) and ten days after the Feast of Christ's Divine Ascension every year.

In the Old Testament, Pentecost was referred to as the Feast which occurred 50 days after Passover. The Passover was the feast celebrating the exodus of the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt. Pentecost therefore celebrated God's gift of the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai.

The Feast of Holy Pentecost commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles on the day of Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came down onto the Apostles as tongues of fire, allowing them to speak in different languages in order to pass on the Good News to the world. This Feast thus celebrates the ultimate creation and foundation of the Church through the preaching of the Apostles. Thousands were baptised on that day after hearing the Gospel message of Salvation, which is through Jesus Christ alone.

In the coming of the Spirit, the very essence of the Church is revealed as "The Holy Spirit provides all, Overflows with prophecy, fulfills the priesthood, Has taught wisdom to illiterates, has revealed fishermen as theologians, He brings together the whole council of the Church."

Micha Chalhoub



ORTHROS OF THE FEAST

The spring of the Spirit hath come to those on earth, dividing noetically into fire-bearing rivers, moistening the Apostles and illuminating them. The fire hath become to them a dewy cloud, lighting, and raining flames upon them, from whom we received grace by the fire and the water. Verily the fire of the

THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

Growing up, going to school and working with friends of different faiths, we may have encountered questions on how we perform the sign of the cross,

Why are our fingers positioned the way they are? Why do we cross to the right before the left? What significance does it all hold?

To answer simply, it epitomizes our Orthodox beliefs of the Holy Trinity and Jesus Christ. However, a deeper explanation may foster a more profound understanding and appreciation of our faith and religious practices.

Theodoret, known as Theodoret of Cyrus, was an influential and pivotal figure in the early Byzantine Church. He gave this instruction to explain the significance of the sign of the cross:

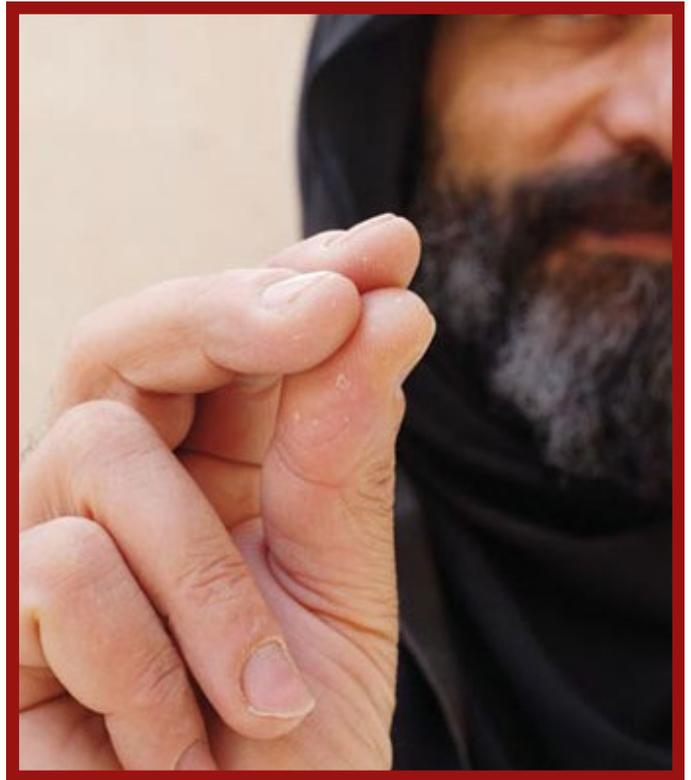
“This is how to bless someone with your hand and make the sign of the cross over them. Hold three fingers, as equals, together, to represent the Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. These are not three gods, but one God in Trinity. The names are separate, but the divinity one ... You should hold the other two fingers slightly bent, not completely straight. This is because these represent the dual nature of Christ, divine and human. God in His divinity, and human in His incarnation, yet perfect in both. The upper finger represents divinity, and the lower humanity; this way salvation goes from the higher finger to the lower. So is the bending of the fingers interpreted, for the worship of Heaven comes down for our salvation. This is how you must cross yourselves and give a blessing, as the holy fathers have commanded.”

Nowadays however, we see differences amongst adherents of Western Christian Churches. The sign of the cross is performed from left shoulder to right, with a full open hand symbolic of the ‘Five Wounds of Christ’ obtained during His passion. The Catholic Encyclopedia states how the Roman Catholics blessed themselves from right to left, like the Orthodox, until the 15th or 16th century.

Concrete reasoning for this change remains indefinite, however Church Fathers and their multiple interpretations have attempted to justify this.

“...in all our coming in and going out, in putting of our shoes, at the bath, at the table, in lighting our candles, in lying down, in sitting down, whatever employment occupieth us, we mark our foreheads with the sign of the cross.”

Tertullian (160- 225 AD)



For most, it is said the forehead symbolizes Heaven; the stomach, the earth; and so, the downward movement of the hand signifies Christ’s descent to us.

It is important to remember our gesture should be made consciously and devoutly, for the Sign of the Cross is a sign of our faith and love for Christ.

In our Eastern Orthodox faith, many interpretations have risen in explanation. Christ was seated at the RIGHT hand of the Father. The Lord separated the sheep from the goats, putting the faithful sheep on His RIGHT. By His invincible power, the Lord overcame the devil, who is on the left side, dark and lacking strength. From the Jews (right), Christ passed to the Gentiles (left)

For Western Christians, left to right signifies a shift from misery (left) crossing over to glory (right), just as Christ crossed over from death to life, and from Hades to Paradise. It also signifies a reflection of the hand movement of the Priest, eventually adapting as a customary practice.

It is important to remember our gesture should be made consciously and devoutly, for the Sign of the Cross is a sign of our faith and love for Christ.

Samantha Antoun

THE LONELIEST MAN IN SYDNEY

With a bucket of cookies in hand, I join a crowd of people gathered around a man in a large overcoat and golfers hat.

In his thick German accent, the man serenades the crowd with his poetry.

“If a dream is a reflection of you, I never have to dream again!” he recites proudly.

His name is Ivan, but we call him The Poetry Man. He calls himself the loneliest man in Sydney.

Ivan is one of the many homeless people Saint Rafael’s Mission feed every Monday night at Martin Place.

“Loneliness is something you have to experience to know what it is,”

While many come for the steaming hot pizzas and fresh coffee, Ivan comes for the friendly faces.

“Loneliness is something you have to experience to know what it is,” he told me sadly.

“I don’t have friends, neither male or female,” he said. “If I had a family here, you would never see me on the streets, why would I be if I had someone to support,”

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, the inner-city part of Sydney has the highest rate of homelessness in NSW with 164 homeless people per 10,000 of the population.

Like many who wind up homeless, Ivan had it tough from the very beginning.

He escaped from his abusive alcoholic father in Yugoslavia and came to Australia with only fifty dollars in his pocket. The language barrier paired with his social anxiety affected his ability to find a job and meet new people.



“My life in retrospect has been a complete disaster in this country from the very beginning,” he said.

“Because of my social phobia, my entire life has been wasted,” he said. “I used to get panicky around other people and because of that I couldn’t have a family or a girl on my arm. And that’s always been my dream,”

While many take shelter in the streets, Ivan strives to find accommodation he can afford. Even if it means living with a drug addict.

“Even now I share a place with an alcoholic and drug addict,” said Ivan. “He smokes pot and gets injected every Friday.”

Speaking and reciting his poetry to the youth every Monday night is the highlight of his week.

He wanted to express his gratitude to the Saint Rafael Mission group with this poem:

You fed us when we were hungry
And said a simple hello.
With a voice of sincerity
And somewhat mellow

To the sounds of the distant bell
Our hearts are joined together
With a symphony of love as well,
The minds and souls are getting better

You disappear suddenly,
Out of sight,
The stardust gently follows
I admire quietly into the night
The city acknowledges,
The evening flows.

Lord Jesus, teach us to see who you see.
Help us to be a people who don’t walk past
Without stopping, and staying,
To meet a need, or listen to a story.
Make us always ready to comfort those on our streets
Keep us open to what you are asking us to do for each one.
Give us your courage to look people in the eye,
And your love to reach out in compassion,
Grant us your peace so that we know we are in your hands,
and doing your will,
May your perfect love for a stranger, cast out our fear of
them
And leave us ready to be your hands and feet to them today.

Ruperta Daher

FUN BIBLE FACTS

In the *Bible*, there are around one hundred different names used for God.

The Bible has been translated into 1,200 different languages, including Klingon, for the Star Trek enthusiasts.

Because the Bible is the world's number one bestseller, it is also the most shoplifted book in the world.

About 50 Bibles are sold every minute

The shortest verse in the NIV Bible is John 11:35: "Jesus wept."

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Our actions have a tongue of their own; they have an eloquence of their own, even when the tongue is silent. For deeds prove the lover more than words."

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

THIS IS THE VOICE!

Saint Nicholas held their annual karaoke night on Sunday 9th of June. Like the popular TV Series *The Voice*, we held blind auditions, had a battle round and a big finale. Delta Goodrem even made a special appearance! Well, Natalie Daher rocked up in a blonde wig, but close enough!

The night was a big success, with over 125 people attending. We held twenty auditions, with people belting their heart out to their favourite tune. Although everyone did a fantastic job, we narrowed it down to three winners. Rawana took home the trophy for best Solo, Amal and Ruperta won Duet, and St Felix wowed the crowd as best singing group.

The night wouldn't have been successful without the help of our youth, judges, and everyone that attended. A special thank you to our donators, Croydon Park Petroleum and Brian Kannan.

Ashley Saliba



GETTING TO KNOW YOU-TH



Name: Natalie Daher

Favourite Food: Kit Kat and ice-cream... Clearly all things healthy ;)

Favourite Quote: "And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing." Corinthians 3:2

Saint who Inspires you: Saint Catherine. She never doubted God's power or truth. She stood up and defended her faith in front of hundreds of men, supposed scholars, and baffled them all. Her actions led to the conversion of many, and all the while she stayed true to the Lord and humble throughout it all. She is an amazing example for what we should be as Christians - humble yet steadfast in our faith. Not denying our beliefs to be polite or not offend those around us, eg at work or school, but rather lead by example and be proud and confident in what we believe in.

Dream destination: Anywhere where I can sleep! Umm... Mount Athos - but that is close to impossible. God willing I'll send John and get him to report back ;)

Best advice you've been given: Strive to tame the tongue, for it is the smallest member but can cause the worst damage. It is not what you take in, but what you put out of your mouth that reflects your heart.