



# Prophet Elias News

News and Views for the Orthodox Church of the  
Holy Prophet Elias in Devon  
June 2022



## Sermon on the Ascension of the Lord by Saint Nikolai Velimirovic



Thus did the One ascend to Heaven Who held heaven within Himself. He who carries hell within himself will end up in hell, but he who bears heaven within his soul will ascend to heaven. And truly, no one can ascend to heaven other than those who have heaven within; and no one can end up in hell besides those who have hell within. The familiar is drawn to what is familiar and unites with the familiar; but it rejects what is not familiar. Matter submits to the spirit to the extent that the human soul is filled with the Divine Spirit; and the laws of nature are obedient to moral laws, which govern the world. Because the Lord Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the perfection of moral law, to Him is subject all matter—the entire physical world, with all the laws of nature. Any person, as a spirit, can be victorious in his life over a certain law of nature, with the help of another law of nature—that is, he can overcome it with his own spirit. Christ, as the God-Man,

could subject the laws of nature to Himself through the law of the Spirit, which is the supreme law of the created world. However, this concept, just as any other spiritual concept, can be but partially explained by ordinary earthly conceptualizations and reasoning—and that only by examples and comparisons. Spiritual things only become clear beyond a doubt when the spirit sees them and perceives them. In order to see and feel the manifestations of the spiritual world, long and exhausting spiritual practice is needed, after which, by God’s grace, spiritual vision may be opened in a person; this vision allows him to see what seems unbelievable and impossible to ordinary mortals. Nevertheless, a person must first believe those who have seen the unbelievable, and strengthen their faith from day to day, striving to see what is inaccessible to the common gaze.

Not in vain does the Lord say, “Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed” [John 20:29]. The Lord God rejoices in their faith just as a father on earth rejoices that his children believe his every word. All the apostles were present at the Ascension of the Lord, gathered on the hill. This was their last collective meeting. However, this was not the last appearance of Christ. Later He appeared in a vision to the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus, to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos, and to other apostles, as well as to martyrs, holy hierarchs, and confessors, over the course of the entire history of the Christian Church.

But the day will come—and that day is not far off—when all the righteous men and women who firmly believed in Him throughout their lives will see Him. And around Him in the heaven will gather all those who were baptized on earth in His name—not only with water, but also with the Spirit and Fire. And they will enter into His joy, which the Heavenly Father has prepared for all His chosen, and will inherit a joy that they have never known before.

Posted at OCA: [Home](#) / [The Orthodox Faith](#) / [Feasts & Saints](#) / [Sermons on the 12 Feasts](#)

Divine Liturgy for the Ascension will be celebrated at Saint Anne’s on  
Thursday June 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10.30am

## Pentecost: The Descent of the Holy Spirit by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

The Old Testament feast of Pentecost occurred 50 days after Passover—the commemoration of the Exodus of the Israelites from captivity and slavery in Egypt—in celebration of God’s gift of the Ten Commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai.

In the New Covenant of the Messiah, the Passover event takes on its new meaning—the celebration of Christ’s Resurrection, the “passing over” from death to life and from earth to heaven, the “exodus” of God’s People from this sinful world to the eternal Kingdom. The New Testament Pentecost also is fulfilled and made new by the coming of the “new law” with the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples of Christ. As we read in the Acts of the Apostles 2:1-4, “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 as resting upon each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit.” The Holy Spirit Christ promised to His disciples came on the day of Pentecost (John 14:26, 15:26; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5) as the apostles received “the power from on high” and began to preach and bear witness to Jesus as the risen Christ, the King and the Lord. Traditionally, this moment has been called the “birthday of the Church.”

In the liturgical services for the Great Feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit is celebrated together with the full revelation of the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The fullness of the Godhead is manifested with the Spirit’s coming to man, and the Church’s hymns celebrate this manifestation as the final act of God’s self-disclosure and self-donation to the world of His creation.

On Pentecost, we have the final fulfilment of the mission of Jesus Christ and the first beginning of the messianic age of the Kingdom of God mystically present in this world in the Church of the Messiah. For this reason the 50th day stands as the beginning of the era that is beyond the limitations of this world, 50 being that number which stands for eternal and heavenly fulfilment in Jewish as well as Christian mystical piety: seven times seven, plus one.

Thus, Pentecost is called an “apocalyptic day,” which means the day of final revelation. It is also called an “eschatological day,” which means that it is the day of the final and perfect *end*—in Greek, the *eschaton*. When the Messiah comes and the Day of the Lord is at hand, the “last days” are inaugurated, in which “God declares, ‘I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.’” This is the ancient prophecy to which the Apostle Peter refers in the first sermon of the Christian Church, preached on that first Pentecost Sunday (Acts 2: 1 7; Joel 2: 28-32).

The Great Feast of Pentecost is not simply the celebration of an event which took place centuries ago. Rather, it is the celebration of what must happen—and indeed does happen—to us in the Church today. We have died and risen with the Messiah-King, and we have received His Most Holy Spirit. We are the “temples of the Holy Spirit.” God’s Spirit dwells in us (Romans 8; 1 Corinthians 2-3, 12; 2 Corinthians 3; Galatians 5; Ephesians 2-3). We, by our own membership in the Church, have received “the Seal of the Gift of the Holy Spirit” in the sacrament of Chrismation. Pentecost has happened to us.

During the Divine Liturgy on Pentecost, we recall our baptism into Christ as we sing, in place of the Trisagion, the well known verse from Galatians: “As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.” The usual antiphons are replaced by special psalm verses that emphasize the meaning of the feast, while the day’s readings from the Epistles and Gospels recall the Holy Spirit’s coming to men. The kontakion speaks of the reversal of Babel, as God unites the nations into the unity of His Spirit. And the troparion proclaims the gathering of the entire universe into God’s “net” through the work of the inspired apostles. In the hymns “O Heavenly King” and “We have seen the True Light”—sung on Pentecost for the first time since Holy Pascha—we invoke the Holy Spirit to “come and abide in us” while proclaiming that “we have received the heavenly Spirit.”

On the evening of Pentecost Sunday, at Vespers, three lengthy prayers are recited, during which we kneel for the first time since Pascha. The Monday after Pentecost is the Feast of the Holy Spirit, while the Sunday after Pentecost is the Feast of All Saints. This is the logical liturgical sequence, since the coming of the Holy Spirit is fulfilled in us as we pursue holiness and sanctity in our own lives—that holiness and sanctity which constitute the very purpose of the creation and salvation of the world: “Thus says the Lord: ‘Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I your God am holy’” (Leviticus 11:44-45, 1 Peter 1:15-16).

Thus, Pentecost ushers in a new era, in which we are called to pursue sainthood by acquiring the Holy Spirit, by opening ourselves to the fullness of Christ’s revelation to mankind, and by anticipating the Kingdom of God, yet to be fully revealed, but already fully present in our midst as we entreat the Holy Spirit to “come and abide in us” now and in the life of the world to come.

## How Should Christians Behave After Communion?

*Hugh drew our attention to a useful compilation of views by Russian priests on how we should behave during the rest of the day after taking communion. As Father Alexei Veretelnikov points out 'we can find a lot [of advice] about the rules of preparing for Holy Communion, but very little about how we should behave after this sacrament.'*

*The five participants are largely in agreement. While some Holy Fathers recommend staying quietly in church for most of the day, or maintaining complete abstinence, or spending the day alone and in silence, there are also other ways. Here are some brief excerpts:*

In the pace of big city life for many, Sunday remains the only day when there is an opportunity to meet with their friends and enjoy a good company. Of course, there is no sin in a good company over a cup of tea. Sunday requires us to do good deeds, especially on the day we take Communion. It is advisable to devote time to reading the Scriptures, prayer and works of mercy. Being the heart of the spiritual life, the Eucharist requires that we should be vigilant and attentive to our actions, words and thoughts.

*Priest Alexei Veretelnikov*

Firstly, grace will not be lost after Communion if you treat people around you with love. Whether you are in a cafe, in a store or on the street: If you treat others with love and talk to them, grace will not go away, but will even increase in your heart. As the Holy Fathers say, you can remain silent but be distracted in the mind, and you can speak and be in the Spirit. Thus, the most important thing is not to sin and to remain in love. It is possible after Communion to be silent, to shut oneself up in a cell, but at the same time to sin more with thoughts than on the street or in communication with people. I think that the most important thing is to treat people with kind feelings and love.

*Archpriest Dimitry Vylekzhanin*

What should we do? How can we safely keep away from the world and everything that is in the world on the day of Communion? Which cave can we hide in? Is there another way to live the day of Communion righteously and properly? I think yes.

The Lord Jesus Christ lived on earth 2000 years ago and lives now in Christians. We know from the Gospels that He spent thirty years in everyday holiness, doing ordinary everyday things very virtuously. Then for three years He served people, preaching the truth and healing the sick. Finally, the time came to take the Cross and go to Golgotha. And all these variations of Christ's life can and will be manifested in the communicants: everyday holiness, service to others, and trials. And that means, having communed, there is no need for us to lock Christ in the apartment; there is no need to put His lamp under a bushel (cf. Mt. 5:15); there is no need to hide Him from other people. The Kingdom of God has drawn near and must not retreat.

*Priest Leonid Kudryachov*

Let's look at the apostles. They received Communion at the Last Supper, and then they had to go through a series of trials. They failed everything! They failed to support Christ during His prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane—they fell asleep. They ran away when He was taken into custody. Peter renounced Christ. Everything went wrong. If they had thought the way modern Orthodox parishioners do, they would have decided that it would be better not to take Communion altogether because of such consequences. Or at least they would have concluded that taking Communion should be less frequent "away from temptation." But instead they began to partake of the Holy Resurrection every day and more often.

*Hieromonk Dimitry (Pershin)*

Communion is participation in the Last Supper. And after taking Communion we show the image of Christ's love in this world. We fulfil the mission that God the Father entrusted to His Son to share with us. Thus, having united with Him at the Last Supper, we bear witness to the One Whom we have received in Communion, by Whom we live and Whom we serve. We try not to spill the grace-filled joy that has touched our hearts, but to increase it in works of love, caring for the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, or prisoners. For the distance between us and God is the distance between us and those who need us. This is the great happiness of Christians—there is no need to go on a pilgrimage to get closer to God.

*Prepared by [Natalia Shatova](#). Translation by Dmitry Lapa. Posted at [Monastery.ru](#) 5/4/20  
The complete article can be found at <https://orthochristian.com/145945.html>*

*One thing all the participants omit to say – I imagine because they take it absolutely for granted - is that we need to use the prayers of thanksgiving after communion. If they are read in church after the Liturgy, we should stay if we can and listen to them quietly. We should in any case use them at home. Father John has often recommended that we should say at least one of the thanksgiving prayers every day of the following week, to remind us that Communion is always central to our lives, not just for a few hours on Sunday. Ed.*

## This Month We Celebrate

- On Wednesday June 1<sup>st</sup>: **Leavetaking of Pascha**  
**Nun-Martyr Wite** of Whitchurch Canonorum in Dorset (?7<sup>th</sup> C)
- On Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>: **THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST**
- On Friday 3<sup>rd</sup>: **Saint Kevin**, Abbot of Glendalough (618)
- On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup>: **Saints Martha and Mary** of Bethany  
We wish **Bethany S** and **Daphne L** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**  
**Saint Petroc** of Padstow, Master Builder of the Faith in the West (6<sup>th</sup> C)  
**Saint Sophia** of Ainos (2<sup>nd</sup>C)  
We wish **Sophie G** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>: **Fathers of the First** (325) and **Second** (381) **Ecumenical Councils**  
**Saint John of New Valamo** (1958)  
**Saint Boniface** (Wynfrith) of Crediton , Apostle to the Germans (754)
- On Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup>: **Holy Martyr Priscilla** of Rome (c305)  
We wish **Scilla W** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**  
**Holy Martyr Valeria** of Caesarea (c300)  
We wish **Matoushka Val** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Thursday 9<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Cyril of Alexandria** (444)  
**Saint Columba of Iona**, Enlightener of the Scots (597)
- On Friday 10<sup>th</sup>: **Martyrs Alexander and Antonina** at Constantinople (c313)
- On Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>: **Holy Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas**  
**Saint Luke of Simferopol** (1961)
- On Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>: **HOLY PENTECOST**
- On Monday 13<sup>th</sup>: **FEAST OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**
- On Friday 17<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Nectan** of Hartland, North Devon (6<sup>th</sup>C)
- On Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>: **Feast of All Saints**  
**Holy Apostle Jude, the Lord's Brother**
- On Monday 20<sup>th</sup>: **BEGINNING OF THE APOSTLES' FAST**  
**Saint Nicholas Kavalas** (1391)  
*Author of The Life in Christ and A Commentary on the Divine Liturgy*
- On Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup>: **Saint Alban**, First martyr of Britain (c209)
- On Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup>: **Saint Mark of Ephesus** 'Pillar of Orthodoxy' (1445)
- On Friday 24<sup>th</sup>: **The Nativity of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John**
- On Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>: **Saint Brannoc** of Braunton (6<sup>th</sup>C)
- On Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>: **All Saints of Russia, of Britain, of Romania, of America, of Palestine**
- On Monday 27<sup>th</sup>: **Holy Myrrh-Bearer Joanna**  
**Saint Austell**, Hermit in Cornwall (6<sup>th</sup>C)
- On Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup>: **Holy, Glorious and All-Praised Leaders of the Apostles, Peter and Paul**  
We wish **Pavlik F** a **Happy Feast** and **Many Years!**
- On Thursday 30<sup>th</sup>: **Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles**



### Exploring Pentecost with Your Children

There is a lot of excellent material for children about Pentecost at the Orthodox Pebbles website, including articles, activities and audio and video files. You can find it all at [Holy Pentecost – Orthodox Pebbles](#)

## Noticeboard

### Services:

Saturday May 28<sup>th</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup>: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am

Wednesday June 1<sup>st</sup>: Vespers for Ascension Saint Anne's 6.30pm

**Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>: FEAST OF THE ASCENSION Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30**

Sunday 5<sup>th</sup>: *Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 9.30am Torquay 9.30am*

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup>: Vespers for Pentecost Saint Anne's 6pm

**Sunday 12<sup>th</sup>: FEAST OF PENTECOST**

**Typika followed by Vespers with Kneeling Prayers Saint Anne's 10.30am**

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 19<sup>th</sup>: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am

**Saturday 25<sup>th</sup>: Divine Liturgy Saint Anne's 10.30am**

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup>: *Matins and Divine Liturgy (in Romanian) St Stephen's Church, Exeter High St 9am*

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>: Vespers for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul Saint Anne's 6.30pm

Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup>: Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

*Orthros and Divine Liturgy Plymouth 8.30am*

Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup>: Vespers Saint Anne's 6pm

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup>: Typika Saint Anne's 10.30am

### *Advance notice – Holy Prophet Elias Patronal Feast*

Father Patrick hopes to be with us to celebrate Divine Liturgy at Saint Anne's on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July.

## Uganda News

We will shortly be sending Father Daniel our annual contribution towards the work of Saint Cyprian's Parish. The total of our regular payment from parish funds plus individual donations over the past year comes to £1128: this amount Fr Daniel will use in equal parts for church expenses, resources for the parish school, and support for economically struggling parishioners. In addition will be £110 proceeds from the sale of Irina R's enchanting knitted mice (10 at £7.50 each) and her Paschal wall plaque which sold for £35. Irina has asked that this money should be used specifically for support for disadvantaged children in the parish.

Four of the mice have since doubled their effect: not only did their purchase raise between them £30 for the children of Saint Cyprian's, but they then set off via the Polish shop on South Street to travel to Ukraine to become special friends for refugee children who have lost everything.

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Mankind has become so earthbound! People have quite forgotten that this life of ours is the path to eternity and a preparation for it: they get excited and worked up in this vale of tears. You meet very few with whom you can talk about "the one thing needful".

Saint John of New Valamo (1873-1958 – canonised November 29<sup>th</sup> 2018)  
*Christ Is in Our Midst – Letters from a Russian Monk* Darton, Longman and Todd 1980

Contributions for the July issue should reach the Editors at [martinolsson827@btinternet.com](mailto:martinolsson827@btinternet.com) or by post at *Little Linhay, Bondleigh, EX20 2AJ* by **Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June**, please.

*Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are entirely those of the named authors or identified sources and should not be taken as representing the views of the parish as a whole.*