

Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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www.holycrossmedford.org

15th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday, September 25, 2022

At a Glance

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Flowers -
In thanksgiving
for Larry's
birthday

A Continued Pentecost

By Fr. Lawrence Farley

In the late Metropolitan Kallistos Ware's classic *The Orthodox Church*, he describes the Church as "a continued Pentecost". This is true, but it is important not to misunderstand his meaning.

It is possible to understand the description of the Church as "a continued Pentecost" as meaning that the Church is an earthly organization founded by Jesus Christ and now run by clergy, an organization which exists as part of this world and which occasionally does sacramental things wherein grace comes down.

Take, for example, Holy Communion. In this model the clergy perform certain rituals and at a certain moment within the ritual something supernatural happens—bread and wine miraculously become the Body and Blood of Christ, and the moment is (in the classic western tradition) signalled by the ringing of a bell to let all the assembled congregation know that now, at the ringing of the bell, grace came down into this world. Or take baptism and chrismation, for example. In this model the clergy again perform certain rituals, a part of which involves dunking someone in water while saying certain words. At that moment, grace comes from heaven into this world, and the candidate is born again; oil is applied to the candidate's person and the Holy Spirit flies down into him or her. This model assumes that the people at assembled for the service live the same sort of life as everyone else. The only difference is that grace is injected into their lives at certain times to help them cope with life in this age.

Liturgical and Events Schedule

Sunday, September 25

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy followed by
Coffee Hour, Sunday School

Thursday, September 29

7:00 PM: Parish Council Meeting by
Zoom

Saturday, October 1

5:00 PM: Great Vespers

CROP WALK

"Give generously, for your gifts will return to you later. Divide your gifts among many, for in the days ahead you yourself may need much help." ~Ecclesiastes 11:1

What are you doing Sunday afternoon, October 16? Would you like a way to visit with friends, make new friends, enjoy the outdoors, get exercise AND help change the world? Come walk with us in the CROP Hunger Walk to raise funds to fight hunger in our community and around the world. We'll start and end at Freedom Park (86 Union St, Medford). Registration starts at 1:00 PM and the Walk starts at 1:30 PM. See Diana Bisinger for more information and to get your Walker envelope.

The Church is a "continued Pentecost" in the sense that it performs certain rituals in which the grace is injected into our individual lives. This is, I suggest, not what Metropolitan Kallistos was getting at, but represents a diminution and distortion of it. To really

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understand what a continued Pentecost is, we must first understand the work of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the power of the age to come, and it is through the Holy Spirit that the entire cosmos will be changed and refashioned. The Psalter declares that God in this age sends forth His Spirit and the world is created and the face of the ground renewed (Psalm 104:30). This refers to the constant renewal of life in this world, wherein creatures die and creatures are born. Every spring, God by His Spirit continues to create life.

That is why Christ referred to the world to come as “the regeneration” (Greek *παλιγγενεσία*/ *paliggenesia*) in Matthew 19:28—in the age to come the entire cosmos will be born again and will rise to a new and immortal life. What happens to us in baptism is that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we begin to partake of this regenerative power even now in this age.

We can miss this because the concept of “becoming born again” has been inadequately understood by well-intentioned Evangelicals. In Evangelical parlance, regeneration is an entirely individual experience, a moral transformation—one effected by the Spirit, admittedly, but primarily an individual experience nonetheless. What is missing from this understanding is the primary cosmic meaning of regeneration. To understand the work of the Holy Spirit, this cosmic component must be recovered: it is the entire cosmos which will be born again and will become the Kingdom of God. Our experience of being born again in baptism is simply a foretaste of this work of regeneration in our lives now.

That is why Saint Paul referred to the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism as “a pledge [Greek *ἀρραβών*/ *arrabon*] of our inheritance” in Ephesians 1:14. In Paul’s day, an *arrabon* was a down payment, something paid in advance as a guarantee that the rest of the purchase price would in due time be paid. God has promised us the Kingdom, a world born again and renewed to deathless joy and immortality. He gives us His Holy Spirit as His guarantee that He will eventually give us this Kingdom as well, for the Holy

Spirit is nothing else than the power that will bring the Kingdom.

The Church—i.e. the assembled Christians, regardless of where they assemble for the Eucharist—is therefore is the place where the Holy Spirit is given and where the Kingdom is even now breaking into this world. That is, to speak more plainly, the Church is the Kingdom, and not simply a part of this world into which grace is occasionally injected. The Church is the presence of the future, the new age present even now among those who gather in Jesus’ Name at the Eucharist.

This means that the Church even now lives by the Holy Spirit in “the eighth day”. There are, of course, by worldly counting only seven days in a week (regardless of the Beatles’ song)—after seven days, beginning with Sunday and ending with Saturday, we begin counting another seven. In this age, therefore, there is no “eighth day of the week”. The term “the eighth day” therefore is used to describe a day outside of time and number, the eternal day which knows no evening, the day of eternity. In the Church’s theological counting, Sunday is both the first day of the week and also the eighth day, because on that day the Christians assemble for the Eucharist and experience the timeless Kingdom of God as eternity breaks into time. In the Church, we experience the Holy Spirit, the power of the age to come, and we live in the eighth day—not just on Sunday, but every day, for the Holy Spirit does not abandon us on Monday morning. In the world every seven days we inch closer to death. In the Church, for those living in the eighth day, every day brings us closer to the Kingdom which we are already experiencing.

Living in the eighth day and by the power of the Holy Spirit brings with it a call to live a certain lifestyle. As Saint Paul phrased it, “If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25). At our baptism, we received new life and began to live by the Spirit’s power within us. Now we must “walk by the Spirit”, conducting ourselves as those

who have been born again and who are destined for the regenerated world to come.

The Greek word here rendered “walk” is not the usual word for walk (Greek περιπατέω/ peripateo), the word used for walking to the store. Saint Paul used the Greek word στοιχέω/ stoicheo, cognate with the word στοῖχος/ stoichos, a line, a row. The verb means to follow in a straight line; Barclay renders it “keep step with”; the Jerusalem Bible “be directed by”. Since we have been given life by the Spirit and now live in the eighth day, we must follow the Spirit, living in the righteousness which will characterize the age to come. Those who are bound by time and know only seven days a week live one way; we live another way entirely, for the Spirit of God indwells us, and calls us to put to death what is merely earthly in us.

This is the continued Pentecost of which Metropolitan Kallistos wrote. When we assemble for the Eucharist we come as those indwelt by the Spirit, and as those who walk by His power. Whatever our daily planners tell us, we live in the eighth day. We experience the promised Kingdom every Sunday, and time on earth is nothing but our advance into that future Kingdom and the age to come.

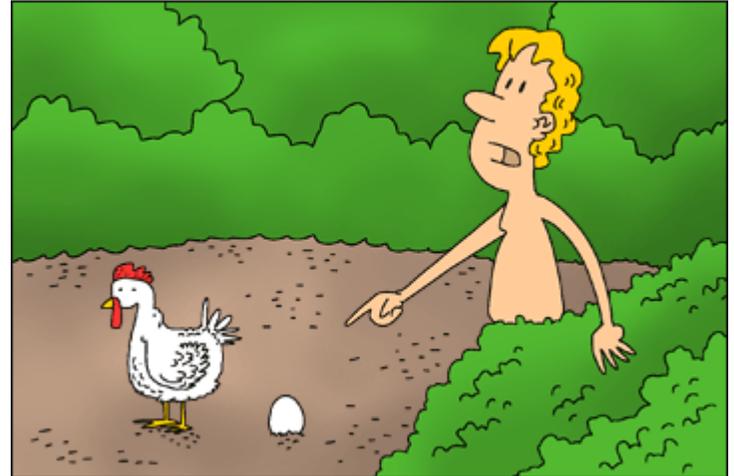
Note: His Eminence Metropolitan Kallistos reposed in the Lord on August 24 after a long and fruitful ministry. May his memory be eternal and may he enjoy a full reward from Christ for all his many labours as he stands before his Lord in the light of the eighth day.

Coffee Hour

September 25 Trudy Ellmore
October 2 Open
October 9 Open
October 16 Open

We need helpers for October & November. Please see Marie Clifton to sign up!

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



(See Genesis 1:1-2:3)

07-06-2015

I MISSED IT ... WHICH ONE CAME FIRST?

GRANT CORNER UPDATE

Dear Parish, Glory to Jesus Christ!

We are almost done with our grant projects. As of this week, the social hall doors have been replaced, all but a few windows have been replaced, and emergency and exit lights throughout the church have been replaced. We are waiting for permit approval for our new Post lights and new LED lights for our parking lot and our full security system is 95% complete.

We have received close to \$100,000 in reimbursements

In Christ,
The Grant Team

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2022
10:00 A.M.

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