

A 'BIRTHDAY' CELEBRATION

Perhaps the most significant day in our life is our birthday. We are never too young to celebrate it, nor are we ever too old not to remember it! Yes, a birthday is always a time of festive commemoration.

PENTECOST

PENTECOST has long been referred to as the "Birthday of the Church." On this day, we observe the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, who had gone to Jerusalem on the command of our Lord to await this Divine Guidance from above. With the rushing of the wind and the descent of tongues of fire, the Holy Spirit came to these twelve loyal, but timid, followers of Christ. They were filled with the zeal necessary to undertake and complete the commission given to them:

GO AND TEACH ALL NATIONS!

This "birthday celebration" had over 3,000 "guests", for the Book of Acts tell us that was the number of converts won over to Christianity that day when the Apostles took the message of the Gospel into the streets of Jerusalem.

The Feast Day of Pentecost is steeped in rich tradition. Churches will be lavishly adorned with flowers and greens. They serve as a reminder that just as nature is renewed in this manner at the coming of Spring, so too, the Church and her faithful have been renewed by the coming of the Holy Spirit. On this 50th day after Pascha, lengthy, elaborate kneeling prayers are prescribed, as we repeatedly invoke the Holy Spirit to COME AND DWELL WITHIN US.

Pentecost is also a time for every Orthodox Christian to remember that each of us have received the same exhortation from Christ that the Apostles were given. Our tasks, too, is to carry the Good News to the ends of the earth! The Holy Spirit comes today, strengthening and encouraging us as we strive to spread God's Word to the unchurched.