"ORTHODOX 9" PARISHES BULLETIN

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CANADA

Monthly Newsletter for the family of Orthodox Churches including:

St. Mary's (the Nativity of the Holy Virgin) - NISKU

Sts. Peter & Paul - BONNYVILLE
Holy Ascension - CALMAR
Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY
St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE
St. John the Baptist - HOREN
St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)
Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)
Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)

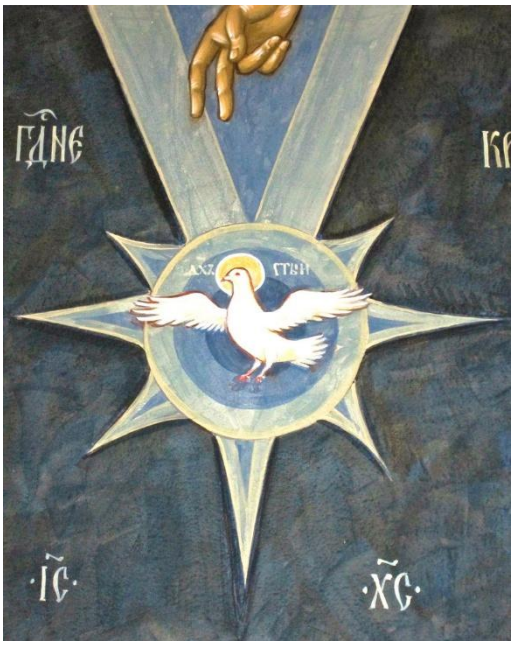


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June the 1st – Monday of the Holy Spirit



This year, the month of June brings us just one of the twelve Great Feasts of the Orthodox Church — but a very significant one: the Monday of the Holy Spirit, also known as Spirit Day. Celebrated the day after Pentecost (Trinity Sunday), it completes the two-day commemoration of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles — the foundational event that gave birth to the New Testament Church.

Fifty days after the Resurrection of Christ, the Apostles and about 120 disciples were gathered in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. Their beloved Teacher had ascended to heaven. The Jewish authorities were hostile. They were few in number, unarmed, with no political or economic power — and yet they remained in Jerusalem, faithfully waiting, as Christ had instructed them.

Then everything changed. Suddenly, a mighty wind filled the room, and tongues of fire descended upon each of them. Filled with the Holy Spirit, they began to speak in languages they had never known. A crowd gathered outside, and the Apostle Peter stepped forward to preach. His words, simple yet charged with divine power, pierced the hearts of his listeners — and that very day, three thousand people were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. What had been a small, uncertain community of 120 disciples became the Church.

The descent of the Holy Spirit is already celebrated on Pentecost (Trinity Sunday). Why, then, does the Church devote a second day specifically to the Holy Spirit? Spirit Day was established as a separate feast no earlier than the 11th century, expressing the Church's desire to honor the Holy Spirit as the Third Person of the Holy Trinity — equal in glory to the Father and the Son, yet sometimes less visible in our devotion. This day is the Church's deliberate act of thanksgiving and praise to the Comforter, the Giver of Life.

The feast's liturgical services include the ancient prayer *"O Heavenly King"* — sung for the first time since the end of Great Lent — and the three main (seven – overall) deeply moving kneeling prayers of St. Basil the Great, offered for the living and for the departed.

The Holy Spirit is not merely a memory of a past event. He is present and active in the Church today — in her sacraments, in her councils, in the lives of her faithful. It was this same power that transformed frightened fishermen

into fearless preachers, turned Saul the persecutor into Paul the Apostle, sustained martyrs in the arenas of Rome, and strengthened confessors in Soviet prisons and camps. This power guided the first Orthodox missionaries to Canada and continues to sustain Orthodox Christians around the world.

As St. Paul reminds us, the fruits of life in the Spirit are *"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance"* (Gal. 5:22–23). These are not distant ideals — they are the signs of the Holy Spirit at work in a human heart.

May this feast renew His presence in each of us. Amen!

The Kneeling Vespers celebrated on the evening of Pentecost (which is a service of Holy Spirit Day) features three profound prayers composed by St. Basil the Great in the 4th century. Kneeling for the first time since Pascha, we offer these prayers as the Church begins her spiritual journey through the rest of the liturgical year. Here is the Second Kneeling Prayer (slightly shortened), addressed to our Lord Jesus Christ, that we could read at home:



O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who gave Your peace to men and, being present still in this life, ever grant the gift of the All-Holy Spirit to the faithful as an inheritance that cannot be taken away — You sent down today, in a manner most clear, this grace upon Your holy disciples and apostles, and opened their lips with tongues of fire. Through them every race of man has received, through the hearing of the ear, the knowledge of God in our own languages. We have been enlightened by the light of the Spirit, freed from delusion as from darkness, and through the distribution of the tongues of fire and their wondrous operation, we have been taught the faith that is in You, and illumined so as to praise You with the Father and the Holy Spirit, in one Godhead, Power and Authority.

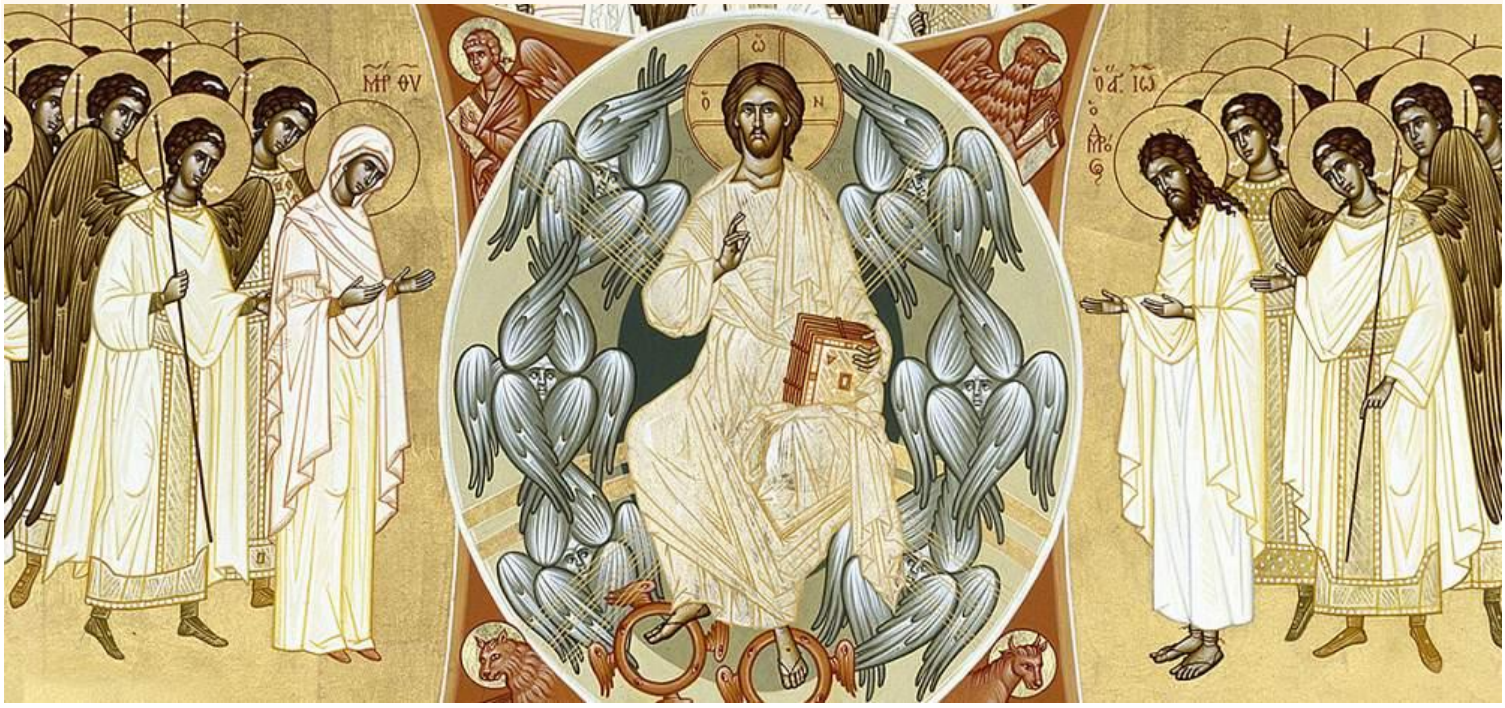
For You are the Brightness of the Father, the express Image, inalterable and immovable, of His essence and nature, the Fountain of wisdom and of grace. Open also the lips of me, the sinner, and teach me how and for what I must pray. You know the multitude of my sins, but Your compassion shall overcome the enormity thereof. In fear I stand before You, having cast the despair of my soul into the sea of Your mercy. Govern my life, O You Who govern all creation by Your word and the unutterable power of Your wisdom, O tranquil Haven of the storm-tossed, and make known to me the way wherein I should walk. Grant to my reasoning the Spirit of Your wisdom, and give the Spirit of understanding to my foolishness. Overshadow my deeds with the Spirit of Your fear, and renew a right spirit within me. With Your governing Spirit, establish my faltering mind, that being guided every day by Your good Spirit toward what is useful, I may keep Your commandments and always remember Your glorious coming again, which shall search out our deeds.

I, the sinner, at the descent of Your Holy Spirit, supplicate Your goodness: grant me whatsoever I have asked unto salvation. O Lord, abundant Giver of every benefit... Grant Your compassions to Your people. Hear us from Your holy heaven. Sanctify us by the power of Your saving right hand... Against You only do we sin, but You alone do we adore. We know not how to worship a strange god, nor how to stretch forth our hands to any other god, O Master. Forgive us our offenses, and accept our prayers with the bending of our knees.

O Lord, Lord, Who delivers us from every arrow that flies by day, deliver us also from everything that walks in darkness. Receive the lifting up of our hands as an evening sacrifice... Grant unto our souls contrition, and to our thoughts care concerning the trial of Your fearful and righteous judgment. Nail our flesh to the fear of You, and mortify our earthly members, that even in the quietness of sleep we may be illumined by the contemplation of Your judgments... Raise us up at the time of prayer, confirmed in the faith and progressing in Your commandments. Amen.

What Is Holiness?

June 7 — 1st Sunday after Pentecost — Sunday of All Saints



It is no coincidence that the day dedicated to All Saints falls on the first Sunday after Pentecost. The very first thing we recall after the birthday of the Church is holiness. This points to the fact that the saints are the fruit of the Church's work in the world. The Church and holiness are inseparable: without the Church there can be no holiness, and yet the Church herself is unthinkable without saints. If there were no saints in the Church, it would be a sign that the Holy Spirit is not at work within her — that the words the Lord spoke even in the Old Testament are not being fulfilled: *"Be holy, for I am holy"* (Lev. 11:45). Therefore, if there are no saints in the Church, it is not the Church of Christ. And this is precisely why, immediately after Pentecost, after commemorating the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, the Church honors All Saints. For what further proof or argument is needed to show that the Orthodox Church is the true Church of Christ?

In today's Gospel reading, brothers and sisters, we heard words that might trouble even faithful churchgoers: *"He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me"* (Matt. 10:37). How can this be? For parents are to their children, and children to their parents, the most precious thing a person can have. How then are we to understand these words of Christ correctly? Of course, they do not call us to stop loving our parents, children, or loved ones. We remember that even in the Old Testament there is a commandment to honor one's parents — and it is the only commandment of the Decalogue that ends with a promise: *"that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth"* (Deut. 5:16; Eph. 6:2–3). The Savior's words about the unworthiness of those who love their neighbors more than Christ point first of all to the need for a rightly ordered system of values: God first, and then everything else — parents, children, loved ones. Moreover, it is only by truly loving God that we learn to truly love our neighbors. Love for God does not cancel love for our family and friends — it purifies it, freeing it, if one may say so, from every admixture of sin, passion, vice, and fault. This is the meaning of the words we heard in today's Gospel.

We all remember how the fall of Adam began: it began when he chose love for Eve over love for God. Man loved another human being more than his Creator. And all of subsequent human history frequently shows that many sinful crimes and transgressions were committed allegedly out of love — for a husband, a wife, or children.

Very often love is far more dangerous than hatred — it can blind a person and drive him to the most terrible deeds. How many crimes have been committed out of jealous love, foolish love, or a false sense of love. But if we sincerely love God, we understand that there is something higher than mere human love. If all crimes are rooted in a disordered

understanding of love, then divine love is the one thing that will never allow us to violate the love of others. When we love God, we can never cause pain to our neighbors — for Christ Himself says: *"If you love Me, keep My commandments"* (John 14:15)…

In honoring the saints, we affirm once more: the Church is holy, the Holy Spirit dwells within her, and where the Holy Spirit is, there are saints. And until the end of time, for as long as this world endures, holiness and saints will never cease in the Church, no matter what trials and temptations may come.

On this day, as we commemorate All Saints, we must understand that a saint is a person who lives for God. A saint is one who loves all and everything, yet attaches his heart to no one and nothing, because his heart belongs entirely to the Lord God. Despite the stereotypes that paint saints in our minds as white-haired elders of a certain type, the saints themselves were as varied as we are. There were saints who were gentle and deeply merciful, and saints who were, in measure, strict. St. Seraphim of Sarov, for instance, greeted everyone who came to him with the words: *"My joy, Christ is risen!"* — while the greatest among those born of women, as Christ Himself calls him, St. John the Baptist, addressed some of those who came to him as a *"brood of vipers."* And yet both served God and loved people, and both are glorified in the ranks of the saints. This is possible because holiness can never be contained within the bounds of human expectation. The holy Apostle Paul writes: *"he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one"* (1 Cor. 2:15) — for the heart of a saint can be opened and understood only by another saint. This is why, in glorifying the saints, the Church declares that holiness itself cannot be grasped theoretically — it can only be received, participated in, lived.

The saints have always unsettled those around them, and always will, because they did not fit into ordinary notions of righteousness and holiness. In this sense the saints, like the Church herself, become a kind of stumbling block to those who love the world and its values. And how fitting here are the words of our Lord: *"Blessed is anyone who does not stumble over Me"* (Matt. 11:6).

And so on this day, as we honor All Saints, the Church points once more to the greatest mystery of her existence: any person, even the most hardened sinner, can become a saint in the Church of Christ. There is no sinner who cannot repent and become a saint; there is no sin that cannot be forgiven by the Lord; there is no person who is rejected by the Church. And a thousand years of sanctity confirm this truth through the multitude of saints who glorify God unto the ages of ages. Amen!

Bishop Sylvester (Stoychev)
Sermon on the Sunday of All Saints
kdais.kiev.ua

The Surgeon Saint: A Word on St. Luke of Crimea

Commemorated June 11

There are lives that seem impossible — lives so vast, so full of contradictions by worldly standards, that one can only stand before them in silent wonder. The life of Saint Luke of Crimea, Archbishop of Simferopol, is one such life. He was at once a world-class surgeon and a bishop of the Church; a prisoner of Soviet labor camps and a Stalin Prize laureate; a scientist who published landmark medical texts and a preacher who delivered sermons of extraordinary power — eventually blind, yet still finding his way to church on his own to venerate the holy icons by touch.



The Making of a Doctor

Valentin Felixovich Voyno-Yasenetsky was born on April 14, 1877, in Kerch, in the Crimea, the third of five children. His father was a Roman Catholic pharmacist; his mother an Orthodox Christian who raised her children in the faith. In 1889 the family moved to Kiev, where young Valentin excelled both at the gymnasium and at an art school.



As he stood on the threshold of adulthood, he faced a choice between art and medicine. He was gifted enough for either. But his overriding desire was to alleviate human suffering, and he believed he could serve society better as a doctor. He entered the medical faculty of Kiev University in 1898 and graduated in 1903. A brilliant career beckoned — but to the surprise of his peers, he announced that he wanted to become a doctor for the poor.

When the Russo-Japanese War broke out, he went to the Far East with a Red Cross detachment and headed the Department of Surgery at a hospital in Chita. There he met Anna Lanskaya, a Sister of Mercy — a devout Christian who had already turned down two marriage proposals, wishing to live in celibacy. Valentin won her heart, and they were married in 1904. She became not only his wife but his faithful assistant in medical practice.

From 1905 to 1917, he worked in rural and provincial hospitals across Russia — in Simbirsk, Kursk, Saratov, Ukraine, and Pereslavl-Zalessky — fulfilling his promise to serve the poor. In 1916, he defended his doctoral dissertation on regional anesthesia. The work was so thorough and original that one reviewer compared it to the song of a bird. The University of Warsaw awarded him a special prize for it.

The Making of a Priest

In 1919, his beloved wife Anna died of tuberculosis, leaving him with four young children. He never remarried. It was a shattering blow — yet it seemed to draw him deeper into the life of the Church rather than away from it.

In 1920, he was offered a department chair at the newly opened Turkestan State University in Tashkent. Around the same time, he began attending meetings of the local Church brotherhood. After he delivered an impressive address at a Church congress, the Bishop of Tashkent told him he wished him to become a priest. Valentin — who had never considered such a path — replied simply that he would agree, if it was pleasing to God.

He was ordained a deacon, then a priest, within the space of a few days in 1921. He continued his medical work and teaching without interruption. In 1923, he was tonsured a monk. The bishop who tonsured him had originally intended to give him the name Panteleimon, after the great Unmercenary Physician. But after hearing his sermons, he changed his mind and chose the name Luke — after the holy Apostle and Evangelist, himself a physician. It was a name that would prove prophetic in every way.

The Confessor

The arrests began almost immediately. In 1923 he was arrested on absurd charges of counter-revolutionary connections with Cossacks and cooperation with the British — and sent into exile in Siberia. Even there, he served Liturgy at home and was permitted to operate on patients, saving many lives.

He returned to Tashkent, but was arrested again in 1931 and exiled to Arkhangelsk for three years — where he again treated patients. In December 1937, he was arrested once more. The interrogators kept him awake for days on end, demanding he sign prepared protocols. He went on a hunger strike and refused. A new exile followed — this time deep into Siberia, to the town of Bolshaya Murta in Krasnoyarsk Territory.

In total, he spent more than eleven years in prisons, transit cells, and places of exile. He was subjected to sleep deprivation, humiliation, and deliberate cruelty. Yet those who witnessed his interrogations noted that he would place his bishop's staff in the corner of the room before speaking — a quiet, unyielding declaration of who he was.

The Surgeon-Archbishop

When the Second World War began, he was brought to Krasnoyarsk to treat the wounded. In 1943 he was elevated to Archbishop, and in 1944 appointed to Tambov. The attitude of the Soviet authorities toward him seemed, for a time, to shift.



In February 1946, he was awarded the Stalin Prize for his outstanding scientific contributions to medicine. He donated nearly all the money to help children orphaned by the war. It is one of the most remarkable ironies of the twentieth century: the same state that had imprisoned him repeatedly now handed him its highest civilian honor — and he gave the money away to the war's smallest victims.

In May 1946, he was appointed Archbishop of Crimea and Simferopol — the land of his birth. He combined archpastoral work with medical practice for as long as his health permitted. His eye disease worsened over the years, and by 1958 he was completely blind. Yet eyewitnesses recalled that even then he came to church on his own, venerated the holy icons by touch, and participated fully in the Divine Services.

The Passing of a Saint

Archbishop Luke fell asleep in the Lord on June 11, 1961 — the very day on which the Russian Orthodox Church commemorates All Saints of the Russian Land. It was as if God Himself had appointed the hour.

When his relics were uncovered in 1996, an ineffable fragrance was said to emanate from them, and his heart was found incorrupt — a testament, the Church teaches, to his great love for Christ and for his neighbor. An estimated 40,000 people took part in the procession that accompanied his relics to Holy Trinity Cathedral in Simferopol. In 2000, he was glorified for church-wide veneration among the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.

He is the patron of surgeons, physicians, nurses, scientists, and pharmacies. A minor planet discovered in 1971 bears his name. The Greek faithful, healed through his intercession, donated 300 kilograms of silver to make a reliquary for his relics.

A Word for Our Time

Saint Luke of Crimea challenges a comfortable modern assumption: that science and faith inhabit separate worlds, that a serious thinker cannot also be a man of prayer. He was arguably one of the finest surgeons of the twentieth century. He was also a bishop who endured eleven years of persecution without renouncing a single word of his faith.

He was asked once how he could believe in God while practicing medicine. He replied that he had never once performed an operation without first praying, and that his hands had been guided by something beyond his own skill.

Perhaps that is the most important thing we can say about him. Not that he was a great surgeon who also happened to be a bishop — but that he was a man whose entire life, from the operating table to the prison cell to the bishop's throne, was offered to God as one unbroken prayer.

oca.org, stjohndc.org, orthodoxwiki.org,
wikipedia.org, vestnik-surgery.com, gw2ru.com

Children's Corner: Drop in with your children and great & grand children!

*Did you know that the day after Pentecost (Trinity Sunday) is called the **Monday of the Holy Spirit**, or Spirit Day? Pentecost is also called the **birthday of the Church** — because on this day, long ago, the Holy Spirit came down on the Apostles like tongues of fire, and the small group of Jesus's followers became the living Church.*

*Ever since then, Christians have loved to show the Holy Spirit in their churches. One beautiful way is through **stained glass windows** — coloured glass that lets light shine through in glowing colours. The Holy Spirit is often shown as a **white dove**, just as He appeared when Jesus was baptized in the river Jordan.*

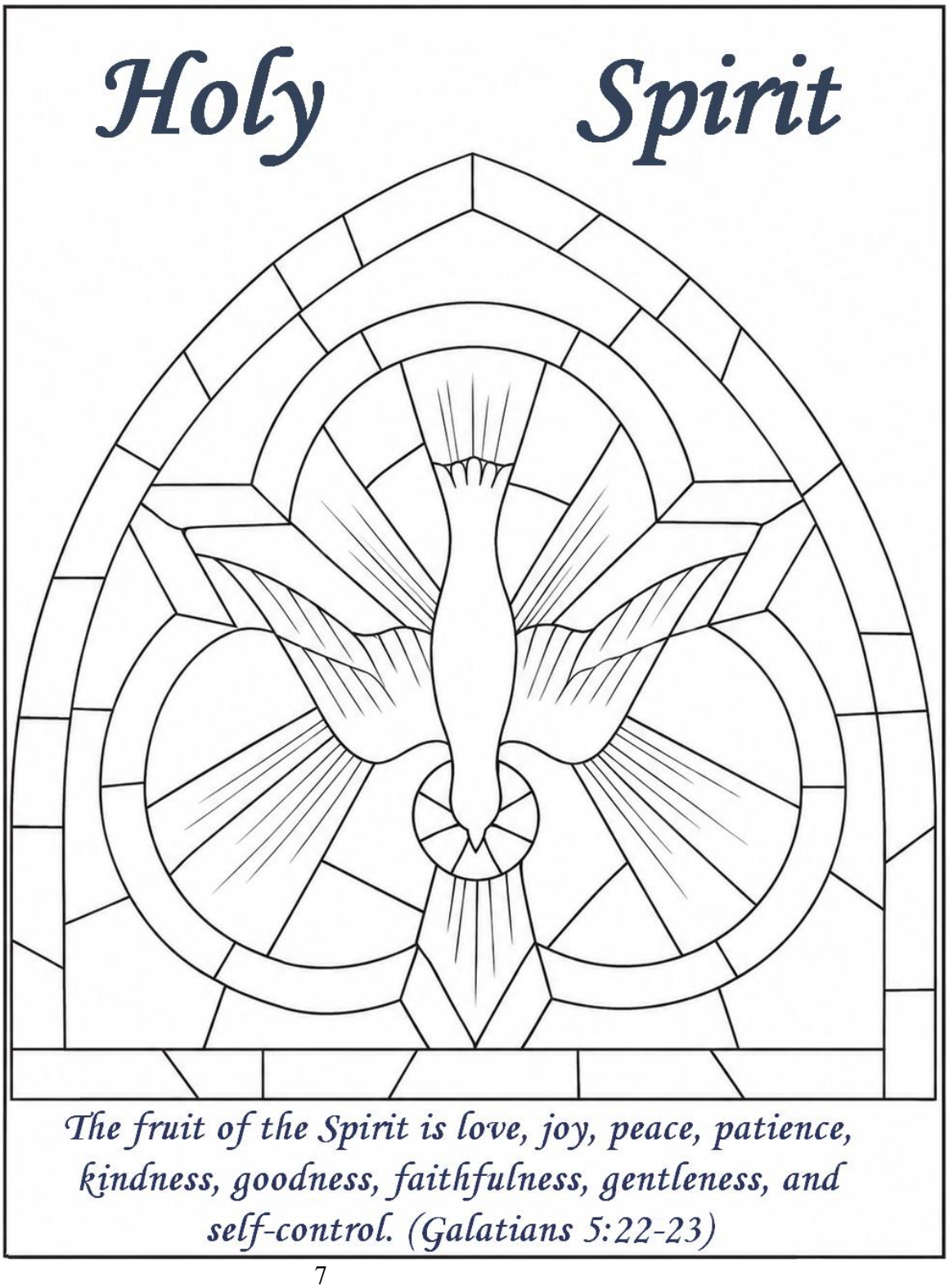
*Light shines through stained glass the same way the Holy Spirit shines through the Church — bringing warmth, colour, and beauty into our lives. The Holy Spirit **is** the **Light of the Church**.*



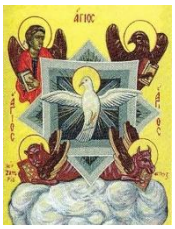
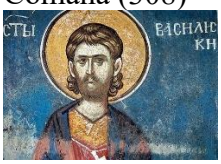
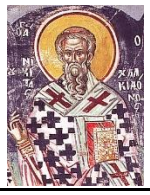
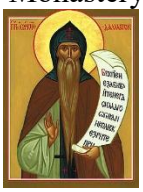
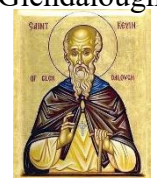
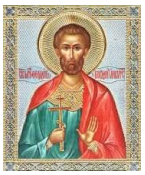
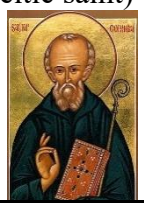
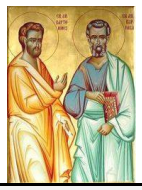








June 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Holy Trinity Day  10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – **Patronal Feast** – THORSBY – Blessing of water	1 **Day Of the Holy Spirit** 	2 *First Week after Pentecost is a fast-free period*	3	4 Martyr Basiliscus the Soldier, of Comana (308) 	5	6 **1 pm - Grave Yard Service** at TOMAHAWK
7 **1st Sunday after Pentecost. Sunday of All Saints** 10:00 a.m. – Liturgy – at **St. Mary's Church, at NISKU**	8 APOSTLES FAST BEGINS	9	10 St. Nicetas the Confessor, bishop of Chalcedon 	11	12 St. Isaac the Confessor, founder of the Dalmatian Monastery 	13
14 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at **St. Barbara**	15	16 St. Kevin, hermit and abbot, of Glendalough 	17	18 Blessed Igor, great prince of Chernigov and Kiev 	19	20 Martyr Theodotus of Ancyra (303) 
21 10:00 a.m. – Liturgy – at **St. Mary's Church, at NISKU**	22 St. Columba of Iona (597, Celtic saint) 	23	24 Holy Apostles Bartholomew and Barnabas 	25	26 Martyr Antonina of Nicaea (ca. 284-305) 	27 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy & Grave Yard Service – **MACNUTT** 5:00 pm - Grave Yard Service - **INSINGER**
28 09:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – **Patronal Feast** (Blessing of water) & Grave Yard Service – **FOAM LAKE**	29	30				