

## The Path to Pentecost

But for the fact that Mary said “let it be to me according to your word” (Lk. 1:38) to the Archangel Gabriel, one may wonder if the incarnation of the Son of God might not have occurred. But for the fact that Joseph accepted the angelic message to accept Mary as his betrothed (Mt. 1:20) and journey into Egypt (Mt. 2:13), one may wonder if the Son of God would have survived into adulthood. But for the fact that Jesus' human and divine natures (Jn. 1:14; Heb. 2:10-15; Third Article of the Nicene Creed) had become one in will, accepting the crucifixion, one may wonder if the resurrection may not have occurred. And without the resurrection, there would not have been an ascension; without the ascension, the descent of the Holy Spirit might not have occurred – and we would not be celebrating the Pentecost during this month of June.

The nexus between the Theotokos' acceptance of her calling, of St. Joseph's acceptance of his calling, the Christ's human will to become one with His divine will, the crucifixion, the resurrection, ascension, and descent of the Holy Spirit goes well beyond the Virgin Mother, St. Joseph, and Jesus. Indeed, our salvation journey began at the moment of the heavenly rebellion and the fall of Satan (Isa. 14:12-15; Lk. 10:18; Rev. 12:7-9). Our Father in His cosmic plan knew what He was going to do to redeem mankind (*cf.* Lk. 3:23-28).

The Father's divine plan did manifest itself. And the Holy Spirit did descend among us. Indeed, the Son told us that “the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you” (Jn. 14:26).

However, the Holy Spirit did not only descend and manifest itself to the apostles, it descended and remains with mankind – within each one of us: “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body” (1 Cor. 6:19). The Holy Spirit is not only within us, it is with us, assisting us “in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words” (Rom. 8:26). If we love the Father “we know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose” (Rom. 8:27-28).

“Intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words” - few more powerful statements have been handed down to us. But even the most hardened of hearts are not immune to the work of the Holy Spirit. Archimandrite Zacharias, in his theology of Elder Sophrony, tell us “God targets man and visits him from morning until evening and from evening until morning. Continually and from all eternity, God waits patiently at the door of man's heart, and when He finds a tiny opening, namely, a little humility and gratitude, He enters in, and of course, when He does, He makes a feast with man.” Why? Our Triune God is our “first love” (Rev. 2:4-5).

For this, the Pentecost is the Father's promise to each one of us.