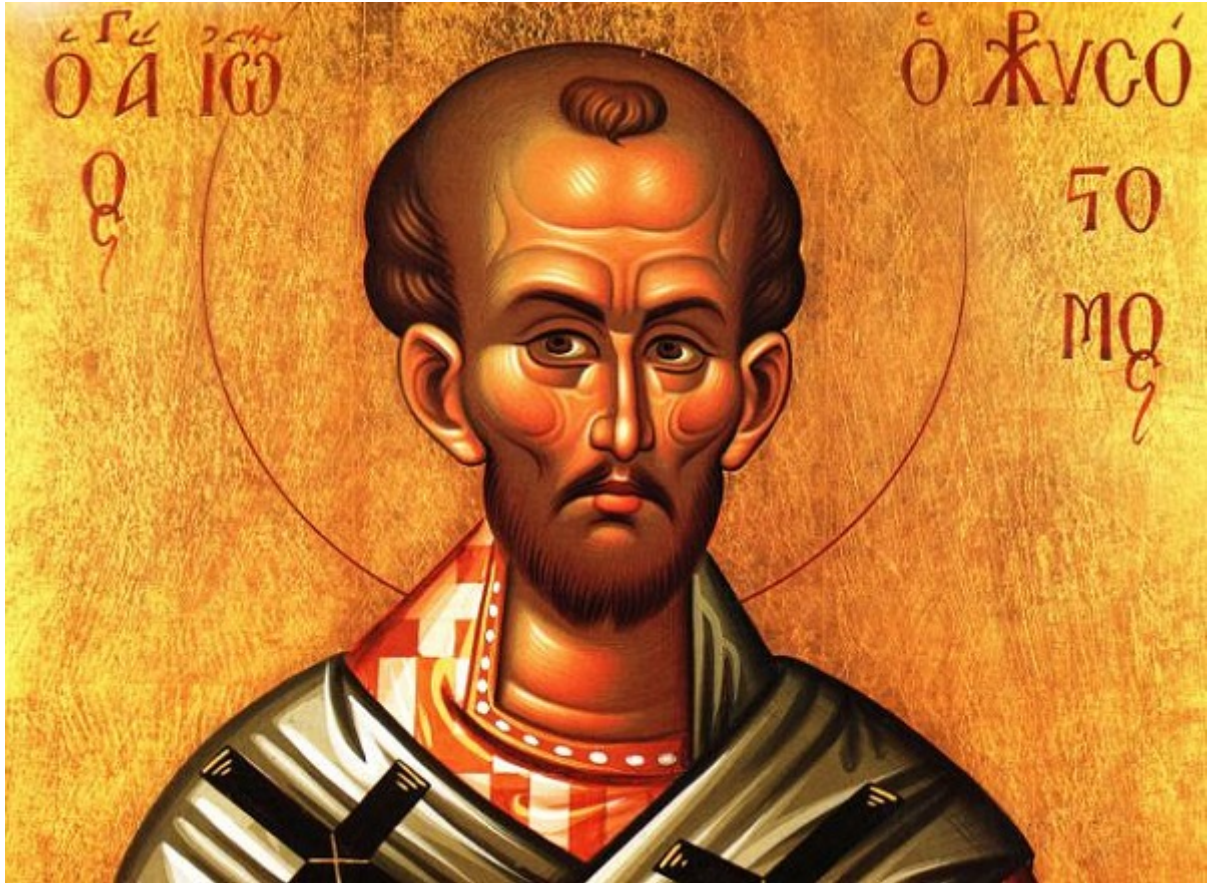


St. John Chrysostom Homily on Pentecost (1) (Saint John Chrysostom)

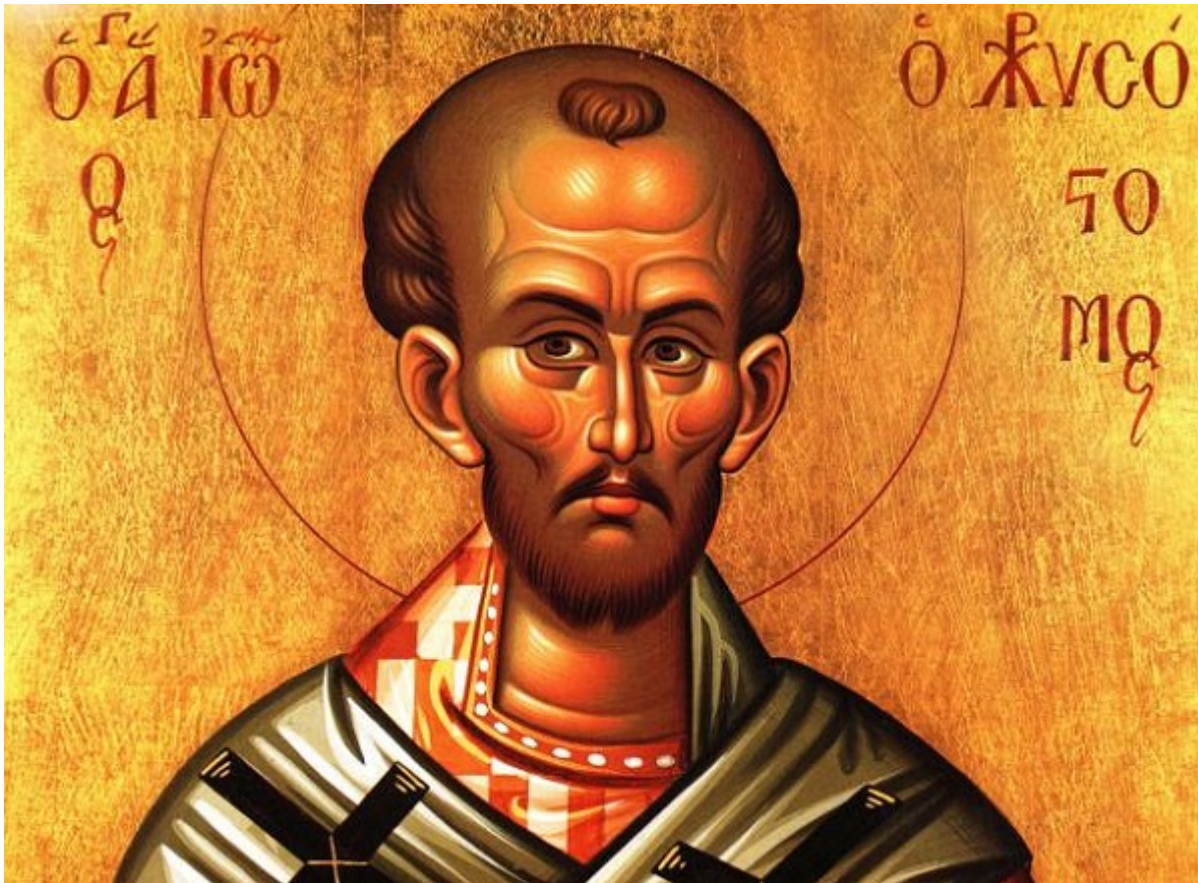
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Let us extol the grace of the Holy Spirit in spiritual hymns, since grace has, on this day, manifested itself to us from heaven. Even though our words are inadequate to express the magnitude of this grace, we shall praise its power and activity insofar as we're able. For the Holy Spirit delves into all things, even the profundities of divinity.

We're celebrating the day of Pentecost, the day of the Descent of the Holy Spirit onto the Apostles, the day of the hope of perfection, the end of expectation, the longing for salvation, the fulfilment of prayer and the image of patience. Today the Spirit Who acted to scatter the nations in the time of Heber has formed tongues of fire among the Apostles. His action of old led to the confusion of the nations, in order to rein in the brazenness of our will, and forestall the concomitant chastisement. On this occasion, however, amid tongues of fire, the deeds performed by the activity of the Holy Spirit were aimed at enabling us to receive

teaching, in fulfilment of the will of God.



In the beginning, the Spirit of God moved over the water, and later, in the time of Christ, the same Holy Spirit of God rested upon Him. First He moved, and now He rested, as being one in essence, equal in honour, co-eternal with the Father and the Son.

The Holy Spirit heralded fair weather to Noah over the waters of the flood. At the waters of the Jordan, the same Holy Spirit revealed to the world the Sonship of Him Who was being baptized. Besides, the Lord had a terrifying answer for those who dared to utter blasphemy against the Holy Spirit: 'Those who speak blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, shall not be forgiven, either in this world or in the world to come'.

Declaring his desire for this Holy Spirit, David prayed to God: 'Do not turn your countenance away from me, Lord and do not take your Holy Spirit from me'. It's common knowledge that, where He is absent, every sort of corruption sets in. Now the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul, an evil spirit had entered into him, and this is why David said: 'Do not take your Holy Spirit from me'.

This same Holy Spirit sanctified the prophets, instructed the apostles and empowered the mar-t-yrs. This same Holy Spirit consecrated Isaiah, taught Ezekiel

and revealed to him the resurrection of the dead. As he says: 'The hand of the Lord was upon me, and carried me out in the spirit of the Lord' [Ezek. 37, 1]. This same Holy Spirit chose Jeremiah from his mother's womb, and raised up Daniel to deliver Susanna: 'God raised up by the Holy Spirit a young man whose name was Daniel' [Sus. 1/ Dan. 13]

David loved the presence of this same Holy Spirit so much that he prayed to God, saving,

'Your Holy Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness'. This same Holy Spirit of God came to dwell in Our Most Holy Lady, embracing her with the communion of the Divine Word as the Father wished, and making her the Mother of God. Filled with this same Holy Spirit, Elizabeth realized that the Lord had come to her through Our Lady and said: 'How is it that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?'

Zachariah, the father of John, was filled with the same Holy Spirit and he declared that the son born to him would be the prophet and forerunner of the King Who was to come. John himself was also filled with the same Holy Spirit. The eyes of his mind were illumined, and he beheld the heavens opened, and the Holy Spirit hovering over Him Who was being baptized, over Him Who baptized with the Spirit and fire.

When He was giving His Apostles His teaching in detail and strengthening their minds for the time of His Passion, the Lord Himself, by the action of the same Holy Spirit, said to them: 'Unless I depart, the Comforter will not come unto you'. Moreover, revealing to them the Spirit's consubstantial nature, He said: 'The Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and when He comes, He will guide you into all truth'.

The holy Apostles waited expectantly for the coming of the power of this same Holy Spirit; they waited together to be clothed with power from on high, in accordance with the commandment of the Lord, Who had said: 'Wait in the city of Jerusalem, until you are imbued with power from on high. For, behold, I shall send the promise of My Father upon you'. So it's written that when the day of Pentecost was fully come, all the holy Apostles were assembled of one accord in one place, and the Comforter was sent to them under the appearance of tongues of fire.

They received the abundant promise of the Father and the Holy Spirit, were strengthened, and revealed Him Who was sent to them, His grace and His power. Stephen, the martyr and first deacon, was filled with the same Holy Spirit, Whom he received by the laying-on of hands of the Apostles, and performed great wonders and miracles among the people. Filled with the Holy Spirit, he saw the doors of heaven opened and the Only-begotten Son and Word of God standing in

the flesh at the right hand of the power of God.

Filled with this same Holy Spirit, Paul became the preacher of divine mysteries. As Ananias said to him: 'The Lord Saviour Himself has sent me to you, so that thou might receive your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit'. And Paul afterwards said with assurance: 'And I think also that I have the Spirit of God'.

The same Holy Spirit came to Cornelius and those that were to be baptized with him, and each of them spoke in his own language and magnified God. This same Holy Spirit came upon the Ethiopian eunuch after he went down into the water. He was filled with elation, and went on his way rejoicing.

(to be continued)