

THE VIBRANT PARISH A PLACE TO ENCOUNTER THE LIVING CHRIST



In 2011 His Beatitude Sviatoslav together with the bishops of the UGCC asked us to pay special attention to the renewal of parish life, as the basis for the on-going development of our Church. The parish is the place where we encounter the Living Christ, where we can grow spiritually and where the Good News of the Gospel is proclaimed, so that it can be shared with others. Our Synod encourages us all together and individually to reflect on and work for the development of our parish community, and to take an active role in the mission of the Church by fostering these aspects of parish life:

- THE WORD OF GOD AND CATECHESIS
- LITURGY AND PRAYER
- SERVICE TO ONE'S NEIGHBOR
- LEADERSHIP – STEWARDSHIP
- COMMUNITY – UNITY
- A MISSIONARY SPIRIT

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Text: Fr. Josaphat Moshchych (*UGCC Counsel for Evangelization*);
Cover: Pentecost Icon: Hieromonk Damian Higgins, iconographer
(*Holy Spirit Seminary; Ottawa, ON*). Graphic design: Olena Hyzha

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MISSION DAYS GUIDEBOOK

From Ascension to Pentecost

“VIBRANT PARISH” Prayer



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His Beatitude SVIATOSLAV
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of the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church
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O Lord Jesus Christ, our Good Shepherd, as you once gathered lost sheep that they might hear Your voice and be your flock, so also today graciously look down from heaven upon our parish community, and send down on it your Holy Spirit, that it might be a place to receive the joy of Your Good News. Strengthen us with your presence, and always gather us together in prayer. Grant us the spirit of serving others, so that in our parish all might encounter You, the merciful God. Bless our spiritual leaders with Your wisdom, and inspire us to generously give of our time, talents and treasure for the building up of Your Kingdom. Unite us in peace and harmony, as befits Your community of love. Instill in us a missionary spirit, and let our parish community shine with the light of the Gospel, with prayer and good works, inviting all to share in the divine life, so that Your Name, O Savior, may be praised, together with Your eternal Father, and your most-holy, good and life-giving Spirit. Amen.



MISSION DAYS GUIDEBOOK



From Ascension to Pentecost

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Mission Days: A Ten Day Journey

By taking an active role in the spiritual efforts of these ten Mission Days, we are called to better understand that, by their very nature, our parish communities and families (domestic churches) have a *missionary* character. This missionary spirit is a consequence of the gift of our Baptism, by virtue of which we, as Christians, take upon ourselves the responsibility to *believe, live, serve, and share* the witness of our faith in Christ, not just among our family members, but with our neighbors, wherever we may live. Thus, the mission of our parish community is to allow our Lord to enter more deeply into our lives, and to carry the Good News beyond our own community, inviting others to partake in the Kingdom of God.

From Ascension to Pentecost, as a parish community we pray that the Lord might renew our life in God through the power and action of His Holy Spirit.

Prayer



Lord our God, spread the light of Your Holy Gospel, that it may shine through us who are baptized, as children of the Light. Grant that the Christian faith may spread in our society, that we may bear witness to Your living presence in our lives and in our parish community; O Lord, hear us and have mercy.

O Holy Spirit, bestowing all: You send prophets, perfect priests, teach the uneducated wisdom, transform fishermen into theologians, and unite the entire church community. Consubstantial and co-reigning with the Father and the Son, O Comforter, glory be to You!



Introduction. Thursday



FEAST OF THE ASCENSION



Word of God: ... he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit ... But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem



and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven...”

Full text: Acts 1:1-12



Reflection: In his book *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict XVI explains the meaning of the Ascension: “The departing Jesus does not make his way to some distant star. He enters into communion of power and life with the living God, into God’s dominion over space. Hence he has not ‘gone away,’ but now and forever he is present with us and for us ... now, through his power over space, he is present and accessible to all – throughout history and in every place.”



Prayer: You, O Lord, ascended into heaven, from where You came. Do not leave us orphans, and may Your Holy Spirit come and bring peace to the world. Show the sons of man the works of your might, O Lord, lover of mankind.



Invitation: On this solemn feast of the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ, we invite all to respond to the invitation of our Father and Head, His Beatitude Sviatoslav (Shevchuk), to travel together towards the feast of Pentecost, together meditating on the daily readings of the Divine Liturgy, taken from the Acts of the Apostles, which we will be reading daily over the next ten days. The Acts are the continuation of the Gospel of St. Luke, relating what took place with the Church following the ascension of Jesus. The example of the life of the Early Church, its birth, development, and missionary activity provides us with an ideal model for our missionary activity in the world today. The themes presented by St. Luke in the Acts of the Apostles will help us to better respond to the call

of His Beatitude, expressed in his pastoral letter: “The Vibrant Parish – a Place to Encounter the Living Christ.”

The account presented in *the Acts of the Apostles* is marked by the abiding presence of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The evangelist Luke frequently emphasizes that Jesus is the King and Lord not of an ever-more distant past, but is present and real to us. He is a person who can be known and loved who can hear and be heard, who continues to act in the world. That is why we could also call this book “The Acts of Jesus in the Church,” for it bears witness that Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and forever (see Heb 13:7), and that He is Emmanuel, God-with-us (see Mt. 1:23), every day until the end of the age (see Mt. 28:20).



First DayFriday



GIFT OF BAPTISM AND DIVINE SONSHIP



Word of God: (Paul) said to them, “Did you receive the holy Spirit when you became believers?” They answered him, “We have never even heard that there is a holy Spirit.” He said, “How were you baptized?” They replied, “With the baptism of John.” Paul then said, “John baptized with a baptism of repentance, telling the people to

believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, in Jesus.” When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul laid [his] hands on them, the holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. Altogether there were about twelve men. He entered the synagogue, and for three months debated boldly with persuasive arguments about the kingdom of God.

Acts 19:2-8



Reflection: The Holy Mystery of Baptism is the beginning of a new life, a rebirth in water and the Holy Spirit, a way of living, a lifestyle. The waters of Baptism wash away everything that leads to death, and save that, which endures forever, namely, divine sonship. The aim of Christian life is to be children of God, bearers of the Light of Christ in the world.

O, Jesus Christ, we implore you grant every one of us during these Mission Days the gift of a new Pentecost, the renewal of the grace of our Baptism and Chrismation. Through your Holy

Spirit, renew in us the gift of faith, the gifts and fruits of Your Spirit, so that we may become a new creation in Christ Jesus.



Quote for the Day: At the time of our Baptism, we renounced the devil and all his powers, and by means of our holy faith, which we received as a gift from God, we were united with Jesus Christ and completely dedicated ourselves to Him. We need to continually remember this event and ask ourselves: “what does our Baptism mean for us?”, so that we not waste the great gift of our Baptism, but be able to live according to our baptismal promises.

His Beatitude Lubomyr Husar



The Meaning of Baptism: How do I currently lead my life? Do I realize and acknowledge that God loves me, and that I have become a child of God through the sacrament of Baptism? Do I actually strive to live as a child of God? Do I help others acknowledge God’s love?



Prayer (before a lit candle): Take this lighted candle, and strive throughout your entire lifetime to shine brightly with the light of faith and of good deeds, so that, when the Lord will come, you may go forth in radiance to meet Him together with all the Saints, and may enter unhindered into the court of His heavenly glory and reign with Him throughout all the ages. Amen.

From the Rite of Baptism



Missionary Task: If possible, find out the date of your Baptism, and the name of the priest, who baptized you. Pray for your godparents, for the priest who baptized you, for your own godchildren, for those that are now preparing for Baptism, and for all those who still do not know Christ.



Second Day. Saturday



THE WORD OF GOD



Word of God: On the first day of the week when we gathered to break bread, Paul spoke to them because he was going to leave on the next day, and he kept on speaking until midnight. There were many lamps in the upstairs room where we were gathered, and a young man named Eutychus who was sitting on the window sill was sinking into a deep sleep as Paul talked on and on. Once



overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and when he was picked up, he was dead. Paul went down, threw himself upon him, and said as he embraced him, “Don’t be alarmed; there is life in him.” Then he returned upstairs, broke the bread, and ate; after a long conversation that lasted until daybreak, he departed. And they took the boy away alive and were immeasurably comforted.

Acts 20: 7-12



Reflection: Taking St. Paul’s example, we too should dedicate time to listen to Word of God, written in the Sacred Scriptures (the Bible). In the Bible, God does not merely provide us with information, but He reveals to us the truth about Himself, and His relationship with us, that He created us out of love, the truth about who we are for Him, His children and inheritors. The Bible invites us to respond to God’s Word. On the road to Emmaus, the mysterious Traveler applied the healing of the Word to cure the disillusioned disciples, giving new meaning to their suffering. By His Word, Jesus sets afire

the hearts of those who follow Him, so that they might receive understanding and have new life. Even though Jesus vanishes before their eyes, he remains in their hearts through the Word of God and the Holy Eucharist.



Quote for the Day: I believe, and I know, that one word of the Holy Gospel is worth more than all human wisdom, more than all human science.

Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky



Meaning of the Word of God: Knowing that faith is born hearing the Word of God (see Rom 10:17), do I regularly read from the Sacred Scripture, both personally, as well as in my family circle?



Prayer: Make the pure light of Your Divine knowledge shine in our hearts, O loving Master. Open the eyes of our minds that we may understand the message of Your gospel. Instill in us the fear of your blessed commandments that we may subdue

all carnal desires and follow a spiritual way of life, thinking and doing all that pleases You. For You, O Christ our God, are the enlightenment of our souls and bodies, and we give glory to You, together with Your eternal Father and Your most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen.

*Prayer before the Gospel
at the Divine Liturgy*



Missionary Task: Give a copy of the Bible (or write out those passages which appeal to you most) and give it to a friend who does not have a copy, or does not usually read the Bible.

In your family circle discuss a passage of the Sunday Gospel or a point in the homily that made an impression on you.



Third Day. Sunday of the Holy Fathers



LEADERS IN THE FAITH



Word of God: Keep watch over yourselves and over the whole flock of which the Holy Spirit has appointed you overseers, in which you tend the church of God that he acquired with his own blood. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come among you, and they will not spare the flock. And from your own group, men will come forward perverting the truth to draw the disciples

away after them. So be vigilant and remember that for three years, night and day, I unceasingly admonished each of you with tears. And now I commend you to God and to that gracious word of his that can build you up and give you the inheritance among all who are consecrated.

Full text: Acts 20:16-18, 28-36



Reflection: This year marks the 25th anniversary of the legalization of our Church in Ukraine. We think of the time when the profession of faith and prayer were prohibited by law. We remember the countless examples of determination and courage in faith and love, which continue to give us hope. Today we venerate those who were faithful – our church leaders, martyrs, and confessors – as we embrace our faith, determined to pass it on to others. We remember the many laypersons, who suffered for their faith in Christ in the hope that a time would come for us to live in the freedom of the children of God. May the lives of our martyrs be for us an example to imitate, and may they inspire us to personal witness, fervor and fidelity to Christ.



Quote for the Day: Do you not sometimes forget that the words of your teaching educate holy citizens for the Church militant on earth? Do you not at times forget that your work with a young soul may produce a real saint? Though misunderstood by others, they have unlimited potential before God, are people of sacrifice, people of love, aflame with God's love...

Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky



Meaning of Leaders of Faith: Which heroes of faith do I remember among the new blessed martyrs? What do I know about the example of service given by the clergy and faithful during the time of the persecution of our Church?



Prayer: All the choirs of the hierarchs, mighty luminaries of the Ukrainian Church! As faithful followers of the apostles and as good shepherds, you faithfully preserved the flock entrusted to you; you led it along paths of truth and carefully

fed it with spiritual food, not hesitating to give up your lives for your sheep. Therefore, together with Saint Josaphat priest-martyr, implore the Chief Shepherd, Christ God, for the Ukrainian nation faithfulness to His commandments and great mercy for our souls.

Sunday of All Saints of Rus'-Ukraine



Missionary Task: Ask an elder person to share with you what he remembers or knows about our Church in the underground.

Share a book about the martyrs of our Church, or at least speak of them to a friend, who knows little or nothing about them.



Fourth Day. Monday



THE GIFT OF THE CONSECRATED LIFE



Word of God: He (Phillip) had four virgin daughters gifted with prophecy. We had been there several days when a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. He came up to us, took Paul's belt, bound his own feet and hands with

it, and said, “Thus says the holy Spirit: This is the way the Jews will bind the owner of this belt in Jerusalem, and they will hand him over to the Gentiles.” When we heard this, we and the local residents begged him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul replied, “What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? I am prepared not only to be bound but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” Since he would not be dissuaded we let the matter rest, saying, “The Lord’s will be done.”

Full text: Acts 21:8-14



Reflection: To live a life serving God is the calling of every Christian, as we have all promised to follow Him in our Baptism. However, there are certain individuals, – monks, nuns and religious – who are consecrated to God in a special way. Having made a special vow, they are completely consecrated to God in order to serve their neighbor, to bring the light of Christ where it is the darkest, and to bring Christian hope to those in despair.

God never ceases to call men and women into his service. The consecrated life is a prophetic sign of God’s love, of the presence of the Kingdom of God in our midst, a constant reminder of the need to repent and to bring our world back to God.



Quote for the Day: The monastic life was, is and will remain an extraordinary power in Christ’s Church, and we all desire that this power have its proper place within the Church, fulfilling its mission according to its calling from God.

His Beatitude Sviatoslav



Meaning of the Consecrated Life: Do I understand that every vocation to the religious life is a great gift from God, and a blessing for the family, parish and nation? Do I foster vocations in my family?



Prayer: Venerable fathers of the Monastery of the Caves, Anthony and Theodosius, the first flowers of the Ukrainian Church, and all the countless righteous ones, who followed in their footsteps, dedicating their lives to God! You shine forth as an example of Christian perfection, and you teach us by prayer and self-denial to model ourselves on Christ-God for the salvation of our souls. Therefore, implore the good God, that we may be made worthy of your intercession, and that together with you, through prayer and sacrifice, we may obtain for the Church of Christ and our Ukrainian nation mercy and God's bountiful blessings.

Sunday of All the Saints of Rus'-Ukraine



Missionary Task: Pray for the gift of religious vocations from our parish community, for those who are already serving in the consecrated life, for their perseverance, and blessing.



Fifth Day. Tuesday



TO BE A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST



Word of God: So Paul took the men, and on the next day after purifying himself together with them entered the temple to give notice of the day when the purification would be completed and the offering made for each of them. When the seven days were nearly completed, the Jews from the province of Asia noticed

him in the temple, stirred up the whole crowd, and laid hands on him ... The whole city was in turmoil with people rushing together. They seized Paul and dragged him out of the temple, and immediately the gates were closed. While they were trying to kill him, a report reached the cohort commander that all Jerusalem was rioting. He immediately took soldiers and centurions and charged down on them. When they saw the commander and the soldiers they stopped beating Paul.

Full text: Acts 21:26-32



Reflection: To be a Christian is to be a disciple of Christ. Jesus wants his disciples to be close to Him (see Mk 3:13-14), to learn from Him (see Mk 11:13-14). Are we conscious of this great honor: to be disciples of the Risen Lord in this world, to share with others the joy of faith and the values of the Gospel? If we understand this, then do we find sufficient time each day to abide with the Lord; do we, as disciples, learn by listening to the Word of God. Perhaps we trust and listen to the deceitful words of the present world?

Rather, let us hold to the Word of God, for it is eternal and grants us fullness of life.



Quote for the Day: Having received the call from Christ: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit” (Mt 28:19), the disciples traveled throughout the world announcing the Good News of the Gospel.

Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky



Meaning of Discipleship: Have I ever thought about what it means to be a disciple of our Lord? Do I try to follow Jesus Christ as one of his disciples, or am I simply like the crowd of this world? (see Mk 10:46).



Prayer: O, Source of wisdom and grace. Open my sinful lips and teach me the manner in which and for what needs I should pray. For You know the great multitude of my sins, but their enormity can be

vanquished by Your loving-kindness ... Guide my life along your ways, for You govern all creation by a word with the ineffable power of Your wisdom; show me the way in which I should walk, O tranquil Haven of those who are turbulently perplexed. Grant the Spirit of Your wisdom to my deliberations, giving the Spirit of understanding to my ignorance. With the Spirit of Your fear, overshadow my deeds and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

*Kneeling Prayers
on Pentecost Sunday evening*



Missionary Task: Read Mk 1:21-35 and try to see yourself as a disciple, who spends an entire day with his Teacher. Afterwards, spend the next day in the spirit of one who follows Christ.



Sixth Day. Wednesday



RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE GIFT OF FAITH



Word of God: Paul was aware that some were Sadducees and some Pharisees, so he called out before the Sanhedrin, “My brothers, I am a Pharisee, the son of Pharisees; [I] am on trial for hope in the resurrection of the dead.” When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and Sadducees, and the group became divided.

For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection or angels or spirits, while the Pharisees acknowledge all three. A great uproar occurred, and some scribes belonging to the Pharisee party stood up and sharply argued, “We find nothing wrong with this man. Suppose a spirit or an angel has spoken to him?” ... The following night the Lord stood by him and said, “Take courage. For just as you have borne witness to my cause in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome.”

Full text: Acts 23:1-11



Reflection: It is only natural to ask: how can one attain the gift of faith? Art arises from inspiration, philosophy from thought, technology from calculation and experimentation, while “faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes through the word of Christ” (see Rom 10:17). Jesus Himself is the Word. Hearing is the first sense through which we receive the faith, but it is only the beginning. The Word of God travels from the ear to the heart, and here within the heart, a miracle of faith takes

place – the spiritual encounter of God with a human person. If a person’s free will accepts the Word, then by God’s grace even the hardest of human hearts can be transformed and converted. The Word emerges from a converted heart, and is transformed into the joyful expression of faith that Jesus Christ is Lord.



Quote for the Day: A living faith in a short time becomes for the Christian, who possesses it, more precious than gold or silver. This faith is so sweet, and brings such comfort and joy; so much so, that a disciple of Christ is ready to give up one’s life so as not to lose his faith.

Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky



Meaning of the Gift of Faith: Am I aware of and able to explain that which I believe? Do I know the truths of my faith? Do I try to deepen my knowledge of the Christian faith?



Prayer: The blessed preachers of Christ received the torch of the Holy Spirit; they spoke with divine inspiration, using few words, but rich in meaning. They proclaimed with boldness the doctrines of the Gospel and the traditions of righteousness. Clearly, they have been illumined with truth from on high; they have made firm the foundation of the faith as a strong mountain.

Sunday of the Fathers of the Nicene Council



Missionary Task: Each day I will affirm my faith through action, through study of the foundations of faith, through prayer, and works of mercy. I will be ready to explain and defend the faith, if someone disrespects or attacks the Church.



Seventh Day. Thursday



READINESS TO WITNESS – SERVE



Word of God: Since they spent several days there, Festus referred Paul's case to the king, saying, "There is a man here left in custody by Felix. When I was in Jerusalem the chief priests and the elders of the Jews brought charges against him and demanded his condemnation. I answered

them that it was not Roman practice to hand over an accused person before he has faced his accusers and had the opportunity to defend himself against their charge. ... His accusers stood around him, but did not charge him with any of the crimes I suspected. Instead they had some issues with him about their own religion and about a certain Jesus who had died but who Paul claimed was alive.”

Full text: Acts 25:13-19



Reflection: When believing Christians give witness to their faith through word and example, even a non-believing or indifferent individual can understand and remember the essence of the Good News that Jesus Christ is our Savior, that He is risen, lives, and is and present among us – in other words, that “God is with us.” This is confirmed in the words of Festus, who understood that the main point of contention was about “Jesus who had died but who Paul claimed was alive.” Therefore, whenever the question arises, has Jesus died and is no more, or is He risen and lives forever, Jesus was or Jesus is, our firm

answer must ring out confidently: Jesus is alive, alive not simply in people’s memory, but truly alive. He is risen. He is our Lord, the One who never abandons His people.



Quote for the Day: Learn to work with a spirit of sacrifice. For surely there will come a time when it will be necessary to give up everything, and become martyrs for our sacred faith, and perhaps to offer one’s life in sacrifice for the good of the Church and Nation.

Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky



Meaning of Personal Witness: In the present world how can I bear witness in word (effectively, according to the circumstances) and through my example of a Christian life (according to the precepts of the Gospel)?



Prayer: Apostles, prophets, martyrs, bishops, venerable and righteous ones, having finished the fight well and having kept the faith, you now have free approach to the Savior. For our sake, we beseech you, entreat Him in His goodness to save our souls.

Troparion of Saturday



Missionary Task: Discover if in our family, parish, among our friends, parishioners, and people I personally know, there are any who witnessed to Jesus Christ with their life, having undergone persecution in the underground. How does their example speak to me today, how does it inspire me?



Eighth Day. Friday



CARRYING OUR CROSS



Word of God: “I urge you now to keep up your courage; for not one of you will be lost, only the ship. For last night an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I serve stood by me and said, ‘Do not be afraid, Paul. You are destined to stand before Caesar; and behold, for your sake, God has granted safety to all who are sailing with you.’ Therefore, keep up your courage, men; I trust in God that it will turn out as I have been

told. We are destined to run aground on some island.” ... Until the day began to dawn, Paul kept urging all to take some food. He said, “Today is the fourteenth day that you have been waiting, going hungry and eating nothing. ... Not a hair of the head of anyone of you will be lost.” When he said this, he took bread, gave thanks to God in front of them all, broke it, and began to eat.”

Full text: Acts 27: 1-44



Reflection: St. Paul risked his life on more than one occasion. This must surprise some, for he was a reasonable, sober minded individual. However, for him there was something more precious than life preaching the Gospel, in order to bring as many people possible to the Risen Lord, our Savior. On the road to Damascus he experienced the gift of salvation granted out of divine love and mercy, and he wanted to share it with others. This does not mean that St. Paul did not hope for a quiet life. However, his love for Christ and his neighbor motivated him to go on further and further, proclaiming the Gos-

pel. To what extent are we willing to give up our own comfort and security to bring others to Christ? How much are we willing to suffer for Christ? Are we ready to cast away the “wisdom” of the world and proclaim the Gospel?



Quote for the Day: But this is the path. Without the Cross, the Christian style is not Christian, and if the Cross is a Cross without Jesus, it is not Christian. The Christian style takes the Cross with Jesus and goes forward – not without the Cross, not without Jesus.”

Pope Francis



Meaning of Our Cross: How do I understand Christ’s words: “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me” (Mk 8:34)? To what extent am I ready and willing to carry the cross of my daily obligations in regard to my faith, and follow our Savior, as did our heroic new martyrs, our spiritual luminaries?



Prayer: Having put on the breastplate of faith and having armed yourselves with the cross as a sword, you showed yourselves to be mighty warriors. You courageously opposed the persecutors, destroyed the deception of the devil, and victorious, you were granted crowns. Pray ever in our behalf that our souls be saved.

Octoechos, Tone 8



Missionary Task: Let us pray accept our different difficulties and challenges in life according to God's way, with joy, knowing that I am not alone, but that our Lord Jesus Christ walks with me and helps me. Let us pray unceasingly for our neighbors (husband, wife, children, grandchildren, friends, and enemies) and carry them to Jesus in our prayers.



Ninth Day, Saturday



BEING FILLED WITH A MISSIONARY SPIRIT



Word of God: From early morning until evening, he expounded his position to them, bearing witness to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus from the law of Moses and the prophets. Some were convinced by what he had said,

while others did not believe. Without reaching any agreement among themselves they began to leave; then Paul made one final statement. “Well did the holy Spirit speak to your ancestors through the prophet Isaiah, saying: ...Gross is the heart of this people; they will not hear with their ears; they have closed their eyes, so they may not see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and be converted, and I heal them.’ Let it be known to you that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen.”

Acts 28:1-31



Reflection: The incomplete nature of the *Acts of the Apostles* encourages us to “continue writing” by means of our own life: to proclaim the Gospel, and carry our faith in the Risen Christ to the “ends of the earth.” Our heart must reach out to this world, in our relationship with others, in our family, our village, city, our country, wherever there is hatred, aggression, injustice, hate, impurity, persecution, that is, where there is sin. We are the Church of the Risen Christ.

We are, therefore, not merely followers, but missionaries – the ones who bring Christ to others. Therefore, through our words and the action of our life, we conquer the world for God and expand the boundaries of the Kingdom of God, fulfilling the commandment Christ gave us: “Go, and make disciples of all nations” (Mt 28:19).



Quote for the Day: In virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (see Mt 28:19).

Pope Francis, Joy of the Gospel



Meaning of Sense of Mission: Am I aware, that the seed of faith and service to God were already implanted in me from the moment of my Baptism and Chrismation? Is this seed growing and does it have an impact on my life? Do I share my experience of God with others? Do I as a disciple of Christ have a missionary spirit to bring the gift of faith into the world?



Prayer: O Lord, our God, for the salvation of the human race, you sent your Only-begotten Son and God, Our Lord Jesus Christ, look now upon your servants listed for baptism ... grant them at the appropriate time the bath of rebirth, the forgiveness of sins and eternal garments. Unite them to your Catholic and Apostolic Church and number them as members of your flock.

*Prayer for the Catechumens
at the Divine Liturgy*



Missionary Task: Sharing with others the joy of salvation in Jesus Christ is the greatest expression of love and our mission in the world.

Pray for our missionaries in Eastern Ukraine, in Kazakhstan, in Russia and other areas. Generously support those, who already serve in mission territories. Reflect on how I and my parish community might join in the mission efforts of the Ukrainian Catholic Church.



Tenth Day. Sunday

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**THE GIFT
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT**



Word of God: When the time for Pentecost was fulfilled, they were all in one place together. And suddenly there came from the sky a noise like a strong driving wind, and it filled the entire house in which they were. Then there appeared to them tongues as of fire, which parted and came to rest on each one of them. And they were all filled with the holy

Spirit and began to speak in different tongues, as the Spirit enabled them to proclaim. Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven staying in Jerusalem. At this sound, they gathered in a large crowd, but they were confused because each one heard them speaking in his own language. They were astounded, and in amazement they asked, “Then how does each of us hear them in his own native language? ... we hear them speaking in our own tongues of the mighty acts of God.”

Acts 2:1-11



Reflection: Sometimes when we want to acquire something, we place a deposit on it in order to secure our claim. This thing is surely precious to us, and we expect to return for it. In the same way Christ, who left in our hearts the deposit of the Holy Spirit on the day of our Baptism and Chrismation, will surely return for us. And even though we still live in this world, we have already been redeemed from the bondage of sin, death, and the devil, and now we belong to Christ. The Holy Spirit, the Comforter, lives

within us, as in a spiritual temple. He is always with us, He is our defender, intercedes for us, and even prays for our welfare. From within, He inspire us to live and behave as true disciples of Christ, courageously bearing the light of God’s love into the world.



Quote for the Day: Jesus entrusts his disciples with a specific task: “to bring glad tidings to the poor ... to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord” (Lk 4:18-19).



Meaning of the Gift of the Holy Spirit: The feast of Pentecost compels me to respond to certain questions. Am I aware of having received the Holy Spirit and His gifts in the sacraments of Baptism and Chrismation? Do I know that through the gift of the Holy Spirit God transfigures my life and the lives of those I meet? Do I have the Spirit in abundance, as to elicit a response in others to my words and witness about Jesus Christ?



Prayer: Almighty, God, King of Glory, Jesus Christ, You who love the human race with Your whole heart, and in Your providential wisdom You continually care for each nation, look mercifully on our Ukrainian nation (as well as the NN. nation), that it (they) become a holy nation and fulfill the mission entrusted to it (them) by God. Amen.



Missionary Task: With a new zeal, let us endeavor to share with others our experience of faith and the joy of salvation in Jesus Christ. Our Lord entrusts our parish community with the task of opening human hearts to Him, proclaiming a new life in Christ in our villages, towns, cities, unto the end of the earth.

