

“Whoever believes in me, streams of living water will flow from within. Thus He spoke of the Spirit, which those who believed in Him should receive.” And at the last supper, “If thou lovest me, keep my commandments. Then I will pray the father, and He will give you another Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, which the world cannot receive.”

Pentecost is the feast of the Outpouring of the Holy Spirit and you would think, because that is what it sounds like, that it is given freely. , it is poured out on the people, we don't have to do anything for it. Yet the Fathers of the Church , especially the Holy Seraphim of Sarov , speak of the goal of the Christian life as the acquisition of the Holy Spirit . So not just freely given, but acquired. How then do we acquire that Holy Spirit?

Saint Gregory Palamas , the saint of the Jesus prayer , he links the measure in which we receive the Holy Spirit to the measure in which we repent . The degree to which we are humble, the degree to which we turn away from our pride. That is the answer to the question; How do I obtain the Holy Spirit. Look at the icon, the Holy Spirit descends on each individual, to the extent that they can bear the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit is like fire, it illuminates, but it also burns up our impurities. Therefore we obtain the Holy Spirit in measure, that we may not be burned.

And let's listen again to the Scriptures; “If you love me and keep my commandments, I will pray the Father, and He will send you the Holy Spirit, which the world cannot receive”. The world ; Christ speaks of the world in 2 ways; one meaning is the cosmos, God's creation, the other meaning is the life where the passions are central. That's the world that cannot receive the Holy Spirit. Apart from the heavier passions such as infidelity , stealing , lying it is mainly the search for comfort , walking a path in this life according to our own insights , avoiding suffering , ignoring the fast etc. . in that world there is no place for the cross, no place for humility or repentance, no place for following Christ and thus no place for the Holy Spirit. While it is the Holy Spirit that we need more than anything else in our spiritual life. And this is what we are longing for ! This gospel reading starts with that; “If any man be thirsty, let him come to Me to drink.” That is the longing for Christ that we can experience, for example, here in the Holy Liturgy. That desire comes from the Holy Spirit and we will have to nourish it, we will have to answer it in order to continue on our way to Christ. Without the Holy Spirit we are powerless and without the Holy Spirit our thirst for God will never be quenched! That is why God has given it to us, so that we may have the power to purify our lives, to fast, to never gossip again, to acquire humility ,to focus our thinking and feeling on God. Lord, do give us humility that we may receive the Holy Spirit.