My Beloved Ones,

This Sunday, we are blessed to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit comes to rest upon the Disciples, and on the entire Church. As we read in this week’s Gospel, St. John writes that, “On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’ Now he said this about the Spirit, which believers in him were to receive; for as yet there was no Spirit, because Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:37-39). However, with our Lord’s Resurrection & Ascension into Heaven, we have seen that He has been glorified.

Therefore, now the Disciples, and the many women who followed Jesus throughout His Ministry, were gathered on Mount Zion, constantly praying. The time was about nine in the morning during the Jewish feast of Pentecost (that is, 50 days after the Passover) when the pilgrims were going to the Temple to pray, and to make offerings. The Book of Acts tells us that “Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting” (Acts 2:2). Imagine their surprise, which became joy! Tongues of fire—bright, but not burning, descended from Heaven, onto the Disciples. According to Sergei Bulgakov, “Directly behind these, or even together with these external appearances, the event followed the internal, completing in the souls of the believers: ‘all were filled with the Holy Spirit’.”

Thanks to this divine gift, the Disciples went out, and began to speak God’s Word to the pilgrims, all in different tongues. As poor fishermen, they had not studied these languages, but this miracle was necessary to help the Disciples fulfill Christ’s Commission to preach to all the nations. The Disciples explained that Christ, the Redeemer of our sins, is the Son of God, of whom the Prophets had spoken, and that through Christ’s life, death, Resurrection, and His Ascension, Man has been reconciled with God. So astonished were many of these foreigners to hear their own languages, that they came away believing in Jesus Christ, The Teacher of new Apostles.

Our Pentecost (because it comes 50 days after Pascha) is special for us, not only because it allows us to commemorate this beautiful historical event, but because we ourselves have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If we permit Him to dwell within us, by observing the Commandments of the Father and the teachings of the Son, then the Holy Spirit will continue to inspire each of us to be great Disciples as well. Let us pray then that we be made worthy of the Wisdom, power, and strength from Above to carry out our Lord’s command to witness Him, now, and always.

+ALEXIOS  
Metropolitan of Atlanta