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The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church Faith and Order

## The Seventh Sunday of Zemene Fasika (*Paschal Season*)

### Liturgical Readings:

**Eph. 4:1 - 8; 1<sup>st</sup> Joh.2:1 – 8; Acts 2:1-4 ,**

**Psalm 67:18;**

**John 14:1– 22**

**The Anaphora of Saint Dioscorus**

### Why did the Holy Spirit Descend into our World on the Day of Pentecost?

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

"Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men" (**Psalm 68:18**). Beloved children of the Kingdom, we stand today in the radiant glow of the Feast of Pentecost, the day when the promise of the Father was fulfilled and the heavens were opened to pour out the Holy Spirit upon the world. We must ask our hearts: Why did the Paraclete descend? It was first and foremost, to clothe the weak children of Adam with divine power. For in our inherent frailty, we are but dust, yet our Saviour commanded His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high (**Luke 24:49**). He knew that to transform a world steeped in darkness, they would need not human eloquence, but the manifest might of the Spirit (**Acts 1:8**). This is the grace that enables us to walk worthy of our vocation, in all lowliness and meekness, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (**Ephesians 4:1-8**).

As the Spirit descended, He came to reprove a deceitful world—to hold up a divine mirror to a humanity lost in shadows. He came to convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (**John 16:8-11**). For it is a transgression to disbelieve in the Lord of Glory, and the Spirit makes manifest the truth that the prince of this world has been judged and his spoils divided (**Colossians 2:15**). While the world laments, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is the propitiation for our sins and whose Spirit leads us into the light (**1 John 2:1-8**). This Spirit of Truth guides us into the land of uprightness (**Psalm 143:10**) and leads sinners upon the path of repentance (**Psalm 25:8**). He does not speak of Himself, but whatever He hears from the Father, He declares to us (**John 16:13**), revealing that the ultimate Truth is the Person of Jesus Christ Himself—the Way, the Truth, and the Life (**John 14:6**).

In the upper room, when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the disciples were of one accord, waiting in hope despite their sorrow (**Acts 2:1-4**). Our Lord had promised them: "Let not your heart be troubled... I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter" (**John 14:1-16**). This Comforter came to sustain the mourning world and to strengthen the Apostles who, in their trembling, could not endure separation from their Master (**1 Corinthians 2:3**). For the world is a place of lamentation, but the Spirit provides a peace that the world cannot give. He is the witness who dwells within the Church, testifying of the Son of God, for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost (**John 15:26-27, 1 Corinthians 12:3**). Through this witness, the Lord is not ashamed to call us brethren, declaring the Name of the Father in the midst of the congregation (**Hebrews 2:22**).

But look, beloved, at the mystery of His manifestation! He descended not in silence, but with the sound of a rushing mighty wind (**Acts 2:2-3**). This wind is the breath of God that blows where it listeth; thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth (**John 3:8**). It was the fulfillment of the prophet Nahum's word, that the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind and the storm (**Nahum 1:3**). And upon the heads of the pure Apostles, He sat as cloven tongues of fire. This was the baptism of fire foretold by the Forerunner, a divine flame to refine the soul like gold and burn away the dross of iniquity (**Matthew 3:11**). In times of persecution and dispute, it is this same Spirit who speaks through the faithful, for it is not we who In times of persecution and dispute, it is this same Spirit who speaks through the faithful, for it is not we who speak, but the Spirit of our Father who speaketh in us (**Matthew 10:20-23**).

Therefore, let us rejoice, for the Comforter has come to abide with us forever. He has turned our mourning into dancing and clothed us with the garments of salvation. Let us go forth, led by the Spirit, to bear witness to the Risen Christ in all the world, until He comes again in glory.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and world without end. Amen.

### **Why did the Holy Spirit Descend into our World on the Day of Pentecost?**

#### **To Clothe the Weak with Power**

The children of Adam, in their inherent frailty, required power from on high to transform this world through the Gospel; therefore, the Holy Spirit descended to endue them with divine might. As our Saviour commanded: *“And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high”* (Luke 24:49; cf. Acts 1:8).

#### **To Reprove a Deceitful World**

The Spirit descended to convict a world steeped in falsehood, as it is written: *“And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged”* (John 16:8-11). Indeed, because it is a transgression to disbelieve in the true Lord, to remain ignorant of the defeat of the vanquished enemy, or to deny Jesus Christ’s return to His former glory, the Spirit came to make these truths manifest through divine reproof.

#### **To Lead Humanity into All Truth**

The Lord declared: *“Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come”* (John 16:13). The Psalmist likewise affirms that the Spirit leads us into the land of uprightness (Ps. 143:10) and guides sinners toward the path of repentance (Ps. 25:8). In times of disputation, He reveals the truth (Matt. 10:19-23). Ultimately, the Truth into which the Holy Spirit has led the Church is the Person of Jesus Christ Himself (John 14:6; 1 Cor. 12:3).

#### **To Comfort the Afflicted**

The Spirit descended as the Comforter because the world is a place of lamentation. Knowing the Apostles could not endure separation from Jesus Christ and would face manifold trials for the sake of the Gospel, He came to sustain them (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:5-15). Glory be to God the Holy Spirit, who came to comfort a mourning world.

#### **To Bear Witness concerning the Son**

Because the world did not recognise the Son of God, the Holy Spirit manifested Himself to bear witness of Him through the Apostles and within the Church (John 15:26; 1 Cor. 12:3).

### **In What Likeness did the Holy Spirit Descend?**

#### **In the Likeness of a Rushing Mighty Wind**

It is recorded that *“suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting”* (Acts 2:2). The Holy Spirit revealed His presence in the form of a tempest. In the Old Testament, it was prophesied that the Lord’s way is in the whirlwind: *“The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked: the Lord hath his way in the whirlwind and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet”* (Nahum 1:3). To fulfil this prophetic word, He appeared in the likeness of a wind. Our Lord Jesus Christ also taught that the wind is a type of the Spirit (John 3:8).

#### **In the Likeness of Fire**

The Holy Spirit did not descend upon the pure Apostles solely as a wind, but also in the likeness of fire, to refine them like gold. The Word of God clarifies this, saying: *“And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them”* (Acts 2:3). The Holy Scriptures confirm that fire is a divine type of the Holy Spirit and His baptism (Matt. 3:11).

**Glory be to God... Amen.**