

# From the Heights: Monastic Musings from the Mountains

Pentecost, 2022

The Holy Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Laurence

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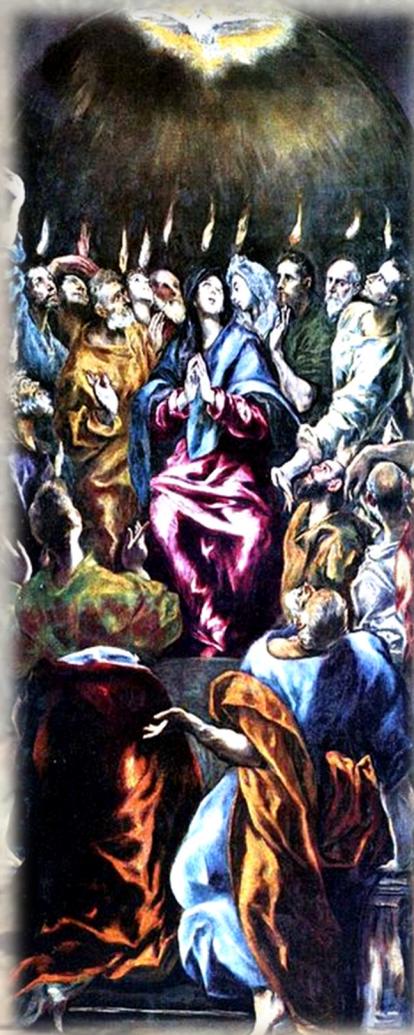
## Veni Sancte Spiritus... Veni pater pauperum...

Of the many medieval sequence hymns (Prose or poetry chanted before the Gospel, to emphasize the mystery or saint being commemorated at a particular Mass), only four remain in general use since the 1500's. One of these is the beautiful and expressive Pentecost Sequence, sometimes called the "Golden Sequence."

*Veni, Sancte Spiritus*, Come, Holy Spirit, was likely written between the years 1050 and 1100. It is notable for being addressed solely to the Third Person of the Trinity, a practice that was rare in the Western Church.

The text makes reference to numerous aspects of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the human heart and notes some of the fruits of that relationship in the lives of the faithful.

Verse two begins by calling the Spirit the "father of the poor."



This may seem a little odd, at first, since we are not accustomed to using "father" in reference to the Spirit. But there is a very important sense in which this is quite appropriate and we will ponder that sense in this article.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall inherit the earth," said our Lord in the Beatitudes as they are related in the St. Matthew's Gospel (5:3). Indeed, left to our own, fallen selves we are all poor in our spirits. We seek constantly for something, or someone, outside ourselves that can enrich our lives, reveal their true meaning, and bring them a transcendent sense of fulfillment.

The Gospel teaches us that there is only One who can fully accomplish this in us: God. St. Augustine famously wrote, in his *Confessions*, "Thou has made us for thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless, until they rest in thee." We were made to be "God-bearing." If we go through life bearing some other bur-



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den, convinced that true fulfillment comes via another person, some other “spirit,” an ideology, or material goods, we will eventually collapse under its weight and be left only with a void that nothing created, nothing natural can fill.

It is when we recognize our inner poverty, our lack of ability to create our own fulfillment, that the Holy Spirit is revealed as “Father of the poor.” Only the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Eternal Father and unites us to his Risen Son can generate within the human soul (see John 3:5) the living presence of God. Only by being filled with this living presence can we fulfill our God-given calling: to rise above the corruption of human nature and partake of the Divine activity we were created to know and experience. “Without thy Godhead nothing can have any price or worth in man, nothing can harmless be” (Vs. 6).

Let us empty ourselves and become brutally honest with ourselves about our inner poverty: our inability to fulfill the commandments of God by our own, natural efforts; our desperate need for supernatural compassion, mercy, and assistance. Then, and only then, can the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, be to us a “father,” and fill the emptiness of our outstretched hearts with the fulness of Divine Presence and Power.



*(Above) Abbot Theodore and Fr. David McCready at Pan-Orthodox Vespers, St. Columba Orthodox Church, April 10, 2022.*



*(Below) The monastery from Table Mountain as the clouds lift on a spring morning.*



*(Above) The Sung Requiem for Dame Olga, (Krum) held in St. Sophia Mausoleum on January 14, 2022. Many thanks to those who joined us for this solemn occasion. ✠ May she rest in peace.*



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*News & Events*

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**February 14th:** A new website for the Monastery of Our Lady and Saint Laurence was launched, featuring a fresh design, streamlined Mountain Monk Store, and Private Forum for Oblates. It can be viewed at [www.ladyminster.com](http://www.ladyminster.com).

**February 20th:** Father Abbot Theodore bade a fond farewell to parishioners of St. Augustine's in Denver. Fr. Demetrios Andrewes was reassigned from his position as Assistant Priest at St. Columba's in Lafayette, CO to serve as Rector of St. Augustine's. Abbot Theodore was appointed to St. Augustine's by His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph in May of 2018 after having served there regularly as a subdeacon and deacon since 2013. The brotherhood wishes Fr. Demetrios many blessings, even as we rejoice in having our Abbot with us on weekends and able to focus more exclusively on the well-being and development of the Monastery.

**March 1st:** The monastic brotherhood celebrated a Requiem Mass on the 2nd Anniversary of the repose of Dame Sophia (Roe). *May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.*

**March 10—17:** Dom Joseph-Marie was in Whittier, CA at St. Michael's Church, to assist in the making of a documentary on the iconography he did for the interior of the Church.

**March 22:** Michael-Lincoln Hammond (former Novice Edmund) withdrew from the novitiate to pursue other life-options. May God bless and guide him.

**April 9—16:** St. Herman's Lodge (the guesthouse) closed so that the Brotherhood could take time for a silent retreat in preparation for Holy Week. .

**April 10:** Abbot Theodore officiated Pan-Orthodox Vespers at St. Columba Parish in Lafayette, CO.

**April 17—24:** *Holy Week and Pascha.* For the first time, the Brotherhood was able to serve all the special Liturgies for Holy Week and Pascha at the Monastery. This was a challenge given our small numbers, but also a great blessing.

**May:** Fr. Sophronios Sanguinetti and Novice Andrew Ritty, from other monastic brotherhoods, began a time of prayer and exploration of the Benedictine way of life and the Orthodox Western Rite.

**May 13—15:** The Brotherhood hosted, *God Shall Be All Our Love*, a guided, silent retreat drawing on the wisdom of St. John Cassian, whose works are quoted and highly recommended by St. Benedict. The retreat was led by Ms. Aimee Cooper, M.A.

**May 30:** Mr. Jack Leahy began a Monastic Internship at the monastery. He will be assisting with various jobs in the monastery and with services in the Oratory. May God bless his time with us!

**June 3—5:** St. Mark Eritrean Orthodox Church in Denver brought 40+ people on retreat for the weekend, led by Fr. Tedros Tesfay and Mr. Mesfin Gebrai—a long time friend of the Fellowship.

**June 16:** Abbot Theodore and Dom Joseph-Marie will attend an event at Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility, for *Restoring Promise*, an anti-recidivism program in which our Dom Silas is a mentor.

**July 8—11:** Annual Benedictine Oblate Retreat and the Solemnity of St. Benedict. We will be joined by a group of men from St. Paul Parish, Katy, TX, led by their new Pastor, Fr. Adam Roberts.

**August 1—5:** We will welcome a group of men from St. Patrick's Parish, Bealeton, VA. They will be with us for a series of retreat talks and possibly some help with projects on the campus.

**August 16—19:** Dom Joseph-Marie will travel to California to represent the monastery at the Antiochian Western Rite Vicariate Conference. This year, the Conference is being hosted by Father's home parish, St. Michael's in Whittier.



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## The Oblate Corner

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### Whitsunday:

*From a poem for Pentecost Sunday, by George Herbert, d.1633*

**L**isten sweet Dove unto my song,  
And spread thy golden wings in me;  
Hatching my tender heart so long,  
Till it get wing, and flie away with thee.

*Where is that fire which once descended  
On thy Apostles? Thou didst then  
Keep open house, richly attended,  
Feasting all comers by twelve chosen men.*

*Such glorious gifts thou didst bestow,  
That th' earth did like a heav'n appeare;  
The starres were coming down to know  
If they might mend their wages, and serve here.*

*(Four stanzas omitted)*

*Lord, though we change, thou art the same;  
The same sweet God of love and light:  
Restore this day, for thy great name,  
Unto his ancient and miraculous right.*

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### How you can help!

- Pray for the Monastery's growth in holiness, vocations, and well-being.
- Schedule individual or group retreats at St. Herman Guest Lodge.
- Register with **Amazon Smile** for your online purchases, and designate the Benedictine Fellowship of St. Laurence as the beneficiary of their support for non-profits.
- Join our monthly donors' association, *The Friends of Our Lady and Saint Laurence*, as a Founder (\$50), Patron (\$25), Benefactor (\$10), or Friend (\$5). See our [web site](#) for a Paypal Donation Button.
- Consider purchasing a plot in the St. Laurence Cemetery or a vault in the St. Sophia Mausoleum.

**Contact:** [Abbot Theodore](#)

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