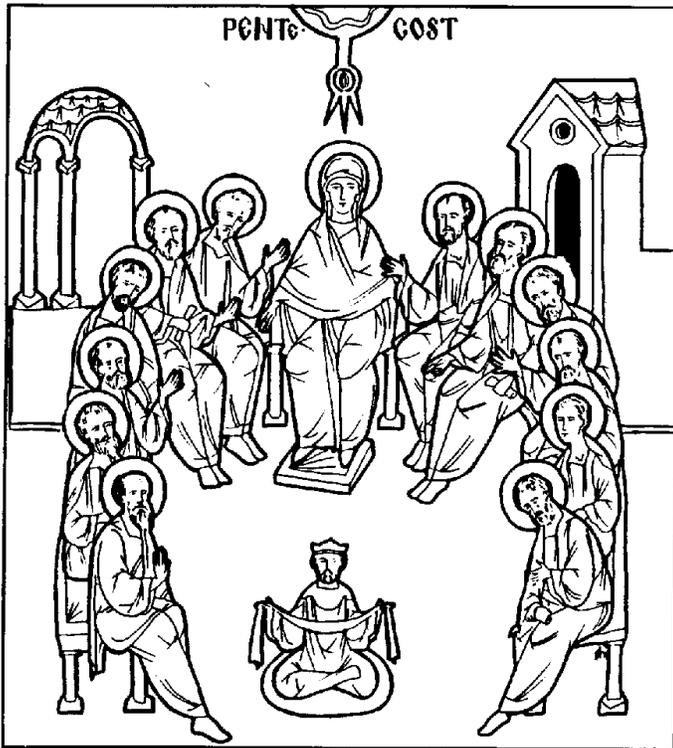


**"THROUGH ALL THE WORLD THEIR VOICES RESOUND ... "**



PENTECOST is a pivotal event in the history of the Christian Church. It was on this day that a group of frightened fishermen were strengthened by the grace of the Holy Spirit, which came upon them in the form of fiery tongues and a rushing wind, as recorded in the Book of Acts. The mysterious happenings of that first Pentecost filled the Apostles with the zeal and dedication necessary to take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the *"ends of the earth"*, as they were commanded to do. Persecutions could not curtail their missionary activities. Death could not silence their message. Once they fully understood what it meant to be *"fishers of men"*, the Apostles commended their entire lives to spreading the wonderful news concerning salvation through Jesus Christ to a skeptical, unbelieving world.

The icon of Pentecost depicts a wonderful theological expression of the Feast Day of Pentecost. The Apostles are seated in a semi-circle, showing the unity of the body of the Church.

Some of them hold scrolls in their hands, a sign of their having received the gift of teaching. At the bottom of this ancient composition is a symbolic figure of a *"King"*, who represents all mankind. He sits in a dark place, since the whole world was engulfed by the darkness of sin prior to the coming of Christ. The crown on the man's head symbolizes the reign of sin over the world before our Savior redeemed us. The white cloth in his hands with the twelve scrolls signifies the purity of the message brought to light by the Twelve Apostles.

It is significant to note that the grouping of the Apostles is completed by an empty, unoccupied place at the top of the circle. This *"place of honor"* is for Christ, the ever-present Head of the Church.

Pentecost is also a time for every Orthodox Christian to remember that each of us have received the same exhortation from Christ that the Apostles were given. Our task, too, is to carry the GOOD NEWS to the ends of the earth! The Holy Spirit comes to US today, strengthening and encouraging us as we strive to spread God's word to the un-churched. Yes, it is truly only through the workings of the Holy Spirit that our appointed work can be accomplished.