

Pentecost. Going for the Green and Gold!

Praying with Icons. Windows into Heaven. Growing in Our Friendship with Christ.
Go Elks Go!

You got it. I'm an Edmonton Eskimos fan or rather today an Edmonton Elks fan. And why not? The Eskimos, as they were known then, have won the Grey Cup fourteen times of the modern era, and an unmatched five consecutive wins between 1978 and 1982, most recently in 2015.

The colours green and gold live forever in my heart. Not only are they the colours of the Elks, but they are also the colours of the Feast of Pentecost, also known as the Feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit, celebrated fifty days after Easter, Our Lord's Resurrection.



After Jesus' resurrection from the dead, he instructed the disciples to stay in Jerusalem and to wait there for the promise of God the Father.

"When the day of Pentecost had come, the disciples were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them ability" (Acts of the Apostles, 2: 1-4).

On that first Pentecost, fifty days after the glorious resurrection of Jesus, the Lord sent the Holy Spirit in the form of tongues of fire upon his disciples that the Good News of the Gospel would be preached through them to all nations.

As we celebrate this Feast, let us remind ourselves of our own Pentecost, that is, our own baptism in the Holy Spirit, when we were anointed with the gifts of the Spirit so that we too might proclaim the Good News of salvation to all peoples of our time.

For the Holy Spirit continues to act today, not just 2,000 years ago, through the gifts given to us for God's glory – the great virtues of faith, hope and charity; the seven gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and the fear of the Lord; and the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.

Let us rediscover these gifts in ourselves, in our families, schools, churches, places of work, and communities, that we may be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and in turn, renew others by our Christian witness.

For each of us can relate stories of how the Holy Spirit has touched us in some special way – through the steadfast faith of a family member that all would be well when little light seemed to escape the darkness encompassing us; or the wisdom of a teacher or colleague to trust God completely; or the kindness of a friend during times of trouble or illness.

And what about the colours of green and gold?

Well, in the Ukrainian Christian tradition, another name for Pentecost is Green Holydays, *Zeleni svjata*. Our churches and homes are decorated with the greenery of branches and such in celebration of the Feast. Green is a symbol of the newness of life – divine life – brought to us by the Holy Spirit. The priests even wear green vestments for the Feast of Pentecost!

And gold? Well, we were created in the image and likeness of God the Father. By living in the love of Christ, we gradually grow into this image and likeness, into holiness. We call this process theosis, deification or divinization. The colour of the Divine is gold. And it is the Holy Spirit who helps us grow in the divine life, into holiness, sanctity.

Green and gold. Pentecost. The Divine Life.

Heavenly King, Advocate, Spirit of Truth, who are everywhere present and fill all things, Treasury of Blessings, Bestower of Life, come and dwell within us; cleanse us of all that defiles us, and O Good One, save our souls (Prayer to the Holy Spirit).

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Wishing you a blessed and enjoyable summer!

Bishop David Motiuk
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