

ANNIVERSARY OR OUR DEPARTED FOR THIS SUNDAY

<u>DAY</u>	<u>NAME OF THE DEPARTED</u>	<u>ANNIVERSARY</u>
20	Hanna Qaqish	11
21	Issa Khoury	15
22	Salma Khoury Dorkhom	35
23	George Karafile	6
23	Salome Bosada	50
23	Lily Zakaib	20
24	Selena Mereweather	65
25	Isabelle Zraik	30
26	Michel Deratany	46

ETERNAL LIGHT

- **Apr 26:** In loving memory of Yousef and Sumayah Musallam from Nadim Irbib and family.
- **May 17:** in loving memory of Adel Younes from his family
- **May 31:** in loving memory of Ernest Younes from his family
- **Please**, pray for the health of the following parishioners: Ellen, Robert, Alex, Sam, Elias, Isabelle, Nassar, Valentine, Lucy, Nina, Sonia, Samer, George and Elizabeth. If you have any names of people who need prayers, email them to father.
- **Check our new website** www.stgeorgeto.org
- Due to the **COVID-19 pandemic**, our office days have been reduced to two days (Thursday and Friday). Therefore, if you need to contact the Church office regarding any documents, donations, or general information on Monday to Wednesday, you can call **Waddah at (905) 508-6247**. Also, if you have any questions about E-transfer, contact our Treasurer, **John Dahdaly at (416)569-9900**. As for our streaming of services, if you have any questions, you can call our President, **George Boutros at 416-688-9994**.
- St George Parish Council is looking for a volunteer with **Accounting experience** to assist our accountant and treasurer with the books. Anyone interested please contact the church treasurer **John Dahdaly at 416-569-9900**

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON SUNDAY, APRIL 26, 2020

NEW SUNDAY OR ANTI-PASCHA

SUNDAY OF THOMAS THE APOSTLE, CALLED "THE TWIN"

HIEROMARTYR BASIL, BISHOP OF AMASEA WITH VENERABLE GLAPHYRA;
STEPHEN, BISHOP OF PERM; VENERABLE IOANIKIOS OF DEVITCH IN SERBIA

NOTE TO CLERGY: Remember to include this special petition in the Great Litany before the one for the head of state, as directed by the Antiochian Archdiocese.

Deacon: For Metropolitan Paul, Archbishop John, and for their quick release from captivity and safe return, let us pray to the Lord.

الشماس: مِنْ أَجْلِ المَثْرُوبُولِيَّتِ بولُسَ والمَطْرانِ
يُوحنا وَفَكَ اسْرِهِما وَعَوَدَتِهِما سَالِمِينَ، إِلَى الرَّبِّ
نَطْلُبُ.

VARIOUS ARRANGEMENTS OF "CHRIST IS RISEN"

Arabic ([slow, chant](#)) // English ([slow, chant](#)) // English-Arabic-Greek ([quick, chant](#))
English-Greek ([slow, choral](#)) // Arabic ([slow, choral](#))

- *The Priest begins Divine Liturgy with "Blessed is the Kingdom" and the choir responds "Amen." Bearing the Paschal Candle, the Priest then leads the singing of the Paschal Apolytikion and censes the west side of the Altar Table.*

Priest: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down Death by death; and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

- *The Choir then sings this twice, and the Liturgy continues with the Great Litany.*

THE FIRST ANTIPHON

Shout with joy to God, all the earth; sing to His Name, give glory to His praises.

Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Say to God: How awesome are Thy works; let all the earth worship Thee, and sing to Thee. Let it sing a song to Thy Name, O Most High. (**Refrain**)

Glory... Both now... (**Refrain**)

هَلِّلُوا لِلَّهِ يَا جَمِيعَ الأَرْضِ، رَتِّلُوا لِاسْمِهِ أَعْطُوا
مَجْدًا لِتَسْبِيحَتِهِ.

اللازمية: بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الإِلهِ، يَا مُخَلِّصُ خَلِّصْنَا.

قولوا لله ما أزهَبَ أَعْمَالِكَ، كُلُّ مَنْ فِي الأَرْضِ
يَسْجُدُونَ لَكَ وَيُرْتَلُونَ لِاسْمِكَ أَيُّهَا العَلِيِّ.
(اللازمة)

المَجْدُ، الآنَ وَكُلَّ أوانٍ (اللازمة)

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

May God have mercy upon us, and bless us, and may He cause His face to shine upon us, and have mercy upon us.

Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

لِيَتَرَأَفَ اللهُ عَلَيْنَا وَيُبَارِكُنَا، وَلْيُضِيءِ بِوَجْهِهِ عَلَيْنَا
وَيَرْحَمَنَا.

اللازمة: خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ
الأمواتِ، لِنُرْتِّلَ لَكَ. هَلِّلُويَا.

<p>That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy salvation among all nations; let the peoples give thanks to Thee, O God, let all the peoples give thanks to Thee. (<i>Refrain</i>)</p> <p>May God bless us, and may all the ends of the earth fear Him. (<i>Refrain</i>)</p> <p>Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...</p>	<p>لِتُعْرَفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ طَرِيقُكَ، وَفِي جَمِيعِ الْأُمَمِ خَلَاصُكَ. تَعْتَرِفُ لَكَ الشُّعُوبُ يَا اللَّهُ تَعْتَرِفُ لَكَ. (اللازمة)</p> <p>لِيُبَارِكُنَا اللَّهُ الْهُنَا، وَلِتُرْهَبَهُ جَمِيعُ أَقْصَايِ الْأَرْضِ. (اللازمة)</p> <p>الْمَجْدُ... الْآنَ وَكُلَّ أَوَانٍ ... يَا كَلِمَةَ اللَّهِ، الْإِبْنَ الْوَحِيدِ...</p>
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THE THIRD ANTIPHON

<p>+ Let God arise, and let His enemies be scattered, and let them that hate Him flee from before His face. <i>Refrain</i>: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death; and upon those in the tombs, bestowing life!</p> <p>+ As smoke vanisheth, so let them vanish; as wax melteth before the fire. (<i>Refrain</i>)</p> <p>+ So let sinners perish at the presence of God, and let the righteous be glad. (<i>Refrain</i>)</p> <p>+ This is the day which the Lord hath made; let us rejoice and be glad therein. (<i>Refrain</i>)</p>	<p>لِيُقُمْ اللَّهُ وَيَتَبَدَّدَ جَمِيعُ أَعْدَائِهِ، وَيَهْرُبُ مُبْغِضُوهُ مِنْ أَمَامِ وَجْهِهِ. (اللازمة): الْمَسِيحُ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، وَوَطِئَ الْمَوْتَ بِالْمَوْتِ، وَوَهَبَ الْحَيَاةَ لِلَّذِينَ فِي الْقُبُورِ. كَمَا يُبَادُ الدُّخَانُ يُبَادُونَ، وَكَمَا يَذُوبُ الشَّمْعُ مِنْ أَمَامِ وَجْهِ النَّارِ. (اللازمة) كَذَلِكَ تَهْلِكُ الْخَطَاةُ مِنْ أَمَامِ وَجْهِ اللَّهِ، وَالصَّادِقُونَ يَفْرَحُونَ وَيَتَهَلَّلُونَ أَمَامَ اللَّهِ، وَيَتَنَعَّمُونَ بِالسُّرُورِ. (اللازمة) هَذَا هُوَ الْيَوْمُ الَّذِي صَنَعَهُ الرَّبُّ، لِنَفْرَحَ وَنَتَهَلَّلَ بِهِ. (اللازمة)</p>
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THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF PASCHA

<p>In the gathering places bless God the Lord, from the springs of Israel. Save us, O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee: Alleluia.</p>	<p>فِي الْمَجَامِعِ بَارِكُوا اللَّهَ، الرَّبَّ مِنْ يَنَابِعِ إِسْرَائِيلَ، خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِنُرْتَلَّ لَكَ: هَلْلُويَا.</p>
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APOLYTIKION FOR THOMAS SUNDAY IN TONE SEVEN

<p>While the tomb was sealed, Thou didst shine forth from it, O Life. While the doors were closed, Thou didst come in to Thy Disciples, O Christ God, Resurrection of all, renewing in us through them an upright spirit, according to the greatness of Thy mercy.</p>	<p>إِذْ كَانَ الْقَبْرُ مَخْتُومًا، أَشْرَقْتَ مِنْهُ أَيُّهَا الْحَيَاةُ. وَلَمَّا كَانَتِ الْأَبْوَابُ مُغْلَقَةً، وَاقَيْتِ التَّلَامِيذَ أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْإِلَهَ، قِيَامَةَ الْكُلِّ. وَجَدَدْتَ لَنَا بِهِمْ رُوحًا مُسْتَقِيمًا بِحَسَبِ عَظِيمِ رَحْمَتِكَ.</p>
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- Do NOT sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple.

KONTAKION OF PASCHA IN TONE EIGHT

Though Thou didst descend into the grave,
O Immortal One, yet didst Thou destroy the
power of Hades, and didst arise as victor,
O Christ God, calling to the myrrh-bearing
women, Rejoice, and giving peace unto
Thine Apostles, O Thou Who dost grant
resurrection to the fallen.

وَلَيْنَ كُنْتَ نَزَلْتَ إِلَى قَبْرِ يَا مَنْ لَا يَمُوتُ، إِلَّا أَنْتَ
دَرَسْتَ قُوَّةَ الْجَحِيمِ، وَفُتَّتْ غَالِباً أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ
الِإِلَهَ، وَلِلنِّسْوَةِ حَامِلَاتِ الطَّيِّبِ قُلْتَ "أَفْرَحْنَ"،
وَوَهَبْتَ رُسُلَكَ السَّلَامَ، يَا مَانِحَ الْوَاقِعِينَ الْقِيَامَ.

THE EPISTLE (for Thomas Sunday)

*Great is the Lord, and great is His power.
Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.*

The Reading from the Acts of the Saintly and Pure Apostles. (5:12-20)

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the Apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested the Apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

عَظِيمٌ هُوَ رَبُّنَا وَعَظِيمَةٌ هِيَ قُوَّتُهُ.

سَبِّحُوا الرَّبَّ فَإِنَّهُ صَالِحٌ

فَضْلٌ مِنْ أَعْمَالِ الرُّسُلِ الْقَدِّيسِينَ الْأَطْهَارِ.

(20-12:5)

فِي تِلْكَ الْأَيَّامِ، جَرَّتْ عَلَى أَيْدِي الرُّسُلِ آيَاتٌ
وَعَجَائِبٌ كَثِيرَةٌ فِي الشَّعْبِ. (وَكَانُوا كُلُّهُمْ بِنَفْسٍ
وَاحِدَةٍ فِي رِوَاقِ سُلَيْمَانَ. وَلَمْ يَكُنْ أَحَدٌ مِنَ
الْآخَرِينَ يَجْتَرِئُ أَنْ يُخَالِطَهُمْ، لَكِنْ كَانَ الشَّعْبُ
يُعَظِّمُهُمْ. وَكَانَ جَمَاعَاتٌ مِنْ رِجَالٍ وَنِسَاءٍ
يَنْضَمُّونَ بِكَثْرَةٍ مُؤْمِنِينَ بِالرَّبِّ). حَتَّى إِنَّ النَّاسَ
كَانُوا يَخْرُجُونَ بِالْمَرْضَى إِلَى الشُّوَارِعِ، وَيَضَعُونَهُمْ
عَلَى فُرُشٍ وَأَسْرَّةٍ، لِيَقَعَ وَلَوْ ظِلُّ بُطْرُسَ، عِنْدَ
اجْتِيَازِهِ، عَلَى بَعْضٍ مِنْهُمْ. وَكَانَ يَجْتَمِعُ أَيْضًا إِلَى
أُورُشَلِيمَ جُمُهورُ الْمُدُنِ الَّتِي حَوْلَهَا، يَحْمِلُونَ
مَرْضَى وَمُعَدِّبِينَ مِنْ أَرْوَاحِ نَجَسَةٍ، فَكَانُوا يُشْفَوْنَ
جَمِيعُهُمْ. فَقَامَ رَئِيسُ الْكَهَنَةِ وَكُلُّ الَّذِينَ مَعَهُ، وَهُمْ
مِنْ شِيعَةِ الصَّدُوقِيِّينَ، وَامْتَلَأُوا غَيْرَةً. فَأَلْقَوْا أَيْدِيَهُمْ
عَلَى الرُّسُلِ وَجَعَلُوهُمْ فِي الْحَبْسِ الْعَامِّ. فَفَتَحَ مَلَائِكُ
الرَّبِّ أَبْوَابَ السِّجْنِ لَيْلًا، وَأَخْرَجَهُمْ، وَقَالَ: امْضُوا
وَقِفُوا فِي الْهَيْكَلِ، وَكَلِّمُوا الشَّعْبَ بِجَمِيعِ كَلِمَاتِ
هَذِهِ الْحَيَاةِ.

THE GOSPEL (for Thomas Sunday)

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. John. (20:19-31)

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the Disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the Disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other Disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe." Eight days later, His Disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the Disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His Name.

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفٌ مِنْ بَشَارَةِ الْقَدِيسِ يُوْحَنَا الْإِنْجِيلِي
البشِيرِ وَالتَّلْمِيزِ الطَّاهِرِ. (31-19:20)
لَمَّا كَانَتْ عَشِيَّةُ ذَلِكَ الْيَوْمِ، وَهوَ أَوَّلُ الْأُسْبُوعِ
وَالْأَبْوَابُ مُغْلَقَةٌ حَيْثُ كَانَ التَّلَامِيذُ مُجْتَمِعِينَ خَوْفًا
مِنَ الْيَهُودِ، جَاءَ يَسُوعُ وَوَقَّفَ فِي الْوَسْطِ وَقَالَ
لَهُمْ: "السَّلَامُ لَكُمْ". فَلَمَّا قَالَ هَذَا أَرَاهُمْ يَدَيْهِ وَجَنْبَهُ،
فَفَرِحَ التَّلَامِيذُ حِينَ أَبْصَرُوا الرَّبَّ. وَقَالَ لَهُمْ ثَانِيَةً:
"السَّلَامُ لَكُمْ، كَمَا أَرْسَلَنِي الْآبُ كَذَلِكَ أَنَا أَرْسَلُكُمْ".
وَلَمَّا قَالَ هَذَا نَفَخَ فِيهِمْ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ: "خُذُوا الرُّوحَ
الْقُدْسَ. مَنْ غَفَرْتُمْ خَطَايَاهُمْ تُغْفَرْ لَهُمْ وَمَنْ أَمْسَكْتُمْ
خَطَايَاهُمْ أَمْسَكْتُمْ". أَمَّا تَوْمًا أَحَدُ الْإِثْنَيْ عَشَرَ
الَّذِي يُقَالُ لَهُ التَّوَّامُ فَلَمْ يَكُنْ مَعَهُمْ حِينَ جَاءَ
يَسُوعُ، فَقَالَ لَهُ التَّلَامِيذُ الْآخَرُونَ "إِنَّا قَدْ رَأَيْنَا
الرَّبَّ"، فَقَالَ لَهُمْ: "إِنْ لَمْ أَعَيْنِ أَثَرَ الْمَسَامِيرِ فِي
يَدَيْهِ، وَأَضَعُ إِصْبَعِي فِي أَثَرِ الْمَسَامِيرِ، وَأَضَعُ
يَدِي فِي جَنْبِهِ لَا أُؤْمِنُ". وَبَعْدَ ثَمَانِيَةِ أَيَّامٍ كَانَ
تَّلَامِيذُهُ أَيْضًا دَاخِلًا وَتَوْمًا مَعَهُمْ، فَآتَى يَسُوعُ
وَالْأَبْوَابُ مُغْلَقَةٌ وَوَقَّفَ فِي الْوَسْطِ وَقَالَ لَهُمْ:
"السَّلَامُ لَكُمْ"، ثُمَّ قَالَ لِتَوْمًا: "هَاتِ إِصْبَعَكَ إِلَى
هَهُنَا وَعَيْنِي يَدِي، وَهَاتِ يَدَكَ وَضَعَهَا فِي جَنْبِي،
وَلَا تَكُنْ غَيْرَ مُؤْمِنٍ بَلْ مُؤْمِنًا". أَجَابَ تَوْمًا وَقَالَ
لَهُ: "رَبِّي وَإِلَهِي". قَالَ لَهُ يَسُوعُ: "لَأَنَّكَ رَأَيْتَنِي يَا
تَوْمًا أَمَنْتَ؟ طُوبَى لِلَّذِينَ لَمْ يَرَوْا وَآمَنُوا". وَأَيَّاتٍ
أُخْرٍ كَثِيرَةً صَنَعَ يَسُوعُ أَمَامَ تَّلَامِيذِهِ لَمْ تُكْتَبْ فِي
هَذَا الْكِتَابِ. وَأَمَّا هَذِهِ، فَقَدْ كُتِبَتْ لِتُؤْمِنُوا بِأَنَّ يَسُوعَ
هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ اللَّهِ، وَلِكَيْ تَكُونَ لَكُمْ، إِذَا آمَنْتُمْ،
حَيَاةً بِاسْمِهِ.

MEGALYNARION FOR THOMAS SUNDAY IN TONE ONE

O most radiant lamp, the Theotokos, the immeasurable honor, which is more exalted than all creatures, with praises do we magnify thee.

أَيُّهَا الْمِصْبَاحُ السَّاطِعُ الضِّيَاءِ وَأُمُّ الْإِلَهِ، وَالشَّرْفُ
الذِي لَا قِيَاسَ لَهُ، الْأَرْفَعُ مِنَ الْخَلَائِقِ جَمِيعِهَا،
بِالْتَّسَابِيحِ لِكَ نَعْظُمُ.

KOINONIKON (COMMUNION HYMN) OF THOMAS SUNDAY (Psalm 147:1)

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem; praise thy God, O Zion. Alleluia.

سَبِّحِي يَا أُورُشَلِيمَ الرَّبَّ، سَبِّحِي إِلَهَكَ يَا صِهْيُونَ.
هَلِّلُوِيَا.

- *Instead of “We have seen the true light,” sing “Christ is Risen” ONCE.*

THE GREAT DISMISSAL

Priest: May He Who rose from the dead, Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by the might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of Heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, whose Divine Liturgy we have now celebrated; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of the holy, glorious, and all-laudable Apostle Thomas, called “The Twin”; of the Hieromartyr Basil, bishop of Amasea with Venerable Glaphyra; Stephen, bishop of Perm; and Venerable Ioanikios of Devitch in Serbia, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

الكاهن: أَيُّهَا الْمَسِيحُ الْهُنَا الْحَقِيقِي، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنْ
بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، بِشَفَاعَاتِ أُمَّكَ الْكُلِّيَّةِ الطَّهَارَةِ
وَالْبَرِّيَّةِ مِنْ كُلِّ عَيْبٍ؛ وَبِقُدْرَةِ الصَّلِيبِ الْكَرِيمِ
الْمُخَيِّ؛ وَبِطُلُبَاتِ الْقُوَّاتِ السَّمَاوِيَّةِ الْمُكْرَمَةِ
الْعَادِمَةِ الْأَجْسَادِ؛ وَالنَّبِيِّ الْكَرِيمِ السَّابِقِ الْمَجِيدِ
يُوحَنَّا الْمَعْمَدَانِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمُشْرَفِينَ الرَّسُلِ
الْجَدِيرِينَ بِكُلِّ مَدِيحٍ؛ وَأَبِينَا الْجَلِيلِ فِي الْقَدِيسِينَ
يُوحَنَّا الذَّهَبِيِّ الْقَمِّ رَئِيسِ أَسَاقِفَةِ الْقُسْطَنْطِينِيَّةِ،
كَاتِبِ هَذِهِ الْخِدْمَةِ الشَّرِيفَةِ، وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الْمَجِيدِينَ
الشُّهَدَاءِ الْمُتَأَلِّقِينَ بِالظَّفَرِ؛ وَأَبَائِنَا الْأَبْرَارِ
الْمُتَوَشِّحِينَ بِاللَّهِ؛ وَالْقَدِيسِ (ة) (فُلَانِ، فُلَانَةَ)
شَفِيعِ(ة) وَحَامِي(ة) هَذِهِ الرَّعِيَّةِ الْمُقَدَّسَةِ؛
وَالْقَدِيسِينَ الصِّدِّيقِينَ جَدِّي الْمَسِيحِ الْإِلَهِ، يُوَاكِمِ
وَحَنَّةً؛ وَالرَّسُولِ الْجَدِيرِ بِكُلِّ مَدِيحِ تُوْمَا الَّذِي
يُقَالُ لَهُ التَّوَامُ؛ وَالشَّهِيدِ فِي الْكَهَنَةِ بِاسِيْلْيُوسَ
أُسْقَفِ أَمَاسِيَّا مَعَ الْبَارَةِ غَلَاْفِيْرَةَ؛ اسْتِفَانُوسَ
أُسْقَفِ بَرْمَ، وَالْبَارِ يُوَانِيْكْيُوسَ أُسْقَفِ دَافِيْتَشَ
الصِّرْبِيِّ؛ الَّذِينَ نَقِيْمُ تَذْكَارَهُمْ الْيَوْمَ، وَجَمِيعِ
قَدِيسِيْكَ، إِرْحَمْنَا وَخَلِّصْنَا بِمَا أَنَّكَ صَالِحٌ وَمُحِبٌّ
لِلْبَشَرِ.

Priest: Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down Death by death, and upon those in the tombs...

الكاهن: المَسِيحُ قَامَ مِنْ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، وَوَطِئَ
المَوْتَ بِالمَوْتِ، وَوَهَبَ الحَيَاةَ...

People: ...bestowing life!

الجوقة: ... لِلَّذِينَ فِي القُبُورِ.

- NOTE: This ending for the remainder of Bright Season matches what is provided in the *Liturgikon* (third edition, p. 14).

These texts have been prepared by the Department of Liturgics of the Antiochian Archdiocese Portions of the Archdiocesan Service Texts include texts from The Menaion, The Great Horologion, The Pentecostarion, The Octoechos, and The Psalter of the Seventy, which are Copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, Massachusetts, and are used with permission. All rights reserved. These works may not be further reproduced, beyond printing out a single copy for personal non-commercial use, without the prior written authorization of Holy Transfiguration Monastery.

St. Thomas Sunday

by Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas and the South

(The following is a brief reflection on the Gospel reading for the Sunday after Pascha, John 20:19-31)

When the disciples had gathered on the new Passover (Pascha), the Lord's Day or Resurrection Day, Jesus entered the room where they were — "the doors being shut ... for fear of the Jews" — stood in the midst of them and showed them His hands and side. Christ then greeted them with that salutation, retained by the Church through the ages, with which the priest greets the faithful at each of the important parts of the Divine Liturgy and other services: "Peace be unto you." Twice our Lord delivers this message of peace to His disciples that "first day of the week." We are reminded in this of the Savior's words before the Crucifixion: "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" and "these things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace." (John 14:27; 16:33) The Resurrection, of which the beloved disciples were witnesses, was the confirmation of Christ's entire life of prophecy and sacrifice. It was a reassurance that the peace He had come to give the world was not vain or imagined. Nor was it peace on strictly a human level, for example the absence of war or strife among men. Rather this peace was the presence of the Prince of Peace in the midst of human existence. It was the long awaited reconciliation between God and man, and in God a profound "union of all men" as children of the Most High, a peace that the world is unable to provide or understand.

Continuing the Gospel reading for Thomas Sunday, we are told that the apostles "were glad when they saw the Lord." Once more Christ's words prior to His Passion are brought to mind: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you." (John 16: 22) This joy that our Lord promised His disciples is, like peace, that which is experienced in the Divine Presence. It is the same joy felt by Christians after all these centuries when they participate, through the divine worship of the Church, in the blessings of the Kingdom to come. Particularly in the Eucharist an almost inexplicable joy is experienced in an encounter with the risen Lord, in communion with His Holy Body and Blood. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matthew 18:20) "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." (John 6:56) In the Eucharistic gathering Christ's glory is revealed to His disciples and they are thus strengthened and confirmed in their faith in the promises of Christ, ready to return to the world from which they were called out. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1Peter 2:9) (The Greek, *ecclesia*, from which we get the word Church means, called out.)

Then He said to them again, "Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained." (John 20: 21-23) The Church is simultaneously called out, "consecrated," and then sent to accomplish the same work as her Founder. Christ preached repentance and the advent of a heavenly Kingdom. His mystical Body, the Church, has the same mission in this world of extending God's Kingdom, central to which is the pronouncement of repentance and forgiveness. The Church, in God's name, pronounces forgiveness to all in light of a heavenly Kingdom revealed in Christ. The Church carries out her mission through the guidance and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now "Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came," and when the others told Him, "we have seen the Lord." He, therefore, said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." (John 20: 24-25) Thomas is like so many of us in that he would require tangible, visible proof that Christ is really active in the lives of His people, caring for creation, and that He was what He claimed to be: "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." (John 14:9) Some today desire generally that kind of evidence even for God's existence, "irrefutable" evidence making it impossible for man not to believe. That type of unquestionable, undeniable proof, we can say, will be put forth only at the end of this age, when "the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him ..." (Matthew 25:31) At that time it will indeed be quite impossible for anyone (although some may try in vain) to deny "the King of kings and the Lord of lords." (Deuteronomy 10:17; Revelation 19:16)

God's most important gift to man, that which identifies him as a creature made in the image of God, is free will. The Lord honors this gift. He loves man and would have man love Him freely in return. God, therefore, will not force man to accept Him, but would have him approach his Creator in faith and trust. We would do well to remember the example of St. John the Baptist. He bore witness to his Lord saying, "Behold, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29) Yet after being arrested, in a moment of hesitation or doubt, the Forerunner sent his disciples to Christ asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matthew 11:3) At first glance this question seems strange, indeed contradictory, for "the greatest born of women" to be asking. It is thus important to note that Jesus does not seek to answer it in some "definitive" way, irrefutable in John's mind. Rather He responds in terms of an invitation, still beckoning His servant to place his trust freely in Him: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me." (Matthew 11:4-6)

Near the end of the Gospel passage, after Thomas exclaims, "My Lord and my God," Jesus says to him, "Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Faith: this is the way that God would have us come to Him. "Faith," says St. Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." (Hebrews 11:1) People sometimes lament the fact that they did not live in Apostolic times when it would have been possible to see for themselves and talk face to face with the Incarnate Lord. In the minds of many, this would constitute tangible proof of God's existence and alleviate any doubts concerning Christ. But would it? Israel was prepared for almost two thousand years for the Messiah's advent. Miracles were performed by Him in the peoples' midst. Yet, in the end, those who heard and saw Jesus for themselves wound up shouting, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." Only a few individuals stood with Him at the foot of the Cross. One really has to wonder seriously if we would have been any different given the chance. For regardless of how and when the Lord chooses to reveal Himself it is always possible, in freedom and because of sin, to explain away that revelation.

A primary emphasis here is that the historical period in which one exists makes no difference as far as one's relationship to Christ is concerned and his or her ability to know the Truth and live by faith. We have the mystical Body of Christ, the Church's sacramental, liturgical life, and the Lord's promise to be with us always. We have "received the Heavenly Spirit," and are blessed with the examples, testimonies and presence of countless saints who have gone on before us. We are literally living, right now if you will, in Apostolic

times. So it seems as though we are missing the mark if we begin to demand, from God or from ourselves, objective, factual knowledge in terms of "proof," before we can come to faith. At some point a "leap of faith," will be required, for as mentioned above, so-called concrete evidence can always be discarded if that is what is desired. On the other side of that "leap," though, is the knowledge that we all seek. Once there, there is no lack of proof. But without this faith no amount of knowledge or evidence will suffice. There will always be room for doubt, and opportunities for man in his "wisdom" to deny what is so plain and simple to all who have truly found the narrow path that leads to life.

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

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