

Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

April 23, 2023



*2nd Sunday
of Pascha*

*St. Thomas Sunday
Holy Greatmartyr George*

**Divine Liturgy
Readings**

(Readings on Back)

- ◆ Acts 5:12-20
- ◆ John 20:19-31

Announcements:

Visit of Archbishop Daniel

His Eminence, Archbishop Daniel is scheduled to visit our parish next Saturday, April 29 & Sunday, April 30. Following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, we will have a festive coffee hour where we can share fellowship with, and get to know our new hierarch. The visit of the bishop is a very important event in the life of the parish. **PLEASE MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND VESPERS AND LITURGY.**

"Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the multitude [of the people] also be; even as, wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Church... And say I, Honor God indeed, as the Author and Lord of all things, but the bishop as the high-priest, who bears the image of God." - St. Ignatius of Antioch, Letter to the Smyrnaeans

Grave Blessings

We will proceed as planned with the grave blessings today. We will begin at noon at Elmwood cemetery. If you cannot be present and want your family's graves blessed please let Fr Joseph know ahead of time.

Today's Panikhida

Today's Panikhida is being said for the 1-year anniversary of the falling asleep of His Emminence, Archbishop PAUL. May the Kingdom of Heaven be his, and may his memory be eternal!

This Week

Saturday, April 29

6:00pm - Great Vespers

Sunday, April 30

9:00am - 3rd & 6th Hours

9:30am - Divine Liturgy
Coffee Hour with Archbishop
Daniel



Paschal Meditation

A confused, weak, and often divided group that included fishermen, a tax-collector, and a zealot; which collectively ran away in fear at the crucifixion; and the leader of which denied the Lord three times, is now a powerhouse of miraculous healings and bold preaching. What has happened to them?

The answer is clear: Christ has conquered sin and death in their lives. He has filled them with the Holy Spirit. He has empowered them to manifest His new life and ministry. "Peace be to you. As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." His victory over sin, the grave, and all human corruption is now theirs. And you can see the change in their lives.

Just as doubting and fearful disciples became faithful, bold preachers and wonderworkers, we are also called to know the power the Lord's resurrection in our lives. We may want to excuse ourselves from this high calling, however. In contrast with the brilliant light of Pascha, we may see the darkness and brokenness in our lives all too well. Christ has conquered sin and death, but we all still bear their wounds; and sometimes we wonder if this glorious news of life eternal really applies to us with all our struggles, pains, and weaknesses.

But didn't you notice that when the risen Lord appears to His disciples, His glorified body still bears His wounds? Christ was not raised as a ghost or a spirit, but as a whole human being with a body. His horrible wounds were part of Who He freely chose to become as a human being for our sakes, and He arises victorious with them. He has taken these wounds upon Himself purely out of love for us and has used them to defeat evil and death.

Of course, we must not deny the truth about lives; we should not pretend that all is well when it is not. Our growth in holiness is an eternal journey, and we certainly have not yet arrived. But we must recognize that Christ rose again to bring the dead to life, to heal our wounds and transform all who are created in His image and likeness; and, yes, that includes all of us. The good news of Pascha is that we are no longer held captive by sin and death. Sin only has the power in our lives that we allow it to have; the same is true of the fear of death, violence, suffering, and all the other works of darkness that can so easily dominate us.

When the Risen Lord breathes on His apostles and says, "Receive the Holy Spirit," we are reminded of the creation of Adam in Genesis. The divine breath gave us life to begin with, but with our sin and corruption we have rejected that life and preferred death instead. Now the same Lord Who created us has conquered death on our behalf. The Second Adam breathes on humanity again, bringing life once more to the first Adam and restoring us to our original dignity. And this time He gives us an ongoing remedy for our sins: the ministry of forgiveness through His Body, the Church. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

This apostolic ministry continues in the Church through the Sacrament of Confession. Even though we fall away time and time again from the new life in Christ, He extends the joy of His resurrection to us by forgiving us, restoring us to the life of the Kingdom, healing our spiritual diseases, and helping us grow ever more like Him. No, Confession is not negative, for it is the good news of the Savior's victory over death applied to us personally, to the wounds and scars of our lives that we rarely expose to anyone else. Through our humble confession, Christ conquers the evil in us and empowers us to life with the joy and confident hope of those who have passed over the slavery of sin to the glorious freedom of the children of God. No, Confession is not only for Lent, and we should all make regular and conscientious use of this Sacrament—not out of legalism or excessive guilt, but as a therapy to help us enter more fully into the joy of the Lord.

No matter how difficult our struggles are or how weak we feel before them, let us rejoice today in the resurrection of Christ. No matter how far short we have fallen from faithfulness in any way, let us embrace the new life brought to the world by the empty tomb. For Christ's resurrection is good news for people just like us. Though His Body, the Church, and His Body and Blood in Holy Communion, and the ministry of forgiveness, we are all to passover from death to life. The light really has overcome the darkness. Now the challenge is for each of us to live in the joy of Christ's resurrection, to make His victory ours, and to recognize that nothing separates us from Him other than our own stubborn refusal to share in His great triumph. So I challenge you—and myself—to celebrate Pascha by not only saying "Christ is Risen," but by living the new life that His empty tomb has brought to the world and to each of us.

Christ is Risen!

St. Thomas Sunday

The Orthodox Church observes the Sunday of Thomas one week following the celebration of the Sunday of Holy Pascha. The day commemorates the appearance of Christ to His disciples on the evening of the Sunday following Passover. It also commemorates the appearance of the Lord to His disciples eight days later when Thomas was present and proclaimed "My Lord and my God" upon seeing the hands and side of Christ.

This Sunday is also called Antipascha (meaning "in the stead of Pascha," not "in opposition to Pascha") because with this day, the first Sunday after Pascha, the Church consecrates every Sunday of the year to the commemoration of Pascha, that is, the Resurrection.

Saint Thomas the Apostle is commemorated by the Church on October 6.

The Lord appeared to the disciples, and standing in their midst He said, "Peace be with you." He then spoke directly to Thomas and said, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe." (vv. 26-27) Thomas answered, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus replied by saying, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe." (v. 29)

The icon of the Sunday of Thomas depicts Christ standing in the midst of the disciples. He has appeared to the eleven in the upper room, and he is inviting Thomas to come and examine his hands and his side. Thomas is reaching out to touch the side of Jesus. He is also looking to Jesus in a manner that indicates his faith and the proclamation recorded in Scripture.

Tropar -

While the tomb was sealed, You, O Life, did shine forth from the grave, O Christ God; and while the doors were shut, You did come unto Your disciples, O Resurrection of all, renewing through them an upright Spirit in us according to Your great mercy.

Kontakion -

With his searching right hand, Thomas did probe Your life-bestowing side, O Christ God; for when You did enter while the doors were shut, he cried out unto You with the rest of the Apostles: You are my Lord and my God.

Prayers Appreciated for:

Living:

Archpriest Emil
Dn. Doug, Mat. Kathy
Katherine, Sam,
Lisa, Paula, Marianne
Suleiman, Holley, Steve

Departed:

Archbishop Paul

Tall Candles

Sponsored by
Virginia Waratinsky
for the living and departed
members of the
Waratinsky and Gimben
Families.

WEEKLY READINGS

Monday, April 24

St Sava Stratelates
Acts 3:19-26
John 2:1-11

Tuesday, April 25

Apostle & Evangelist Mark
Acts 4:1-10
John 3:16-21

Wed, April 26

St. Basil, Bishop of Amasea
Acts 4:13-22
John 5:17-24

Thurs, April 27

*St. Simeon, kinsman of the Lord,
second Bishop of Jerusalem (107)*
Acts 4:23-31
John 5:24-30

Friday, April 28

Ss Jason & Sosipater of the 70
Acts 5:1-11
John 5:30-6:2

Saturday, April 29

St. Memnon the Wonderworker
Acts 5:21-33
John 6:14-27



Today's Scripture Readings

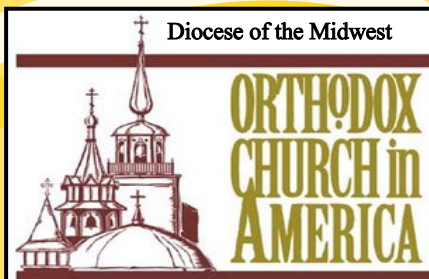
Epistle: Acts 5:12-20

And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on 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, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life."

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, 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. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also 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 them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His 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.

Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee!



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