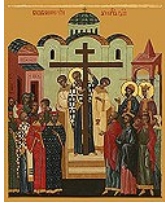


## ✠Bulletin✠

Week of April 19th to April 25th



# Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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## CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED HE IS RISEN!

### ANTIPASCHA

2nd SUNDAY OF PASCHA - Tone 1

St. Thomas Sunday

Martyr Theodore and those with him. Ven. John of the Ancient Caves in Palestine (8th c.). Martyrs Christopher, Theonas, and Anthoninus, at Nicomedia (303). Hieromartyr Paphnutius of Jerusalem. St. George the Confessor, Bishop of Antioch in Pisidia (813-820). St. Tryphon, Patriarch of Constantinople (933). Ven. Nikēphóros, Abbot of Catabad. Monastic Martyr Agathangelos of Esphigmenou (Mt. Athos—1819). St. Simeon the Barefoot, of Philotheou (Mt. Athos—1594).

### Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

**Sunday April 19, 2025 – St. Thomas Sunday**

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

**Saturday April 25th**

5:30 pm – Vespers

**Sunday April 19, 2025 – Sunday of the Myrrhbearing Women**

**Bishop Gerasim Visit**

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

### Weekly Schedule

**Sunday April 19, 2025**

- Choir Practice follow Divine Liturgy
- Inquirers & Catechism classes following choir practice

### **St. Thomas Sunday**

Archimandrite Kosmas Damianides  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia

Nobody knows the time or even the place that our Lord is coming again to judge the living and the dead. For this reason, the Fathers of our Church do not tell us to try and outsmart God, by predicting the time that He will appear. On the contrary the Fathers concentrate on teaching us to be constantly ready and watchful, by praying, fasting and doing works of love and faith. We are instructed to expect a sudden if not instant entry of our Lord.

In today's gospel reading we were told of the pitiful sight of the Apostles who gathered in a small dark house for fear of the Jews after the death of their Lord Jesus. They had locked every window and door, and they were in a state of mourning. They must have been deeply depressed, angry, disillusioned, confused and very afraid to say the least.

Instead of waiting eagerly for the coming of their Lord, they probably feared that the world was about to end. Instead of standing well, standing with fear and trembling in expectation of their Lord, they were crouched down in complete darkness and gave way to their material fear for their lives. They probably thought, 'How was it possible for the corpse of Jesus to rise from the dead when they knew that His body was so mutilated, beaten and pierced with large nails and a spear in His side?'

The Gospel reading of today tells us, "When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week ... Jesus came (to his disciples) and stood in the midst of them and said 'Peace be with you'. After showing the disciples the nail marks on His hands and the gash in his side, again He said to them, "Peace be with you".

Then He started to commission them; this was the beginning of the Great Apostolic mission to the world. "As the Father sent me" he told them, "I also send you". Jesus then told His Apostles, "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". What a great thing happened that day, the power to forgive sins,

the authority of judgement was given to the Apostles to pass on, from generation to generation, from Apostle to Apostle.

However, where was Thomas, the other Apostle, when all of this was happening? Unfortunately, we do not know. Perhaps by divine economy he was not there.

We do know that as soon as the other disciples saw Thomas, they cried out, "We have seen the Lord!" Nevertheless, he was not so easily convinced and probably thought, 'perhaps it was an illusion a ghost of some sort'. Thomas then said to his fellow disciples, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in His hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails, and my hand in his side, I will not believe".

Do not misjudge Thomas, for perhaps he remembered the words of his master Jesus Christ, Who once proclaimed, "If anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or, 'There He is!' do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect--if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time". "So if anyone tells you, 'There He is, out in the desert', do not go out; or, 'Here He is, in the inner rooms', do not believe it. For just as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, this is also how the coming of the Son of Man will be" (Matt 24:23-27). So, Thomas probably did not wish to believe until he had substantial proof, in order to keep the word of his master.

Within eight days however, Jesus appeared to the disciples again just as suddenly as He did the last time, but this time Thomas was present.

Although the doors were all shut and there was no possibility of entry, Jesus appeared to them again, from nowhere, and stood amongst them. Thomas most probably thought 'surely He must be a ghost, a vision, a false Christ'. Jesus then spoke "Peace be with you." and He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe". And Thomas answered with such assurance and conviction, "My Lord and my God!" The Holy Tradition of the Church tells us that Thomas did not touch our Lord, nor did he ever contemplate on doing so after seeing Him, because he quickly realized that it is not only the human senses which are required to discern the Truth but rather, (more importantly) the divine senses of the heart.

Yet Jesus said to him, "You have believed because you have seen me. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe" (John 20:29). So, brethren truly we are blessed if we have not seen and yet we do believe. Have you noticed how many gather together throughout the world and cry out and proclaim every Pascha. "Christ is Risen!" and "Indeed He is Risen!"

Dear brethren, the skepticism of the Apostles and especially that of Thomas is not detrimental; it is in fact very beneficial, if not vital, for the whole of Christianity. Sound discretion and good judgement are vital for spiritual matters, and the resurrection event of our Lord is no exception.

In the secular world Thomas is known as "Doubting Thomas", but in the Orthodox Church he is known as Believing Thomas.

For this reason the Apostles had to be 100% sure that Jesus rose from the dead in order to proclaim the FULL TRUTH, which is WITHOUT DOUBT so that we may believe without that "Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that through believing [we] may have life in His name". So that we may be blessed by having a faith which comes from the heart, the soul -- and not purely from our human senses.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen.

**Antipascha: St Thomas Sunday**  
**By Hieromonk Job (Gumerov)**

The first week after Pascha is called *Renewal* week, or the week of *Antipascha* (the Greek prefix, *anti*, means "in place of")—that is, the renewal of Pascha. On this Sunday, the Lord repeated and renewed *for all* eleven of the Apostles His appearance on the first day after the Resurrection. But because the renewal of the Savior's appearance was especially for the sake of the Apostle Thomas, the eighth day after Pascha is called Thomas Sunday. Following directly after the Paschal week, it completes the most solemn part of the great feast. Therefore, Thomas Sunday is sometimes called *the eighth day after Pascha*.

St. Gregory the Theologian writes:

"The law of honoring the *day of renewal* is ancient and of good intent; or it would be better to say, to honor with the day of renewal a new act of goodness. But was not the first day of Resurrection, the

Sunday which followed the holy and light-bearing night, the day of renewal? Why is that name given to the present day? That day was the day of salvation, and this day is the day of remembrance of salvation” (Homily 44, on the Sunday of Renewal).

### **Inquirers & Catechism Class**

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

### **[tithe.ly.com](http://tithe.ly.com)**

Another way to “donate”. This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, [tithe.ly](http://tithe.ly) can be accessed through the church website [www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org](http://www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org)

### **Prayer Requests**

Walter Kallaur – brother of the Constantine & Arlene Kallaur  
Heather (Helen) Auld  
Anne and Scott Peatross  
Nicholas Kowalski  
Robert Kozera  
Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos’ daughter  
Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

### **Please pray for our families in Ukraine**

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,  
Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,  
Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,  
Roman, Mykola  
Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei  
Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

## **The Divine Liturgy**

**Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom**  
Variable Hymns and Readings

**Priest:** “Blessed is the Kingdom...”

**Choir:** “Amen.”

**Priest:** “Christ is risen...” (2 ½ times)

**Choir:** “and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!”

*(The Divine Liturgy is begun in this manner until the Leavetaking of Pascha.)*

### **The First Antiphon – Psalm 65**

Make a joyful noise to God, all the earth! Sing of His name, give glory to His praise.

*Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us!*

Say to God how awesome are Thy deeds! So great is Thy power that Thy enemies cringe before Thee! *(Refrain)*

Let all the earth worship Thee and praise Thee! Let it praise Thy name, O most High! *(Refrain)*  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Refrain)*

### **The Second Antiphon - Psalm 66**

God be bountiful to us and bless us! Show the Light of Thy Countenance upon us and have mercy on us!

*Refrain: O Son of God, Who arose from the dead, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia!*

That we may know Thy way upon the earth, and Thy salvation among all nations! *(Refrain)*

Let the people give thanks to Thee O God! Let all the people give thanks to Thee! *(Refrain)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

*(“Only-begotten Son and immortal Word of God...”)*

### **The Third Antiphon - Psalm 67**

Let God arise, Let His enemies be scattered; Let those who hate Him flee from before His face!

*Troparion of the Feast*

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

As smoke vanishes, so let them vanish, as wax melts before the fire!

*Troparion of the Feast*

So the sinners will perish before the face of God but let the righteous be glad! *Troparion of the Feast*

**Tone 7 Troparion** (Pentecostarion)

From the sealed tomb, Thou didst shine forth, O Life!  
Through closed doors Thou didst come to Thy Disciples, O Christ God.  
Renew in us through them an upright spirit,//  
by the greatness of Thy mercy, O Resurrection of all!

**Tone 8 Kontakion** (Pentecostarion)

Thomas touched Thy life-giving side with an eager hand, O Christ God,  
when Thou camest to Thine Apostles through closed doors.//  
He cried out with all: "Thou art my Lord and my God!"

**Tone 3 Prokeimenon** (from the Pentecostarion)

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power, / His understanding is beyond  
measure. (Ps. 146:5)  
V. Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God!  
(Ps. 146:1)

**Acts 5:12-20 (Epistle)**

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."

**Tone 8**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!  
V. Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! (Ps. 94:1)  
V. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King over all the earth.  
(Ps. 94:3)

**John 20:19-31 (Gospel)**

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.

**Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading**

By Blessed Theophylact  
Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

**19-23. 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."** When Mary Magdalene brought her news to the disciples, it is likely that they reacted in one of two ways: either they did not believe her, or, if they did, they were crestfallen because they were not

deemed worthy to see Christ. Meanwhile, *fear of the Jews* was increasing the disciples' longing to see the only One Who could relieve their anxiety. And so, the Lord appeared to them that very evening, when all of them were gathered together. It is written that He appeared *when the doors were shut*, meaning, He entered through locked doors. This was to show that He had risen in the very same manner, while the entrance to the tomb was shut with a stone. One would think they might have taken Him for a ghost, but Mary Magdalene's testimony had greatly strengthened their faith. Also, He manifested Himself in such a way as to calm their tumultuous thoughts: *Peace be unto you*, He said gently, meaning, "Be not afraid." This was to remind them of what He had told them before the crucifixion: My peace I give unto you (John. 14:27). *Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord*. This, too, He had foretold before His death: *I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice* (John. 16:22). It was well that He should *say to them again, Peace*, for the disciples were now engaged in desperate struggle with the Jews. As He had said, *Rejoice!* to the women (Matt. 28:9), because sorrows were their lot, so He grants peace to the disciples, who were now, and would always be, at war with the Jews. It is fitting that He grants joy to the women, condemned to bear children in pain and suffering; and peace to the men, on account of the warfare that would engulf them for preaching the Gospel. At the same time, He reveals that the cross has ushered in peace: "The cross has brought peace: now I send you forth to proclaim it." To strengthen and embolden the disciples, He declares, "*As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you*. It is My work you have undertaken, so do it boldly: I will be with you." Behold the authority of his command: "It is I Who sends you (Ἐγὼ πέμπω ὑμᾶς)." No longer does He condescend to the limitations of their understanding, saying as He often did before the resurrection, "I will ask My Father and He will send you." Now He breathes on them and gives them the Holy Spirit—but not the entirety of the gift that He would bestow at Pentecost. *Receive ye the Holy Spirit*, means, "Let this partial bestowal of grace make you ready to receive later the fullness of the Holy Spirit." The words, *Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them*, indicate the particular gift He gives the disciples now: power to forgive sins. Later, on Pentecost, the Holy Spirit Himself would descend in all His might, lavishing upon the apostles every spiritual gift and power to work wondrous deeds, such as raising the dead.

**24-29. 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. Thomas ... was not with the disciples, perhaps because he had not yet returned from where he was hiding after the disciples had scattered. Elsewhere, we learned that the Hebrew name "Cephas" means "Rock" (Πέτρος, see Jn. 1:42); here we are told that "Thomas" means "Twin" (Δίδυμος). The Evangelist provides the meaning of the name here to indicate that Thomas was prone to be of two minds—a doubter by nature. He doubted the news brought to him by the others, not because he thought they were liars, but because he considered it impossible for a man to rise from the dead. And his doubt made him excessively inquisitive. Gullibility is a sign of light-mindedness; but stubborn resistance to truth is a sure indication of thick-headedness. Thomas would not even trust his eyes, but demanded proof by touch, the least discriminating of the senses: except I shall ... thrust my hand into His side. Why does the Lord wait eight days before appearing to him? To allow time for each of Thomas' fellow disciples to tell him what they had witnessed. Hearing the same story from each one individually made him more willing to believe, and increased his desire to see the Lord. In order to show that He was invisibly present *eight days* earlier, when Thomas had expressed disbelief, the Lord does not wait for Thomas to speak. Instead, He straightway proposes exactly what Thomas desired, quoting his very words. First He rebukes Thomas, saying, *Reach hither thy hand*; then He admonishes him: *and be not faithless, but believing*. From this it is clear that Thomas' doubt was caused by lack of faith, and not because he was careful to verify the facts (as some say, wishing to put him in better light). But as soon as Thomas touched the Lord's side, he was revealed as a superb theologian, proclaiming the two natures and single hypostasis of the one Christ. Thomas refers to the human nature of Christ, calling Him Lord; for the term "Lord" (Κύριος) is applied not just to God, but to men as well. When Thomas cries out, *...and My God*, he confesses Christ's divine essence, and affirms that the names *Lord* and *God* refer to one and the same Person. By declaring *blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed*, the Lord teaches us that faith means the acceptance of things not seen. He is referring, first to the disciples who believed without touching His side or the print of the nails, and second to those who would later believe (without any physical confirmation). He is not depriving Thomas of his share of blessedness, but encouraging all who have not seen. There was a common**

saying, “Blessed are the eyes that have seen the Lord.” Christ, however, praises those who will believe without seeing, declaring them to be truly blessed. A question arises: how can an incorruptible body display the mark of nails and be touched by human hands? The answer is that such things are possible as part of the divine *oconomia*: they are manifestations of God’s condescension and love for man. By entering the room *when the doors were shut*, Christ makes it absolutely clear that after the resurrection His body is altered: it is now light and subtle, free of all material coarseness. But to confirm that it is indeed their Lord and Master Who has appeared to them, He permits His resurrected body, bearing the wounds of the crucifixion, to be touched. For the same reason, when He walked on the water before the Passion (see Mk. 6:48)], His body was unchanged from when He was walking about on land, and this reassured the disciples. But though He allows His resurrected body to be touched, it is now impassible and incorruptible. When Christ eats now with the disciples, it is no longer to satisfy any physical demands of His body (for there were none). Food once eaten is altered in the stomach and passes out into the drain (see Mt. 15:17). But it was not so with Christ after the resurrection. The food He ate during that time was consumed by an invisible, divine power. His only purpose in eating was to confirm the reality of His resurrection, and He permitted His incorruptible body to bear the mark of nails, and to be handled, for the same reason. Do you see, O reader, how, in order to save one doubting soul, the Lord did not spare His own dignity, but condescended to bare His side? Neither should we despise even the least of our brethren.

**30-31. 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.** To what *other signs* is the Evangelist referring? To those that Jesus did after the resurrection, and not those before His crucifixion, as one might suppose. The Evangelist is speaking about the signs which Jesus did *in the presence of His* disciples only. The miracles before the Passion were performed in the presence of the multitude and revealed Jesus to all as the Son of God. The miracles after the resurrection were performed while He was alone with the disciples during the forty days: their purpose was to convince them that He was still the Son of man, with a human body, albeit one now incorruptible, more Godlike, and no longer subject to the laws of the flesh. Of the many miracles after the resurrection, *only these are written*. They are not described ostentatiously, to vaunt the glory of the Only-begotten, but simply, as the Evangelist says—*that ye might believe*. So what is the profit here, and to whom does it accrue? Certainly not to Christ, for what does He gain by our

belief? It is we who gain. The Evangelist himself tells us that he wrote so *that believing ye might have life through Jesus’ name*. When we believe that Jesus rose from dead and lives, we win for ourselves eternal life. He arose, and is alive, for our sake. But whoever imagines that Christ is dead and did not rise from the grave has no life in him. Indeed, by thinking this he confirms and ensures his own eternal death and corruption.

#### **Paschal Hymn to the Theotokos**

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace:

“Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: Rejoice,  
thy Son is risen from His three days in the tomb!  
With Himself He has raised all the dead.”  
Rejoice, O ye people!

Shine, shine, O new Jerusalem!  
The glory of the Lord has shone on thee.  
Exult now, and be glad, O Zion!  
Be radiant, O pure Theotokos,  
in the Resurrection of thy Son!

#### **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise thy God, O Zion! *(Ps. 147:1)*  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*At the Dismissal, the Priest says: “Glory to Thee, O Christ...” and the choir sings “Christ is risen from the dead...” (thrice).*

And unto us He has given eternal life.

Let us worship His Resurrection on the third day!