

Holy Apostles Orthodox Church

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HolyApostlesLansing.org

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APRIL 23, 2017

ANTIPACHA. SECOND SUNDAY OF PASCHA – Tone 1. Holy Glorious Greatmartyr, Victorybearer and Wonderworker George (303). St. Thomas Sunday. Martyr Alexandra the Empress, wife of Diocletian (303). Martyrs Anatolius and Protoleon, soldiers converted by witnessing the martyrdom of St. George (303).

EPISTLES: Acts 5:12–20: The Apostles heal the sick, are imprisoned, and are set free.
Acts 12:1–11: Peter is freed from prison.

GOSPELS: John 20:19–31: Thomas finds faith in the Risen Christ.
John 15:17–16:2: Jesus speaks of His followers' martyrdom.

COFFEE HOUR: This week: Brown & Brady Next week: ??? (sign up today!)

CORNELL LECTURE SERIES: The Cornell ocf lecture series got off to a great start this past week, with Archbishop Michael's lecture "Convictions of the Early Christian Church." It continues this week with Dr. Elyse Smerdjian's lecture "What Lies Beneath Grandma's Tattoos? Gender, Islamization, and the Armenian Genocide" on Tuesday, April 25 at 4:30 PM, in 110 White Hall at Cornell, and concludes next week with Mother Magdalena's talk "In Search of Solid Ground: From New Age Hippie to Orthodox Nun" on Wednesday, May 3 at 7:30 PM in the Edwards Room of Anabel Taylor Hall. Please plan to attend! Posters are available in the back of the church to help publicize the lecture series.

FOOD PANTRY HELP: The Lansing Food Pantry would love to have people from our parish come and help distribute food. They are open two days per month; please see Fr Joel for more information.

PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND: The oca Dept of Evangelization, along with Abp Michael, announce a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, June 4–17, 2017. For more information or to reserve your spot, please visit the diocesan webpage.

WELCOME VISITORS! We warmly welcome all of our visitors! Please know that we are glad to have you here praying with us, and we invite you to stay after the service to enjoy a meal and meet everyone in our community.

PRAYER SCROLL

LIVING:

Apr Timothy H
Apr Herman S
Apr Sergius K
Apr Thomas E
Apr Stephen M
Apr John R
Apr Patrick C
Pr Adam S & Angie
Mother Raphaela
Mother Christophora
Mat Joanna B
Mat Katya
Mat Mary G
Kh Lynn
Joshua
Brittany
Gretchen
Marianne
Terrence
Helen
Judy
Mary & Susan
John & Carmine
Nathan

Leah
Helen
Lindsey
Elizabeth
Mary
Joe A
Daniel
Andrew & family
Carol
Wilhelmina
Elizabeth
David
Shirley
Christina
Jim & Kim
Rachel
Constantine & Maria
Gaetan
Christine
Samuel
Lisa
Lyudmila
Nickolay
Anetta
Zachary

Iconographer Helena
Natasha, Lena, Vera,
Sergei
Caleb
Danielle
Larry, Mark, Katie
Ann
Dorothy
Ronald
Sheryl & Lacey
Alexander, Angela,
Anton
Peter
Gregory & Ann
Raymond
Vincent
Photini
Robert
Steven, Stephanie,
and family
Diana
Elizabeth
John
Felicia

Children: Anthony,
Mia, Isabel, Bear,
Victoria, Iva Bell,
Panagiotis, Ada,
Grace, Elias, Jack
Seminarians: Rdrs
Robert & Ivan
Birthdays: Gregory,
Natalie, Dominic
Anniversaries:

Namesdays:

REPOSED:

Apr John U
Priest Matthew
Priest John
Apr Alexander
Dn Mark
Rdr Gregory
Daniel
Ada
Lillian
Joseph
Marie
Joseph

Laura
Martha
Stanley
Taissia
Steluța
Theophan
Lynda
Florence
James
James R
Vasily
Mordecai
Alexandr
Ron
John
Eleanor
Harold
Alfred
Edward
Michael
Mat Julianna
Mario
Newly Reposed:
Robert, James

ON THE GOSPEL FOR ST. THOMAS SUNDAY By "A Monk of the Eastern Church"

Today's gospel also puts us on guard against any presentation of the Christian message which seeks to eliminate the Cross and the crucifixion. The danger of such falsification comes from two different sides. There are those who wish to soften and humanize Christ so that He becomes a mild and likeable teacher of morals: the mystery of the cross seems too harsh to them, and unacceptable to the "modern spirit". Then there are gnostics and pseudo-mystics who are so filled with ideas of Incarnation, of transfiguration, and of deification that, in their notion of salvation, there is no place for the Cross. Both the former and the latter – the humanists, the theosophists, the anthroposophists, etc. – share an aversion to what the Cross represents in practical life, that is to say to repentance, asceticism, and sacrifice. We reject the false Christs that they set up, and shall insist on looking at and touching the wounds of our Lord. We know that a Christ who does not carry the imprint of the nails is not authentic, and we shall reserve our adoration for the Crucified One alone.

SCHEDULE FOR THIS WEEK

Confessions are heard before and after Vespers or by appointment.

Sunday, April 23: 9:10 AM Hours

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

Monday, April 24: Rector's Sabbath

Tuesday, April 25: 8:30 AM Morning Prayer

Wednesday, April 26: 8:30 AM Matins

Thursday, April 27: 8:30 AM Morning Prayer with Akathist "Nurturer of Children"

Friday, April 28: 8:30 AM Morning Prayer

9:20 AM Cornell ocf Morning Prayer

Saturday, April 29: 6 PM Great Vespers

Sunday, April 30: 9:10 AM Hours

9:30 AM Divine Liturgy

PRAYER FOR CHURCH GROWTH

Again, we pray to Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou wouldst renew us and this parish by the Power of the Holy Spirit. Fill us with love and longing for Thee. Grant that we would seek not our own will, but to do Thy will in all things and to be willing to lay down our lives out of love for Thee and for our neighbor. Draw thirsty souls to this place and remove their spiritual blindness, granting them through Thy grace to see the beauty of Thy Holy Glory in this place. Fill this community with new life, spiritual vigor, and an insatiable desire to live godly and holy lives. Forgive us all of our sins as we fall down before Thee. Bring us all to a greater repentance and to an amendment of our lives as we look to Thee, the only merciful and loving Lord, Who calls all to salvation. We beg Thee, our merciful Lord, hear us, grant all of these petitions and all of our requests unto salvation: we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

FROM THE PENTECOSTARION

O Lord, when doors were shut you came in the unbearable blaze of your godhead and standing among your Disciples you bared your side. You showed them the scars of the wounds in your hands and feet, and banishing their dejection you cried out clearly: 'The way you see me, my friends, I bear, not a spirit's nature, but the flesh which I assumed'. To the doubting Disciple, 'you were ready to handle me with dread', he said, 'you investigate all things, come then, do not hesitate'. But he, sensing with his hand your double being, with fear cried out in faith: 'My Lord and my God, glory to you.'

Glory to God for all things!

HOLY APOSTLES ORTHODOX CHURCH LANSING, NEW YORK



SUNDAY, APRIL 23, 2017
THOMAS SUNDAY
GREAT MARTYR GEORGE

A SERMON ON ST. THOMAS SUNDAY

By Metropolitan Anthony (Bloom) of Sourozh

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Thomas is known, in common speech, as the Doubter. And this name the Doubter casts aspersions on a man who was very far from being unfaithful to his Master and Lord.

When Christ had left Jerusalem because the Jews wanted to murder Him, He received the news of the illness and death of Lazarus; and He turned to His disciples and said, 'Let us go back to Jerusalem to heal him, to bring him to life.' And every one of the Apostles was saying, 'They wanted to kill you. Are you returning there?' Only Thomas said to his fellow Apostles, 'Let us go with Him and die with Him'. This is not the word of a doubter, of someone who is divided in his mind and in his loyalty. It is the word of one who is totally devoted to his master, totally given to him, totally faithful.

What happened, then, on the day when Christ appeared to His disciples after His Resurrection in his absence? What happened, that when he came back to them and heard the news of the Resurrection, he looked round and said, 'I will believe only if I have proof myself, if I can test – bodily – the Resurrection of the Master, of the Lord whom I saw crucified and dead.' What happened, why could he not believe their words?

It was because, I believe, they were full of exulting joy; but nothing had happened to them. They were rejoicing, yes, that Christ had visited them, that He had been in their midst, that He was alive; but they were the same. He had changed; they had not. It was only when the Holy Spirit came upon them that they became new creatures, new men, new witnesses. Because then, people meeting them looked at them, heard them, and saw people who were possessed in this world of eternal life.

C. S. Lewis in one of his writings said that when people saw the Apostles, they looked at them and said, 'Look, statues have become living men.' Yes, we are all, it may well be, like statues. But we are called to be living people. We are called, all of us, to be witnesses of the Resurrection, of the life, of the death, of Christ, of the victory of God.

But meeting us — me and you — can people say, 'Yes, it is true. Christ is risen, because this woman, this child, this man is alive with a life of which I had no suspicion, a life that I couldn't even imagine'? Not an intensity of life in the sense of enthusiasm only, but an intensity of life divine in us. And this is a question which is being asked of each of us. We must be able to convey it, not in words, but somehow differently.

I remember an example from years ago, from my youth. A very remarkable preacher was invited to give a lesson to Sunday school children. He spoke magnificently. We, youth leaders, were lined against the walls, listening with nothing but admiration for what he had said. But when he had finished, Professor Zander called a little boy of seven and said to him, 'Well, how was it?' And the little boy said, 'Oh, it was entertaining; but what a pity that Father does not believe what he says.' It was not true. But the children's response stemmed from the fact that

this preacher was used to speaking to grown-up people on an intellectual level. It was not his heart he was bringing forth, it was convincing arguments, and they had not reached the children. And the children thought he did not mean what he said, because what he said meant nothing to them.

Isn't it the same with us when we speak of our faith? Of God? Of life eternal? Of Orthodoxy? Can people look at us and say: 'Yes, it is true, because I can see that he is no longer a statue, a piece of wood, a piece of stone. He is alive with eternal life.' And this is a challenge to us. We must all learn to ask ourselves questions about ourselves, and ask ourselves: do I know that Christ is risen? Not from hearsay, not from books, not from others, but from an inner experience. Am I alive with life eternal, or not? If I am, then my words will be life and power. When Christ spoke to His disciples, as St. John the Divine tells us, the crowd left, and Christ said, 'Are you also going to leave me?' And Peter, speaking for all of them, said, 'Where could we go? You have the words of life eternal.' It was not a description of eternal life. It was not a discourse about life eternal that they had been reading. But every word of His was life, and life-giving; when He spoke it awoke eternal life dormant in each of them. So should be our words; so should be our presence; so should be our testimony in the world. Let us reflect on it, because we are responsible for the world in which we live. Are we truly alive or are we simply part and parcel of a world that has lost its way? Amen.

FROM THE PENTECOSTARION

It is first and mistress of days, this light-bringing day, on which it is fitting for God's new people to rejoice, for with trembling it bears the type of the age to come, as it completes the Eight. O highly exalted, our God and the God of our fathers.

Thomas the Twin, who alone was bold, and brought blessing by his faithless faith, banished misty ignorance in all the ends of the earth by his believing unbelief; while for himself he wove a crown as he wisely said, 'You are our God, O highly exalted, our God and the God of our fathers; blessed are you'.

Not in vain did Thomas doubt your Rising, not in vain declare, but he hastened, O Christ, to show to all the nations that it was undoubted; and so having through unbelief come to belief he taught them all to say, 'You are our God, O highly exalted, our God and the God of our fathers; blessed are you'.

Fearfully placing his hand, O Christ, in your life-bearing side, trembling he felt the double force, O Saviour, of the two natures united without confusion in you, and with faith he cried, 'You are our God, O highly exalted, our God and the God of our fathers; blessed are you'.

WEEKLY HYMNS FOR SUNDAY, APRIL 23

Troparion, Tone 7 (St. Thomas)

From the sealed tomb, You shone forth, O Life!
Through closed doors You came to Your Disciples, O Christ God.
Renew in us, through them, an upright spirit,//
by the greatness of Your mercy, O Resurrection of all!

Troparion, Tone 4 (St. George)

As a martyr of Christ, you were bound for good deeds, O George,
by faith you conquered the torturer's godlessness.
You were offered as a sacrifice pleasing to God;
thus you received the crown of victory.//
Through your intercessions, forgiveness of sins is granted to all.

Kontakion, Tone 4 (St. George)

God raised you as His own gardener, O George,
for you have gathered for yourself the sheaves of virtue.
Having sown in tears, you now reap with joy;
you shed your blood in combat and won Christ as your crown.// Through your intercessions,
forgiveness of sins is granted to all.

Tone 8 (St. Thomas)

Thomas touched Your life-giving side with an eager hand, O Christ God,
when You came to Your Apostles through closed doors.
He cried out with all: "You are my Lord and my God!"

Prokeimenon, Tone 3

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power! His understanding is beyond measure!
v: Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God!

Another, Tone 7: The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall hope in Him.

Alleluia, Tone 8

v: Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior!

v: For the Lord is a great God, and a great King over all the earth.

Tone 4 v: The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree and shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.

THE GREAT MARTYR GEORGE

The great martyr George was the son of wealthy and pious parents, who raised him in the Christian faith. He was born in the city of Beirut at the foot of the Lebanese mountains. Having entered military service, George stood out among the other soldiers by virtue of his mind, valor, physical strength, military bearing and beauty. Having quickly attained to the rank of millenary, an officer in the Roman army in charge of a thousand or more soldiers, Saint George became a favorite of the Emperor Diocletian.

Diocletian was a talented ruler, but a fanatical adherent of the Roman gods. Having set for himself the goal of reviving dying paganism in the Roman Empire, he went down in history as one of the cruelest persecutors of Christians.

Once, when he heard in a court the inhuman sentence concerning the annihilation of Christians, Saint George became inflamed with compassion for them. Foreseeing that sufferings were also awaiting him, George distributed his property to the poor, freed his slaves, appeared before Diocletian and, having revealed himself as a Christian, denounced him for cruelty and injustice. George's speech was full of powerful and convincing objections against the imperial order to persecute Christians.

After futile persuasions to deny Christ, the Emperor ordered that the saint be subjected to various tortures. Saint George was confined in a dungeon, where they placed him supine on the ground; his legs they confined in stocks, and on his breast they placed a heavy stone. But Saint George manfully endured the sufferings and glorified the Lord. Then George's torturers began to refine their cruelty. They beat the Saint with ox hide whips, subjected him to the wheel, threw him into quicklime and forced him to run in shoes with sharp nails inside. The holy Martyr endured everything patiently. Finally, the Emperor ordered the Saint's head to be cut off. Thus, the holy sufferer departed unto Christ in Nicomedia in 303 AD.

The great martyr George, for his manliness and for his spiritual victory over the torturers, who could not force him to renounce Christianity, and likewise for his wonderworking assistance to people in danger is additionally called the "Trophy bearer." The relics of Saint George the Trophy bearer were placed in the Palestinian city of Lydda, in the church that bears his name, while his head was preserved in Rome, in the church that is also dedicated to him.

*Come, O assemblies of the faithful, let us prepare a feast,
for the brilliant day commemorating the passionbearer George has arrived.
Invisibly it enlightens our hearts, making them bright with virtues.
Therefore, singing with one accord, let us say:
"Rejoice, O soldier of Christ, the great King!
Rejoice, O brightest exultation of faith!
Rejoice, most radiant and glorious saint!
Entreat the Master, Christ our God,
that He may save our souls, O most blessed martyr,
and that we may be preserved from the temptations of the Evil One!"*