

ST. THOMAS SUNDAY

One can say that everyone rejoices when they hear the troparion of the Resurrection. But they sometimes grow bored when it is sung often. This hymn, however, should be endlessly joyful to people: its continual repetition about the victory over death and the devil should be an infinite source of consolation. Therefore, if this joy soon passes, it passes because one's faith is not so living and strong. People find it difficult to believe because their souls do not especially love this victory.

They say: Thomas, who had been previously ready to die for Christ, also did not believe.

No, Thomas asked for assurances not because he did not believe, but because he desired an untroubled faith, for he longed for the resurrection and understood its significance.

Before their entry into Jerusalem, having learned that there would not be any external success but, to the contrary, that the Savior awaited suffering, the disciples thought that the same death awaited them as a reward for following Him. They were overcome by horror and fear, and then Thomas said: Let us go that we might die with Him [Jn 11:16]. Thomas had a loyal heart. How many of them were troubled when they learned that there was not, and would not be, any external success! When He was to them a great miracle worker, healing them and giving them bread, they believed; but when they learned that He was ready to accept and bear the great deed [podvig] of patience and suffering for the sake of their spiritual benefit – then they all ran away, their faith weakened and, if their conscience rebuked them, they easily found an excuse in themselves: we trusted that it had been He [Lk 24:21].

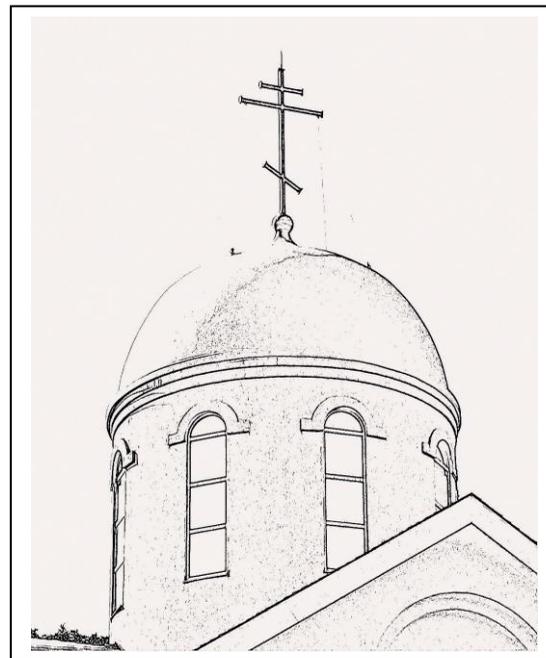
People say: if we had seen Him we would not have denied Him. This is not true: the majority of those who denied Him had seen Him, and they denied Him because they did not love spiritual values, and the victory over the devil spoke but little to their hearts; they desired external success.

Cases of full denial are not many. Normally a remnant of faith remains, and this half-acknowledgment and half-faith is perhaps even worse, and such half-believers are in the majority. If they were to be excluded from so-called believing society we would see that there are but few true worshippers. Church and cross, unity in Christ, unity in the name of the feat [podvig] of love – there is the outline of our relationship towards the Lord. But half-believers do not strive to understand either one or the other – unity or Christ's love – in the way that Christians understand it.

Half-faith has many degrees, but one thing inevitably follows from all half-belief. Those who deny know both what they have denied and to what to return. But the half-believer does not have any such clarity and grows accustomed to a life guided by sophistries, half-truth, and hints at some sort of supposed truth.

Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky)

WEEKLY



BULLETIN

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you!

Troparion of the Annunciation to the Theotokos

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

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Very Rev. Fr. Paul Kucynda, *Retired Attached Priest*

Rev. Fr. Alexander Smida, *Attached Priest*

Rev. Dn. Michael Pejovic, *Attached Deacon*

Tara Paxton, *Senior Warden*

Reader Matthew Hascha, *Choir Director*

April 26, 2020
ANTIPASCHA. 2nd SUNDAY OF PASCHA
St. Thomas Sunday

Tone 1. St. Thomas Sunday. Hieromartyr Basil, Bishop of Amasea (ca. 322). St. Stephen, Bishop of Perm (1396). Righteous Virgin Glaphyra (322). St. Joannicius of Devich, Serbia (13th c.).

Today's Readings:

Epistle: Acts 5:12-20

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Upcoming Service Schedule:

Today @ 9:00am Divine Liturgy

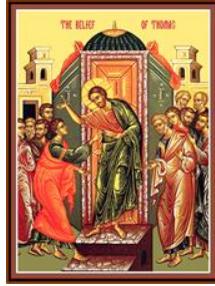
Saturday @ 6:00pm Great Vespers

Sunday @ 9:00am Divine Liturgy

Next Sunday's Readings:

Epistle: Acts 6:1-7

Gospel: Mark 15:43-16:8



St. Thomas Sunday

Special Prayers

We pray for **all** our parish family members, but we pray especially for those who are ill and afflicted. Among them are: **Robert Vessio, Betty James, Manya Shark, Deryl Tczap, Reader John Economou, Meni Mari, Tom Collins, Tom Kopec, Alan Diaz, Ann Marie Gahr, Dennis Gahr, Dorothy Studier, Helen Ciurczak, Pauline Barnowsky, Elba Cinciarelli, and Catherine Ratushnik.**

PRAYER IN TIME OF THE COVID-19 CORONA VIRUS

O God Almighty, Lord of heaven and earth, and of all creation visible and invisible, in Thine ineffable goodness, look down upon us, Thy people gathered in Thy Holy Name. Be our helper and defender in this day of affliction. Thou knowest our weakness. Thou hearest our cry in repentance and contrition of heart. O Lord who lovest mankind, deliver us from the impending threat of the Corona virus. Send Thine angel to watch over us and protect us. Grant health and recovery to those suffering from this virus. Guide the hands of physicians and nurses, and preserve those who are healthy that we may continue to serve our suffering brothers and sisters in peace, that together we may glorify Thy most honorable and majestic name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Annunciations

TODAY – Except for the Divine services, all in-person parish activities including **Church School classes, organizational meetings, baking sessions, etc.** are CANCELED until further notice. Only those who are deemed “essential” to the conducting of the service are allowed to be present and participate in the services. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in following these directives.

TODAY – At **11:15am**, we will conduct a “**Virtual Coffee Hour**” using ZOOM. Instructions have been emailed to our regular parishioners and friends. Please join us and resume contact with your parish family.

MONDAY – The **Parish Council** will meet online at 7:00pm.

Please consider **mailing your regular donations** to the parish to the church address: 360 Van Zile Road, Brick, NJ 08724. We now have the ability to accept **on-line donations**; visit our website for a link. Many thanks for continuing to support your parish in these challenging times.

Virtual Church School sessions are being hosted by the OCA for all who wish to participate. The link is: https://bit.ly/oca_churchschool. This week's schedule is:

Grades 9-12 Tuesday, 4/28 @ 3:30pm

Grades 3-5 Wednesday, 4/29 @ 3:30pm

Grades 6-8 Thursday, 4/30 @ 3:30pm

Grades 3-5 Friday, 5/1 @ 2:00pm

We have created a **Parish Directory** to be accessed by all our parishioners. It is accessible one one's phone or computer. A printable version is also available. Instructions for accessing the directory and updating family listings have been emailed to parishioners. During this time where connecting with each other is important, **this will prove to be an invaluable tool.** Please log in, check your information, update it if necessary, and help make a great resource for everyone.

The **blessing of graves**, usually done on this St. Thomas Sunday, has been postponed to a future time.

MANY YEARS

Birthdays this week:

Last Wednesday – Jason Price

Last Thursday – Kathryn Diaz

Wednesday – Stephen Chidylo

Friday – Olga Kornafel

Keep up on OCA news by visiting www.oca.org, diocesan news and directives by visiting www.nynjoca.org, and parish news by visiting www.oca-brick.org.