

Second Sunday of Pascha - Antipascha - St Thomas Sunday Readings & Hymns



Troparion, Thomas Sunday - Tone 7

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!

verse: **Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

Kontakion, Thomas Sunday - Tone 8

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

The Prokeimenon - Tone 3

The Prokeimenon in the 3rd Tone: Great is our Lord and abundant in power. His
understanding is beyond measure! (Ps 146 [147]: 5)

verse: Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God! (Ps 146 [147]: 1)

Epistle

§ 14 : Acts 5: 12 – 20 (*Thomas Sunday*)

The reading from the Acts of the Holy Apostles.

IN THOSE DAYS, many signs and wonders were done
among the people by the hands of the apostles.

And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch.

Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people magnified them.

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.

And a multitude also gathered from the cities close to Jerusalem,
bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits,
and they were healed every one.

Then the high priest rose up, and all they that 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."

The Alleluia - Tone 8

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Reader, verse: **Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God
our Savior!** (*Ps 94 [95]: 1*)

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Reader, verse: **For the Lord is a great God, and a great King over all the earth.**
(*Ps 94 [95]: 3*)

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Gospel

§ 65; John 20: 19 – 31 (*Thomas Sunday*)

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,
came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

²⁰ And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side.

Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

²¹ Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me,
even so send I you.

²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them,
Receive ye the Holy Spirit:

²³ Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them;

and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

²⁴ But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus,
was not with them when Jesus came.

²⁵ The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord.
But he said unto them, 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.

²⁶ And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them:
then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said,
Peace be unto you.

²⁷ Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands;
and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side:
and be not faithless, but believing.

²⁸ And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

²⁹ Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed:
blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

³⁰ And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples,
which are not written in this book:

³¹ But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;
and that believing ye might have life through his name.



Hymn to the Theotokos - Tone 1*Instead of "It is truly meet ...," :*

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, all ye people!
 Shine! Shine! O New Jerusalem!
 The glory of the Lord has shone on thee!
 Exalt 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! *(Thomas Sunday) (Ps 148:1)*
 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Tone 8

**And unto us He has given eternal life.
 Let us worship His resurrection on the third day.**

*for St Thomas Sunday, from the Pentecostoarion***Tone 1**

The disciples were gathered, the doors being closed, / and suddenly Thou didst enter, O Jesus our Almighty God. / Standing in their midst Thou didst grant them Thy peace / and fill them with the Holy Spirit. / Thou didst command them to wait and in no wise to depart from Jerusalem, / until they be vested with power from on high. / Wherefore we cry to Thee, / "O our Enlightenment and Resurrection and Peace, // Glory to Thee!"

Eight days after Thy Resurrection, O Lord, / Thou didst appear to Thy disciples in the place where they were gathered / and didst exclaim to them, "Peace be unto you!" / Thy most pure side and hands didst Thou show to Thine unbelieving disciple. // And he, believing, cried out, "My Lord, and my God, glory to Thee!"

When the doors were closed and Thou didst enter, O Christ, / Thomas, called Didymus was not with them. / And he believed not the tidings of faith which were brought to him. He doubted. / Yet Thou didst not deem him unworthy, O Good One, / to be shown Thy most pure side and the wounds on Thy hands and feet. / And He, having touched and seen, / confessed Thee to be not only God and not simply man, // crying out, "My Lord, and my God, glory to Thee!"

The Savior appeared on the eighth day where the doubting disciples were gathered, / and granting them peace, He cried out to Thomas, / "Approach Me, My apostle, and touch the hands, pierced with nails." / What great good there was in the

unbelief of Thomas, / bringing the hearts of the faithful to knowledge. // And he cried out in fear, "My Lord, and my God, glory to Thee!"

for St Thomas Sunday, from the Pentecostoarion

Tone 2

After the Resurrection, O Lord, / when the disciples were gathered together, the doors being closed, / Thou didst stand in their midst, granting them peace. / At the sight of Thy hands and side Thomas also believed and confessed Thee to be Lord and God, / Who dost save all who put their trust in Thee, // the Lover of Mankind.

The doors being closed, / Jesus appeared to His disciples, granting peace and dispelling fear. / He said to Thomas, / "Why dost thou not believe in Me, as I am risen from the dead? / Bring hither Thy hand and touch my side and see. / Through thine unbelief all have learned of My Passion and Resurrection // to call out with Thee, 'My Lord and my God, Glory to Thee!' "

Doxastikhon for St Thomas Sunday, from the Pentecostoarion

Tone 6

The doors being closed, / Thou didst come to Thy disciples, O Christ, / when by design Thomas was not with them. / For he said "I will not believe, until I see the Master, / until I see His side from which flowed the baptism of water and blood, / until I see the wounds that healed the great wound of mankind, / until I see that He is not a spirit but flesh and bone". / O Lord, Who didst destroy death and confirm the faith of Thomas, // Glory to Thee!

The Apostikha

for St Thomas Sunday, from the Pentecostoarion

Tone 4

O glorious wonder! / Unbelief gives birth to great belief. / For Thomas said, "If I do not see, I will not believe". / Having touched His side, he blesses the Incarnate Son of God, / Recognizing His Passion in the flesh / and preaching His Resurrection from the dead, / crying out in a joyful voice, // "My Lord, and my God, glory to Thee!"

verse: Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, praise thy God O Zion. (Ps 147: 1 [147: 12])

O glorious wonder! / The straw that touched the fire remained unconsumed. / For Thomas, placing his hand into the fire of the side of Jesus Christ our God, was not burned. / The unbelief of his heart was changed to belief, / and he cried out fervently from the depth of his soul, / "Thou art my Master and my God, risen from the dead, // glory to Thee!"

verse: For He strengthens the bars of thy gates; He blesses thy sons within thee! (Ps 147: 2 [147: 13])

O glorious wonder! / John lay on the bosom of the Word, / and Thomas was deemed worthy to touch His side. / John drew from this an awesome and profound

understanding of theology; / Thomas was vouchsafed to teach us the mysteries. / For he presents clear proof of His resurrection, crying out, // "My Lord, and my God, glory to Thee!"

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

Doxastikhon for St Thomas Sunday, from the Pentecostoarion

Tone 5

O Lover of mankind, / incomparable and vast is the greatness of Thy compassion. / For Thou hast suffered long the torment of Israel, / the denial of the Apostle, / and the great torture of those that cast Thee away. / I ask Thee how Thou didst become incarnate? / And how wast Thou crucified, O Sinless One? / But teach me like Thomas to cry out to Thee: // My Lord, and my God, glory to Thee!

Exapostilarion - Tone 1

Having touched the wounds of My members with Thy hands, O Thomas, believe in Me who was wounded for thy sake.

Become wise as the others disciples, and preach the Living God.

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

Today Spring sends forth its sweet fragrance,
and new creation rejoices.

Today the keys of the doors are taken away,
as is the unbelief of Thomas the friend,
who cries out, "My Lord and my God!"



St. Thomas Sunday

by Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas

(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."

Doubting Thomas

by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann

“Unless I see ... I will not believe” (Jn 20:25). So said Thomas, one of Christ's twelve disciples, in response to the joyful news of those who had seen their crucified and buried Teacher risen from the dead. Eight days later, as recorded in the gospels, when the disciples once again were all together, Christ appeared and told Thomas: “Put your finger here and see my hands; and put out your hand and place it in my side; be not faithless, but believing.” And Thomas exclaimed: “My Lord and my God!” Then Christ told him: “You have believed because you have seen me; blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe ...” (Jn 20:24-31).

Millions of people today think and speak essentially like Thomas, and assume that this is the only correct approach worthy of any thinking person. “Unless I see, I will not believe ...” In our contemporary speech isn't this the “scientific approach”? But Christ says: “Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe.” This means that there is, and was, another approach, another standard, another possibility. True, others may say, but that approach is naive and not rational; it's unscientific; it's for people who are backward; and since I'm a person of the modern world, “Unless I see, I will not believe.”

We live in a world of great oversimplification and therefore spiritual poverty. “Scientific” or “Unscientific.” People use words like these all the time as if they were self-evident and self-explanatory, and they use them because everyone else also uses them, without reflection, without debate. In fact, they themselves believe these reductions blindly and simplistically, and so any other approach appears to them as neither serious nor worthy of attention. The question is already decided. But is that really true? I just said that we live in a world of great spiritual poverty. And indeed, if the end result of humanity's interminable development boils down to this pronouncement, “I won't believe it till I see it”; if the human race looks upon this as the height of wisdom and reason's greatest victory, then our world truly is poor, superficial, and most all, incredibly boring. If I only know what I see, touch, measure and analyze, then how little I really know! The whole world of the human spirit falls by the wayside, all the intuition and profound knowledge that flows not from “I see” or “I touch,” but from “I think” and, most importantly, “I contemplate.”

What falls away is that realm of knowledge which for centuries was rooted not in external, observable experience, but in another human faculty, an amazing and perhaps inexplicable ability that sets human beings apart from everything else and makes them truly unique. Even robots, machines and computers can now touch, handle and manipulate objects; they can make accurate observations, and even make predictions.

We know that they actually perform better than human beings in measuring, comparing, making exact observations flawlessly; they are more accurate, more "scientific." But here is what no robot, under any circumstances, will ever be able to do: to be filled with wonder, to be awed, to have feelings, to be moved by tenderness, to rejoice, to see what can't be seen by measurement or analysis of any kind. No robot will hear those unheard sounds that give birth to music and poetry; no robot will ever cry, or trust. But without all this doesn't our world become colorless, boring and, I would say, unnecessary? Oh yes, planes and spaceships will fly ever further and faster. But where to and what for? Oh yes, laboratories will conduct their analyses with ever increasing accuracy. But to what end? "For the good of humanity," I'm told. I understand, so this means that one day we will have a healthy, well fed, self-satisfied human being walking about, who will be totally blind, totally deaf and totally unaware of his deafness and blindness.

"Unless I see I will not believe." Clearly, however, observable experience, empirical data, is just one form of knowledge, the most elementary, and therefore the lowest, form. Empirical analysis is useful and necessary, but to reduce all human knowledge to this level is like trying to comprehend the beauty of a painting by a chemical analysis of its paint. What we call faith is at a second and higher level of human knowledge, without which, it can be claimed, man would be unable to live even a single day. Every person believes in something or someone, so the only question is whose faith, whose vision, whose knowledge of the world corresponds more accurately and more completely to the richness and complexity of life.

Some say that the resurrection of Christ must be a fabrication since the dead do not rise. True, if there is no God. But if God exists, then death must be overthrown, since God cannot be a God of decay and death. Others will then say: but there is no God, since no one has seen him. But how then do you account for the experience of millions of people who joyfully affirm that they have seen, not with their physical eyes, but with a profound and certain inner sight? Two thousand years have passed, but when the joyful proclamation "Christ is risen!" descends as if from heaven, all still send out the same triumphant response, "Indeed He is risen!"

Is it really true that you neither see nor hear? Is it really true that in the deepest part of your consciousness, away from all analysis, measurements and palpation, you neither see nor feel an undying, radiant light, you do not hear the sounds of an eternal voice: "I am the way, the resurrection and the life ..."? Is it really true that in the depth of your soul you do not recognize Christ within us, within me, answering Doubting Thomas, "Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe"?

**THE SUNDAY AFTER EASTER:
THE SUNDAY OF SAINT THOMAS**

The period after Easter is particularly full of meaning. Up to the end of the After Feast (*Otdanie*) which falls on the eve of the Ascension we continue to sing many of the Easter hymns as well as the verses for the day. Instead of "It is meet and right to call thee blessed and the Mother of our God" we sing "The angel cried to her who was full of grace, rejoice O pure virgin, and again I say rejoice. On the third day thy Son is risen from the tomb and He has raised up the dead. Make glad all ye people"; and the *Irmos* is "Shine, O new Jerusalem: for the glory of the Lord hath risen upon thee; Rejoice in the dance and exult, O Sion! And do thou O Mother of God, most pure, delight in the rising of thy Child."

The first Sunday after Easter inaugurates the second week and is sometimes called the second Sunday of Easter, and also the new Sunday because it is the beginning of the new dispensation following Easter.

Each Sunday during this post Easter period takes its theme from the Gospel of the day, that of St Thomas, of the Myrrh-bearing Women, of the Man with the Palsy, the Woman of Samaria and the Blind Man. In the middle of the period between Easter and Pentecost there is the feast of Mid-Pentecost and finally forty days after Easter the Feast of the Ascension. The last Sunday before Trinity Sunday (Pentecost) is that of the Fathers of the Council of Nicaea.

The liturgical texts for the Sunday of St Thomas refer to his doubts about Christ's Resurrection: "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," and Christ's words to him, "Reach hither thy hand and be not faithless but believing." But they underline that what happened was not in vain, that St Thomas' doubts were providential for us, for he was the first to proclaim Jesus as Lord and God and by thrusting his hand into the Lord's side to have opened for us "the curious hidden treasure that was his", namely the mystery of the twofold working of the two natures in Christ, human and divine.

Troparion of the Feast. When the tomb was sealed, Thou the Life, O Christ our God, didst rise up from the grave; and when the doors were closed, Thou, the Resurrection of all didst stand amongst the disciples, and through them according to Thy great mercy, didst renew a right spirit within us.

Verses from the canon.

Canticle 4. Thy most blessed tongue O Didymus, is the subject of song; for full of the grace that thou hast touched, it was the first to proclaim Jesus, the Giver of Life, God and Lord.

Canticle 7. Thomas Didymus, who was the only one to dare, by his mistrustful faith

hath done for us good things and put an end to dark ignorance throughout the earth by his trusting incredulity and he has woven himself a crown by exclaiming Thou art the Lord, the high exalted God of our fathers and of ourselves, blessed art Thou.

Not in vain did Thomas doubt Thy rising, O Christ; not in vain did he argue about it but he went in eager haste to show it as an indisputable fact to all nations and, therefore, having come to believe through incredulity, he taught all men to say; Thou art the Lord, the high exalted God of our fathers and of ourselves; blessed art Thou.

He felt the twofold working of the two natures united in Thee, O Saviour, and he cried out with faith; Thou art the Lord, the high exalted God of our fathers and of ourselves, blessed art Thou.

Canticle 8. O Thomas thou hast opened for us the curious hidden treasure that was thine.

Exapostilarion. Search the wounds of my members with thy hand and refuse not to believe in Me who was wounded for thee; be of the same mind as the disciples and proclaim the living God.

From "Feasts of the Orthodox Church", SLG Press, Oxford, 1974.



Appearance to St Thomas, Sinai Icon