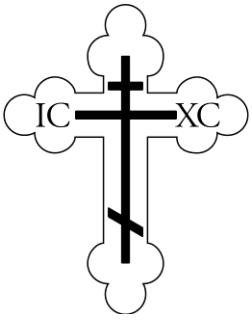


Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church



A Parish of the
Diocese of Chicago
and the Midwest
Orthodox Church
in America



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Great Vespers: 6pm Saturdays

Divine Liturgy: 10am Sundays

Confession is available before or
after Vespers or by appointment

Welcome visitors!
Please join us in the
parish hall after Divine
Liturgy for coffee hour.

May 9, 2021 St. Thomas Sunday

Some icons depicting this event are inscribed “The Doubting Thomas.” This is incorrect. In Greek, the inscription reads, “The Touching of Thomas.” The Slavonic inscription is, “The Belief of Thomas.” When Saint Thomas touched the Life-giving side of the Lord, he no longer had any doubts.

This day is also known as “Antipascha.” This does not mean “opposed to Pascha,” but “in place of Pascha.” Beginning with this first Sunday after Pascha, the Church dedicates every Sunday of the year to the Lord’s Resurrection. In fact, the word for “Sunday” in Russian means “Resurrection”, and the Greek word for this day of the week is “the Lord’s Day.”

HYMNS OF THE DAY

Tone 7 – Troparion of Thomas Sunday

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!

Tone 8 – Kontakion of Thomas Sunday

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!”

SCRIPTURE READINGS

Tone 3 – Prokeimenon of Thomas Sunday (Psalm 146)

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power,

His understanding is beyond measure!

Epistle: Acts 5.12-20

At that time, 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.

WE REMEMBER IN PRAYER

N.Dep. Louis Milton

Cheryl Chancellor

Joseph Starkey

Ev.Mem. Pr. Thomas Brown

Simeon Pozniak ('14)

Tikhon Klimuk ('20)

Feodosia Fisuk ('44)

Michael Pilnock ('67)

Martha Pachapa ('69)

Christopher Taseff ('69)

Kateryna Gruszyk (2012)

Health & Salv.

Archpr. Peter

Mat. Margaret

Mat. Anne

Pr. Christopher

Mat. Jennifer

Andrew

Gideon

Kevin

Jon

Tanya

Jovan

Julia

Warren

Tom

Tina	Timothy	Mark
Jennifer	William	Christine
Gail	Paul	Dale
Stacy	Joseph	Pauline
Jeramie	Linda	Mary
Olivia	Claudia	Jessika & family
Parker	Elizabeth	Timothy
Christine	Snezana	Lisa
Larry	Nathan	Lois
Rollie	Kara	Michael
Joseph	Ryan	Janice
Nadia	Thomas	Ken
Brendan	Carol	Debbie
David	Christine	Jacqueline
Sharon	Jon	Dara
Michael	Zoey	Cindy
Janie	Dominic	Daniel
Tanya	Declan	Laura
Christopher	Hudson	Dorothy
Nina	Ayden	Vasiliy
Renee	Hyland	William
Carissa	Jason	Wanda
Cynthia	Ted	Cindy
John	James	Mary
Olga	Pamela	Linda
Mark	Erin	Ivanka
Jerry	Alexander	Susan
Michael	Ronald	Denise
Anthony	Theodore	Valerie
Daryl	Robert	Aaron
Diane	Craig	William
Carla	Chuck	Nicholas
Susan	Scott	Melody

*If you know someone who needs prayer, please give their name to Fr Jacob

Paschal Theotokion (*Instead of "It is Truly Meet..."*)

The Angel cried to the Lady, full of grace:

“Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Again, I say: Rejoice,

your Son is risen from His three days in the tomb!

With Himself He has raised all the dead.”

Rejoice, O you people!

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bible Study and **Faith Enrichment** both resume this week on Wednesday evening and Thursday morning respectively, both **in the parish hall**. For Bible Study, read 2 Kingdoms (a.k.a. 2 Samuel) 1-4.

The Protection of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church **Jan Hughes Memorial Golf Outing** is scheduled for **Saturday, June 5**, at Summertree Golf Course in Crown Point. This is a major fundraiser for us. The proceeds will benefit the Church's building fund and be used for the continuation, support, and development of various Church projects, which reach out to the community. Hole sponsors (\$125) or other monetary or prize donations will be greatly appreciated. Those wishing to help in any way (including making desserts or appetizers), or to purchase banquet tickets (\$20 each), please see Rich or Linda Svihra or Lara Richards. Thanks in advance, The Golf Committee.

Mark your calendars:

- May 11: **Radonitsa ("Day of Rejoicing) Panikhida and picnic** at St. Mary's cemetery @ 11am
- May 12: **Bible Study @ 7pm**
- May 13: **Faith Enrichment @ 10am**
- May 14: **Spring outdoor Church clean-up @ 9am** (weather permitting/lunch provided)
- May 15: **St. Mary's cemetery clean-up @ 9am** (weather permitting)
Feed the Flock at First Presbyterian in Merrillville @ 11am
- May 31: **Memorial Day grave blessings** starting at St. Mary's @ 9am
- June 5: **Annual Golf Outing**

Gifts to the Lord from Palm Sunday through Pascha: \$13,010

2021 Paschal Message of His Eminence, our Archbishop Paul

The women, bearing spices, ran in tears to the tomb, while the soldiers kept their watch over You, the King of all. They said to each other: Who will roll away the stone for us? The Angel of Great Counsel is risen, trampling down death. Glory to You, Almighty Lord. (Octoechos Sessional Hymn at Resurrection Matins, Tone 7)

The goal of the Great Fast is to get us to the point where the stone in our hearts is rolled away so we are able to behold the Empty Tomb and receive the Good News that Christ is risen! Our weeping over His death and burial is transformed into tears of joy and victory!

Yet there is so much that has happened in the last year that has led many of us to experience distress, anger, despair, and for some, a loss of faith. Yet on this day of the Lord's Pascha, these stones of distress, anger, despair, and loss of faith are rolled away. These stones that have prevented us from beholding the Empty Tomb have been defeated.

What is the message of the Empty Tomb? Bear with me as I seek to answer this question. In the 1980s there was a big deal made about a sealed vault of the mobster Al Capone that was said to have valuable items in it. Geraldo Rivera, the journalist, was actively campaigning to have this vault opened. There was a two-hour special scheduled to actually open the vault. There was a lot of hype and publicity about it. There was great excitement about it. Many of us bought into this. We looked forward to watching this event on TV. The whole thing was a bust. When the supposed vault was opened, there was nothing in there. This vault of the fallen world, when opened, offered no good news.

Yet, for us Orthodox Christians, the worldly proof of the Resurrection lies in our witness to the Empty Tomb. Why is this not a disappointment for us, but points to His victory over death? Contrary to the Capone vault, we know a crucified, dead body was placed in a tomb with soldiers set over it to guard the tomb. Yet He was not there when the stone was rolled away. What does this mean?

To answer this, we need to understand the significance of the Lord's appearances to his followers after the Resurrection. There was something mystical about them. Mary didn't recognize Him at the Tomb when he spoke to her; she thought Him to be a gardener.

But when He called her “Mary,” she recognized Him and called him “Teacher.” When He revealed Himself to His Disciples, they were meeting behind closed doors. He suddenly appeared to them while the doors remained shut. It wasn’t an apparition or ghost they saw, as they were able to handle and touch Him. Thomas specifically did this and proclaimed Him as “My Lord, and my God!”

Finally, in the wonderful account in Luke 24 on the road to Emmaus we witness another appearance of our Lord to two of His Disciples. He walked with them for several hours, yet they did not recognize Him. They engaged in a conversation about the events of our Lord’s death and the Empty Tomb. They then persuaded this unknown person to stay with them longer. When he ate with them, He broke the bread, and “their eyes where opened and they recognized Him; and He vanished out of their sight” (Luke 24:31). They later remarked to others, “He was known to them in the breaking of the bread” (Luke 24:35).

The Empty Tomb is important because it is proof that we come to know the Crucified Risen Lord in another reality, in the sacramental life of the Church. It is at every Liturgy that we, just as the disciples, meet behind closed doors, and the Crucified Risen Lord reveals Himself to us in the breaking of the bread.

May we ever more come to grow in the understanding that the stones of the disappointment we have encountered in the last year—stones which we may think have robbed of us of our faith, brought us despair, and anger—are deceptions. Those deceptions are not there. Let us proclaim with the angels, “He is not here, He is risen!” The stone has been rolled away!

With love in Christ,

+PAUL

Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest

2021 Archpastoral Paschal Message of His Beatitude, our Metropolitan Tikhon

Today the Myrrhbearing Women arrive at the tomb and, seeing the angel, hear from him the joyous message that the Lord has risen. When they leave the tomb, running to tell the Apostles the news, Christ Himself suddenly appears to them and greets them with a single word: “*Rejoice!*” (Mt 28:9).

On this bright day, as we celebrate this glorious feast of feasts, this supreme festival of festivals, the Resurrection of Christ, I in turn extend our Lord's greeting and say to you all: *"Rejoice!"*

Our Lord Jesus Christ has revealed Himself to us through His Death and Resurrection. He has won the victory for us over seemingly meaningless death by His all-meaningful Death, and we in turn celebrate with exceeding joy. Death no longer stings and hell has no victory, for its gates are smashed and its prisoners are freed. The Resurrection of Christ has brought eternal life to all.

Through the Resurrection, we rejoice—in spite of our sins, hardheartedness, and lack of forgiveness. For we know that God promised through Jeremiah: *"I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more"* (Jer 31:34).

Through the Resurrection, we rejoice—in spite of our doubts, worries, and anxieties. For as was guaranteed to us through Zephaniah: *"No one shall make them afraid... The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall see disaster no more!"* (Zeph 3:13, 15).

Through the Resurrection, we rejoice—in spite of the difficulties, trials, and struggles that we have faced, and always will face, in the brief span of our earthly lives. For Christ Himself has promised: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen!" (Mt 28:20).

My brothers and sisters in the Lord: "Rejoice!" Our sins are forgiven, our anxieties cease, and our temporary sufferings are given meaning through the Resurrection of the One who grants us eternal life. And while this eternal life is only fully manifest in the age to come, it is ours to experience joyfully even now.

May we celebrate the Feast of the Resurrection in joy and love. From this day forward, may we never cease exulting in the Lord.

+ TIKHON

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Christ is risen!
Indeed He is risen!