

Scripture Readings

EPISTLE Apostles 5:12-20 In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested 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 and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

GOSPEL John 20:19-31 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them 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. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I 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; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him: "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them: "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe." Eight days later, His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said: "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the 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.



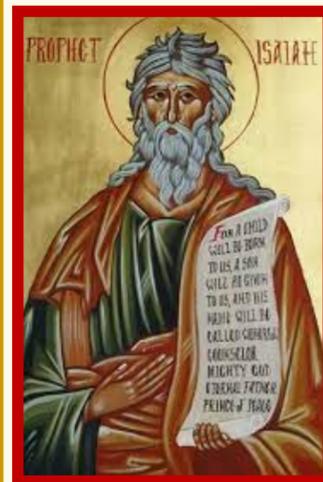
Gospel Reflection: Jesus Used Thomas' Doubt to Renew His Faith and Ours



Our Holy Father, St. Gregory the Great, wrote of today's commemoration: "Thomas' unbelief was of more advantage to our faith than the faith of believing disciples, because when he was led back to faith by touching Jesus, our minds were relieved of all doubt and made firm in faith." Doubt as the path to true belief — it seems a contradiction! It was in the intimate environment of Christ's Apostles where Thomas lived and although they all had seen the dead raised, the leper's cleansed, and the blind given sight, still he doubted the words of his friends when they told him that Christ had risen from the dead. Thomas demanded proof. He relied on his visual and tactile senses to finally accept the Risen Christ. In other words, his faith was conditional rather than full-hearted. Yet nowhere do we observe Christ rebuking or chastising Thomas because of his doubts. Instead, as it is said of our Savior: "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench" (Matt. 12:20). Christ comes to Thomas to alleviate him of this poison of doubt, this spiritual obstacle, this stifling of the fullness of joy which Pascha should impart to each one of us. Narrating this moment between Thomas and Christ, St. Romanos the Mel-

odist writes: "Have compassion on me, Master, as I boldly handle You, and accept me, Lover of mankind. " Christ offers to us doubters' eyes the marks of the Cross that remained in His hands and feet and invites us to handle Him with careful scrutiny. He does this because the traces of the nails and spear had been retained to heal the wounds of unbelieving hearts, weak hearts, conditional hearts, tentative hearts, so that, not with wavering faith, but with the most certain conviction, we might comprehend that the nature that had been laid in the tomb was to sit on God the Father's throne. We can never avoid doubts whether their cause is intellectual, physical, relational or through some other means. And yet, Christ has not abandoned us and even seeks us out to assuage our doubt and the sorrow and self-criticism it causes. May we bear this burden with humility like our Savior who is meek and lowly of heart, (Matt. 11:29) for those who are humble are given grace by God and shall be exalted and lifted up and will find rest for their souls. If we are humble, Christ will seek us out, will come to us, and alleviate us of our doubts, skepticisms, and the haunting feeling that our life has missed the mark. He did for the Apostle Thomas, in that very particular way in which the Apostle needed and in the way that each of us need. Through the prayers of the Holy Apostle Thomas, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. And save us. Amen. Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!

The Holy Prophet Isaiah—Anticipating the Lord Jesus Long Before He Came



It is fitting that the Church honors the Holy Prophet Isaiah during Paschal season this year. It was Isaiah that gave us vivid prophecies of the passion and death of the Lord: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5) The start of his service was marked by the following vision: he beheld the Lord God, sitting in a majestic heavenly temple upon a high throne. Six-winged Seraphim encircled Him. With two wings they covered their faces, and with two wings they covered their feet, and with two wings they flew about crying out one to another, "Holy, Holy, Holy Lord Sabaoth, heaven and earth are filled with His glory!" The pillars of the heavenly temple shook from their shouts, and in the temple arose the smoke of incense. The prophet cried out in terror, "Oh, an accursed man am I, granted to behold the Lord Sabaoth, and having impure lips and living amidst an impure people!" Then was sent him one of the Seraphim, having in hand a red-hot coal, which he took with tongs from the altar of the Lord. He touched it to the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah and said, "Lo, this has touched thy lips, and will take away with thine iniquities, and will cleanse thy sins." After this Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord, directed towards him, "Whom shall I send, and who will go to this people?" Isaiah answered, "Here am I, send me" (Is 6:1 ff). And the Lord sent him to the Jews to exhort them to turn from the ways of impiety and idol worship, and to offer repentance. He prophesied the birth of the Messiah and His death. He was a wonderworker. When during the time of a siege of Jerusalem by enemies, the besieged had become exhausted with thirst, he by his prayer drew out from beneath Mount Sion a spring of water, which was called Siloam, i.e. "sent from God." It was to this spring afterwards that the Savior sent the man blind from birth to wash, and He restored his sight. The Prophet Isaiah died a martyr's death. By order of the Jewish king Manasseh he was sawn through by a wood-saw. The prophet was buried not far from the Pool of Siloam. The relics of the holy Prophet Isaiah were afterwards transferred by the emperor Theodosius the Younger to Constantinople and installed in the church of Saint Laurence at Blachernae. At the present time part of the head of the Prophet Isaiah is preserved Mt. Athos in the Hilandar monastery.

Attending Divine Liturgy

To safely accommodate the faithful in accordance with official health guidelines, please register for May 16 services beginning Monday, May 10 and ending Thursday, May 13 at 3:00 PM at the following link:

<https://forms.gle/wrKiQ7zZeuCYzZpb7>

Those without computer access please call the Church office to register for seats. Seating is on a first come, first serve basis. Live Stream will be available at <https://stgeorge.org/livestream>



Thus the power of death was overcome
And the dominion of corruption and sin was
destroyed. For Christ is Risen from the dead, the proof
of the Father's great love for us. We weep not, there-
fore, but cry out: Alleluia!

St. Cyril of Alexandria

Save and Protect, O Lord, These Thy Needing Servants

His Eminence Archbishop Elpidhoros, Metropolitan +Panteleimon of Antioeos; Metropolitan +Kallistos of Diokleia, Maria Barton, K. Constantine, Anthoula Anagnostopoulos, the child Abbey Renehan, Anthony Kopsidas, Alexander Falsken, Andrew Katson, Anatoly Seraphim, Jessica, Ourania Mantzouranis, Maria Kritzas, Cathy, Janie Pappas, Eleni Gourmani, Angela Apidououlos, the child of God Amelia Marghi, the child of God Seraphina Marie Vasilatos, Adib Marghi, Betty Jean Dubard, Nicholas Ellis, Katherine Ellis, Kelly, Jon Wood, Tom Dale, Evangelia Pantazakos, George Dizelos, Constantina Speris, Joy Kizzie, Stavros, Laura-Maria, Philippos-Spyros and all the members of this Holy Church.

A PRAYER OF BLESSING FOR MOTHERS

God our Father, bless every mother, grandmother, and spiritual mother with the finest of your blessings. today. If they have reposed, grant them eternal rest and future resurrection. Confirm in their hearts and spirits the work of their hands and the love that they have so freely given to those children under Your care. Validate their worth daily so that they have no reason to doubt whether they are loved, valued, and cherished in Your eyes and in the eyes of their Heavenly Father. Create in them a deep sense of your protection and trust, so that worry and fear will disappear as they place their loved ones into Your care. Let them know that every prayer they have prayed and every encouraging word they have spoken on behalf of their children and grandchildren, has been transformed into sweet, fragrant offerings before Your throne. Through the intercession of Your mother, the Most Holy Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary, may they remain steadfast in the holy vocation to which You have called them --- namely, the care and nurturing of the family and the teaching of the holy Orthodox faith not only by words but by their pious example. Bless them with a servant spirit as, indeed, you came to serve not to be served. Remove any guilt, false or real, and replace them with Your amazing grace and forgiveness. Help them to see their children or grandchildren, or anyone given to their care, through Your eyes, knowing that in Your hands is the safest place they can be. Holy Father, we ask that you bless all mothers, grandmothers, and spiritual mothers, + in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen! Christ is Risen! Truly, He is Risen!

PARISH MINISTRIES

BOOK STUDY: We are studying "For the Life of the World," an examination of Orthodox social ethics applied to issues such as the sanctity of human life, poverty and wealth, war and peace, civil justice, and science, technology, and the natural world. Please purchase at <https://bit.ly/3pUxkK5> and download the Study Guide at <https://bit.ly/3rPpn9s>. Sessions are on ZOOM every Thursday at 10:30 AM and 7:00 PM. All are welcome to join this important study! **Book Study will resume on Thursday, May 6.**

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: Every Monday at noon, fifteen-minute reflections live-streamed through the Orthodox Christian Network at <https://www.facebook.com/MyOCN/>.

PARISH ACTIVITIES

LIGHT A CANDLE: Please make wax and red glass candle offerings and tray offerings at <https://stgeorge.org/livestream/> - thank you for your continued love and generous support!

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Resumes TODAY. In-person instruction for ages 5-18 at 11:15 AM in the upper level of the Education Building, following safety regulations. Spacing is limited, so please register in advance through the Divine Liturgy registration form. Parents may provide snacks for their own children. Virtual instruction for ages 3-18 begins at 11:30 AM. Parents of in-person students can participate in the Family Ministry discussion group in the Chapel.

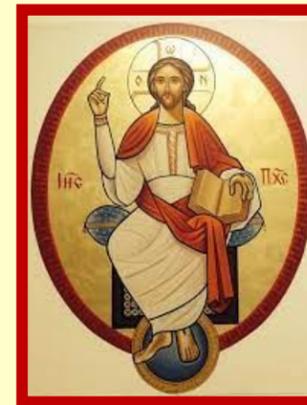
ST. GEORGE MISSION TEAM: Due to continued safety concerns we have decided not to travel out of state this year. Our spirit is high, and we will embark in local service projects to assist those in need. Please consider participating and be part of an organization that puts your Orthodox faith to work. Students can earn service hours. For information, contact Athena Kaiser at avmail@verizon.net or (240) 498-0870.

GREEK PRESCHOOL: 2021-2022 school year registration now open for programs Monday-Friday 8:30 AM-5:30 PM, offering half or full-day classes for children ages 2-5. To schedule a private tour, contact Director Marilena Michalas at directorstgeorgegreekpreschool@gmail.com. To register or for more information, visit <https://www.stgeorgegreekpreschool.org/>



THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE

Rev. Fr.
Dimitrios J. Antokas,
Presiding Priest
FrAntokas@stgeorge.org



**CHRIST IS RISEN!
TRULY, HE IS RISEN!**

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THOMAS SUNDAY Holy Isaiah the Prophet

May 9, 2021



Χριστός Ανέστη! Ἀληθῶς Ανέστη!

Apolytikion of the Feast of Feasts

Χριστὸς ἀνέστη ἐκ νεκρῶν, θανάτῳ θάνατον
πατήσας, καὶ τοῖς ἐν τοῖς μνήμασι, ζωὴν χαρισάμενος!

Christ is Risen from the dead, by death trampling
down upon death, and to those in the tombs
He has granted life!