

*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

Fr. Gregory Fedorchak, Parish Rector 607-427-3286, father.fedorchak@gmail.com

Upcoming Services:

April 23, Bright Wednesday

6pm – Akathist to St George

April 24, Bright Thursday

8am – Divine Liturgy (7:50am Paschal Hours)

April 25, Bright Saturday

5pm – Great Vespers

April 26, St Thomas Sunday

10am – Divine Liturgy (9:40am Hours)

May 3, Saturday

5pm – Great Vespers

May 4, Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women

10am – Divine Liturgy (9:40am Hours)

*Weekday Daily Vespers, 5pm @ the Hermitage

Saint Thomas Sunday

April 27



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

Kontakion



Bright Friday: The Life Giving Fountain of the Mother of God

O most favored by God, you confer on me the healing of your grace from your inexhaustible Fountain. Therefore, since you gave birth incomprehensibly to the Word, I implore you to refresh me with the dew of your grace that I might cry to you: Hail, O Water of salvation.

Kontakion

Antipascha: Saint Thomas Sunday

April 27

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. Sunday is called “Resurrection” in Russian, and “the Lord’s Day” in Greek

From the sealed tomb, You did shine forth O Life! Through closed doors You did come 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

St. Thomas Sunday: Keeping the Joy of Pascha Alive

By Father Christopher Foley

Reflections in Christ, May 4, 2019

I am sure many of us experience what I have come to call the “post-Paschal funk.” We spend long hours in church during the Great Fast and Holy Week. We experience the intensity of the Lord’s final days in Jerusalem. We stand at the foot of the Cross and see Him laid in the tomb. We experience the palpable joy of our Lord’s Resurrection from the dead. We feast together in our own resurrection with Christ. And then, the let down. We have a hard time keeping the Paschal joy intact. Liturgically, Bright Week in parish life is rarely observed. A repeat of the Paschal Liturgy is called for every day, as is the celebration of Paschal Matins and Vespers. It is hard to sustain another week of a full liturgical cycle in a parish context, but the result is that we can very easily sink into the “post-Paschal funk.”

How are we to keep the joy of Pascha alive within our hearts after Pascha and, for that matter, the whole year? We go through times of doubt, despair and difficulties, and somehow the Bright Light of Pascha begins to fade. We return, not to the empty tomb of Christ, but to Holy Saturday, that unique moment between death and resurrection.

Thankfully, the Church, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has given us many days to continue pondering and celebrating the Resurrection of Christ. This is why we are given Saint Thomas Sunday as the first Sunday after Pascha. The Church knows how quickly we forget, how quickly we fall into the darkness of doubt, and how that can squeeze out all of the joy of the Resurrection.

Saint Thomas is sometimes called the doubter, but if we are attentive to the Holy Gospels, we see that he was also the one who, as Metropolitan Anthony Bloom reminds us, “When the Apostles and the Lord heard of the illness of Lazarus, Christ said to them: Let us return to Jerusalem. To which the others said: But the Jews wanted to kill you there. Why should we return? Only Thomas the Apostle answered: Let us go with Him and die with Him. He was prepared not only to be His disciple in words, not only to follow Him as one follows a teacher, but to die with Him as one dies with a friend and, if necessary, for a friend. So, let us remember his greatness, his faithfulness, his wholeness.”

Saint Thomas was faithful, and his doubt becomes the very means by which we all have come to behold the Resurrection of Christ. In fact the hymns even praise his doubt.

The disciples were assembled on the eighth day, and the Savior appeared to them.

He gave them peace and said to Thomas:

“Come, Apostle! Feel my hands, which were pierced by the nails!”

Most wonderful doubt of Thomas!

It brought the hearts of the faithful to knowledge.

And with fear he cried: “My Lord and my God, glory to You!”

O most glorious wonder! Doubt bore certain faith!

The Lord confirmed Thomas in faith through his doubt. We read this in the Gospel given for this Sunday: “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.’”

The other theme given to us for this particular Sunday is that of the closed doors. Christ appears to His disciples even though the doors were shut. The closed doors, through which Christ appears, are linked to the sealed tomb from which Christ has shown forth.

*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!*

It is always striking to close the doors before Vespers on Saint Thomas Sunday. The service books instruct us to close all of the doors of the iconostasis, which had been open throughout Bright Week, before the Ninth Hour preceding the Vespers of Thomas Sunday. Then we hear all of the references to the closed doors through which Christ appears. And then it dawns on us—Christ can manifest Himself to us even when our doors are shut. Is this not the key to the joy of Pascha remaining with us? We recall lines from the Lamentations from the Matins of Holy Saturday as we stand at the sealed tomb.

*Oh Life, how canst Thou die, how canst Thou dwell in a narrow tomb?
When Thou wast placed in a tomb, O Christ, the foundations of hell shook and the graves of the dead were opened.
Thou didst descend to earth to save Adam, not finding him on earth.
O Master, Thou didst descend as far as Hades in search of him.
O the joy, O the boundless delight, with which Thou didst fill those who lay bound in hell,
When Thou madest light blaze throughout its murky depths.
Thy tomb, O Christ, is the fountain of our resurrection!*

Christ indeed comes, searching for us even in our doubt, even in our “post-Paschal funk.” He comes to us even though the doors of hearts are shut. Even when we are in a terrible place and have closed our doors – He still comes. We put our hands in the wounds in His hands and we touch His side. He comes to dispel all sorrow and sadness. Again, from the services of Thomas Sunday, we sing

*O Lord, shining with the splendor of Thy divinity,
Thou camest through closed doors to Thy disciples, showing Thy pierced side,
the wounds from the nails, dispelling all sadness and sorrow!
“O friends, see that I am not a spirit, but truly man!”
Thou didst command the disbelieving disciple to look, saying:
“Prove to yourself, then come and believe!”
He touched Thy side with his own hand and cried in faith and fear:
“My Lord and my God, glory to Thee!”*

Christ’s coming to the disciples through closed doors is the effect of Christ’s Resurrection. What He accomplished through the power of His Resurrection is still being accomplished today. Pascha is not merely a commemoration of an event in the past, but one in which we continue to participate in daily. Christ comes to us every day. He comes to us today through closed doors.

Christ’s death and Resurrection is our death and resurrection. We are dead, and Christ comes to bring us back to life, entering again and again into our baptism into Christ. As Olivier Clément reminds us, “Life in the spirit means gradually becoming aware of ‘baptismal grace,’ and this awareness transforms the whole person. Each present moment has to become baptismal: a moment of anguish and death if I seek to cling to it and so experience its non-existence, but a moment of resurrection if I accept it humbly as ‘present’ in both senses of the word.... We come finally to the moment of agony when we are overwhelmed by the waters of death. Through our baptism, according to the measure of our faith, they will be transformed into the womb of eternity.”

Each day may we continue to rejoice in our Lord’s Resurrection. May we continue to offer our praise and glory—and even offer our glorious doubt—like Thomas. Christ continues to come to us even though the doors are shut, leading us to deeper faith in Him. He not only offers His hands and His side, but He allows us to be partakers of Himself in His Holy Mysteries. O most glorious wonder! As we sing from the depths of our hearts as we did on that bright night,

*This is the day of Resurrection, let us rejoice, O people.
The Pascha, the Pascha of the Lord.
For from death to life, and from earth to heaven,
Has Christ our God led us, as we sing the hymn of victory!*

UPCOMING PARISH EVENTS

Festival of Sacred Music and Text

Sunday, April 27, 3:00–4:30 PM at St. Mary's Catholic Church at 20 Lawrence Ave in Potsdam. We will sing the Paschal Aposticha verses ("Let God Arise") in both settings. We will rehearse after Vespers on Saturday the 26th and also do a quick run-through after Liturgy on the 27th. Contact Dr. Jessica if you want to sing!

Parish Council Meeting

Tuesday, April 29, 7:30 PM @ the Hermitage.

Book Club

Thursday, May 1, 5:45–7:15 PM at the Church. We will be reading selections from Dostoevsky's *Brothers Karamazov*. Contact Joseph Stark for more information.

UPCOMING DIOCESAN EVENTS

Divine Liturgy with Archbishop, and Camp Open House

Bright Saturday, April 26 at St. Andrew's Camp

Camp Fundraiser

Sunday, May 4, at 4:00 PM: a "Spaghetti and Song" fundraiser for St. Andrew's Camp will be held at Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in Endicott. Tickets can be purchased at <https://givebutter.com/KzEdEw>.

Young Adult Retreat

Friday, May 16 – Sunday, May 18 @ St. Andrew's Camp. Open to Orthodox young adults, catechumens, and inquirers age 18-35. For questions, contact LonnBologna@gmail.com or text 203-258-5324.

Parish Council Conference, NYS Deanery West

Saturday, June 14, 9:00AM–3:00PM at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Syracuse, NY. The theme of the 2025 Parish Council Conferences is "Integrating New Converts into Our Parish Families."

Altar Server Retreat, NYS Deanery

Saturday, June 28 at SS. Peter and Paul Church, Endicott, NY.

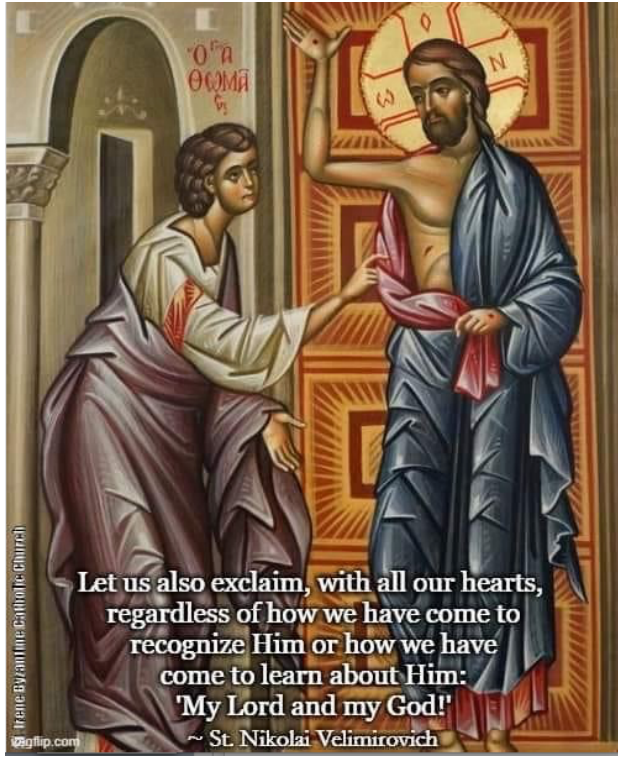
OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

SAFETY – Please steer clear of the basement as work intensifies. You may still use the bathroom, but please avoid the kitchen area and debris.

Coffee Hour – Please consider sponsoring a meal after Liturgy. There are still some open slots this coming Sunday. Sign up [here](#) or on the list at Church.

~PARISH NEEDS~

Bottled water | Volunteers to help with regular cleaning of the Church | Maintenance work at the Hermitage



Let us also exclaim, with all our hearts,
regardless of how we have come to
recognize Him or how we have
come to learn about Him:
'My Lord and my God!'

~ St. Nikolai Velimirovich