



## **Message from Fr. Michael....**

Dearly Beloved Faithful in the Lord:

Christos Anesti! Christ is risen! Alithos Anesti! Meci Haqam! Christos imviat! Truly He is risen! The Sunday of Thomas is also called Antepascha. A very warm welcome goes out to Fr. Myron Oryhon who will be substituting for me today celebrating the Divine Liturgy while I am in the hospital recuperating following surgery. (However, I will see you next Sunday for the Sunday of the Myrrh bearers God willing!). Please welcome him. Today, the feast of Pascha draws to a close. However, we will continue to sing joyous paschal hymns until the feast of our Lord's Holy Ascension. This past week which followed Pascha was known as "Bright Week," which was derived from the Latin "Dominica in Albis." In ancient years the newly baptized wore white robes from the day of their baptism, from Holy Saturday until the Sunday of Antepascha. Today we commemorate the incident which occurred eight days after Christ's first appearance to His disciples. The beloved apostle Thomas was not present at that special event. He refused to believe, Christ appeared to all of the disciples. The Lord said to Thomas, "reach here with your finger, and see my hands; and reach here with your hand, and place it into my side: and do not be faithless, but believing" (John 20:27).

Our Lord does not compel us to believe in Him. Instead, the risen Lord invites all to follow Him. Many follow Him freely. The Lord respects the freedom of will with which we were created. Unfortunately, many continue to reject Him. Unbelievers will continue to formulate plans to contradict the Lord's teachings. Scholars and some scientists may run the words of our Lord through their man-made computers with futile attempts to prove that those words are not authentic. Unfortunately, people have and will gather in an attempt to refute Christ and challenge the Lord's teachings. The unbelievers, will continue to hear the voice of Thomas crying, "My Lord and my God."

Thomas' doubt when he stated, "unless I see I will not believe" is motivated by faithlessness. We must possess an attitude of faithfulness. How could schools of higher learning function with an attitude of faithlessness? How could teachers or professors prove to their students that Napoleon, Socrates, Plato, Eisenhower, Lincoln, or other great figures in history actually lived? We live and are moved by the confidence that others have in us and the confidence we have in them. Ten fellow apostles of Thomas, whom he had known for at least three years, assured him that they had seen the Lord. Their testimony was true. There was a general consensus amongst them. There was an agreement amongst them as to what they witnessed. These men were quite rational. However, Thomas refused to believe without seeing. Many people today repeat the words of Thomas, especially those who would destroy the major doctrines of the Christian faith.

If people are going to take this attitude of "I won't believe it unless I see it," one would think that they would at least bother to investigate more carefully. Let us not be as a *doubting Thomas*. He began to comment upon the "writings" of Socrates, noting that Christ wrote nothing. At a hotel in New York City a person was complaining about business. Someone said, "Don't worry; the rich will die just as we will, and their wealth won't do them any good in the future life." For truly they cannot take such wealth with them. On the Sunday of Thomas, we hear how our Lord has concern even for one soul in that He condescends to the doubting Thomas, permitting him to see and touch Him, thus verifying the truth of the resurrection. "Be not faithless," He says, "but believing."

When Thomas saw the Lord, he instantly believed, crying out, "My Lord and my God!" The reply of our Lord was intended for each of us: "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed" (John 20:29). "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). May we transcend to great spiritual heights through our belief in our risen Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Believing in Him, I remain in His service, prayerfully, and without doubt,  
Your fervent supplicant,

+Fr. Michael

## Saints and Feasts Commemorated

### George the Great Martyr and Triumphant



George, this truly great and glorious Martyr of Christ, was born of a father from Cappadocia and a mother from Palestine. Being a military tribune, or chiliarch (that is, a commander of a thousand troops), he was illustrious in battle and highly honoured for his courage. When he learned that the Emperor Diocletian was preparing a persecution of the Christians, Saint George presented himself publicly before the Emperor and denounced him. When threats and promises could not move him from his steadfast confession, he was put to unheard-of tortures, which he endured with great bravery, overcoming them by his faith and love towards Christ. By the wondrous signs that took place in his contest, he guided many to the knowledge of the truth, including Queen Alexandra, wife of Diocletian, and was finally beheaded in 296 in Nicomedia. His sacred remains were taken by his servant from Nicomedia to Palestine, to a town called Lydda, the homeland of his mother, and then were finally transferred to the church which was raised up in his name. (The translation of the Saint's holy relics to the church in Lydda is commemorated on November 3; Saint Alexandra the Queen, on April 21.)

### Thomas Sunday

Though the doors were shut at the dwelling where the disciples were gathered for fear of the Jews on the evening of the Sunday after the Passover, our Saviour wondrously entered and stood in their midst, and greeted them with His customary words, "Peace be unto you." Then He showed unto them His hands and feet and side; furthermore, in their presence, He took some fish and a honeycomb and ate before them, and thus assured them of His bodily Resurrection. But Thomas, who was not then present with the others, did not believe their testimony concerning Christ's Resurrection, but said in a decisive manner, "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." Wherefore after eight days, that is, on this day, when the disciples were again gathered together and Thomas was with them, the Lord Jesus came while the doors were shut, as He did formerly. Standing in their midst, He said, "Peace be unto you"; then He said to Thomas, "Bring hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not unbelieving, but believing."

And Thomas, beholding and examining carefully the hands and side of the Master, cried out with faith, "My Lord and my God." Thus he clearly proclaimed the two natures - human and divine - of the God-man (Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-29). This day is called Antipascha (meaning "in the stead of Pascha," not "in opposition to Pascha") because with this day, the first Sunday after Pascha, the Church consecrates every Sunday of the year to the commemoration of Pascha, that is, the Resurrection.

### Mellitus, Archbishop of Canterbury

**FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS**...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Angelo Romas, Persa Nizamis, Mity Ganim, Ted Simon, and Suzanne Vaishnani, daughter of Ted Simon. Please notify Fr. Michael if you have anyone else who should be included for special prayers. May they be under the grace and tender watch of our Lord.

#### **ATTENTION ALL YOUTH WORKERS**

Whether it be teaching our youth to Greek dance or conducting Sunday School or Greek lessons or working with our Youth of our Parish IN ANY CAPACITY, The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America and the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Detroit have mandated that everyone working with the Youth must complete a background check and online Youth Safety training through Sterling. Please contact the Metropolis of Detroit and speak with the Metropolis Youth Director about details at (248) 823-2411. Please go on the YouthSafetyPlatform.goarch.org website and register.

### **Wisdom of the Fathers**

The Lord stoops to the level even of our feeble understanding. He works a miracle of His invisible power in order to satisfy the doubts of unbelieving minds.

#### **St. Hilary of Poitiers**

On the Trinity, 1.20. Taken from: Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. Vol: John. Intervarsity Press, 2007, p. 369.

For great is the dignity of the priests. ... And hold them very exceedingly in honor; for you indeed care about your own affairs, and if you order them well, you give no account for others; ...

#### **St. John Chrysostom**

Homily 86, 4th Century

*Whether you are an Orthodox Christian, or this is your first visit to an Orthodox Church, we are pleased to have you with us. Although Holy Communion is reserved for baptized and chrismated (confirmed) Orthodox Christians, all are invited to receive the "ANTIDORON" (blessed bread) which is not a sacrament, but is a reminder of the "agape feast" that followed worship in the early Church. After the Divine Liturgy this morning, please join us in the Church Hall for fellowship and refreshments. We hope that you will return often to worship with us.*