

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. 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. Their 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 can not 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 the 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

Martyrs Emmanuel, Theodore, George, Michael and the other George of Samothrace

Epiphanius, Bishop of Cyprus

Saint Epiphanius was born about 310 in Besanduc, a village of Palestine, of Jewish parents who were poor and tillers of the soil. In his youth he came to faith in Christ and was baptized with his sister, after which he distributed all he had to the poor and became a monk, being a younger contemporary of Saint Hilarion the Great (see Oct. 21), whom he knew. He also visited the renowned monks of Egypt to learn their ways. Because the fame of his virtue had spread, many in Egypt desired to make him a bishop; when he learned of this, he fled, returning to Palestine. But after a time he learned that the bishops there also intended to consecrate him to a widowed bishopric, and he fled to Cyprus. In Paphos he met Saint Hilarion, who told him to go to Constantia, a city of Cyprus also called Salamis. Epiphanius answered that he preferred to take ship for Gaza, which, despite Saint Hilarion's admonitions, he did. But a contrary wind brought the ship to Constantia where, by the providence of God,



Epiphanius fell into the hands of bishops who had come together to elect a successor to the newly-departed Bishop of Constantia, and the venerable Epiphanius was at last constrained to be consecrated, about the year 367. He was fluent in Hebrew, Egyptian, Syriac, Greek, and Latin, and because of this he was called "Five-tongued." He had the gift of working miracles, and was held in such reverence by all, that although he was a known enemy of heresy, he was well nigh the only eminent bishop that the Arians did not dare to drive into exile when the Emperor Valens persecuted the Orthodox about the year 371. Having tended his flock in a manner pleasing to God, and guarded it undefiled from every heresy, he reposed about the year 403, having lived for ninety-three years. Among his sacred writings, the one that is held in special esteem is the Panarion (from the Latin Panarium, that is, "Bread-box,") containing the proofs of the truth of the Faith, and an examination of eighty heresies.

Germanos, Patriarch of Constantinople

Saint Germanos, who was from Constantinople, was born to an illustrious family, the son of Justinian the Patrician. First he became Metropolitan of Cyzicus; in 715 he was elevated to the throne of Constantinople; but because of his courageous resistance to Leo the Isaurian's impious decree which inaugurated the war upon the holy icons, he was exiled from his throne in 715. He lived the rest of his life in privacy, and reposed about 740, full of days. The fore-most of his writings is that which deals with the Six Ecumenical Councils. He wrote many hymns also, as is apparent from the titles of many stichera and idiomela, among which are those for the Feast of the Meeting in the Temple.

FATHER MICHAEL REQUESTS...that we, as a faithful community keep the following individuals in our prayers: Demetrios Pappastratis (father of George Pappastratis), Angelo Romas Persa Nizamis, Mitry 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 VOLUNTEERS AND WORKERS: Please note that if you have not yet completed the Archdiocese Youth Safety training program online and the background check you are in noncompliance with the Archdiocese requirement. It is MANDATORY that this be completed immediately. Anyone who does not complete the program and the background check will be prevented from participating in any youth programs and youth activities in our parish. This includes Greek dancing program, Sunday school, and Greek school. YOU MAY NOT PARTICIPATE IN THESE PROGRAMS UNTIL THIS REQUIREMENT IS COMPLETED. This is a requirement that ALL churches are required to follow with no exceptions!

Grecian Festival Food Preparation

The next gathering for food preparation will be on Monday, May 13th and Tuesday, May 14th for the making of Moussaka. Please contact Jimmy Anastos for times and if you are interested in helping.

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.