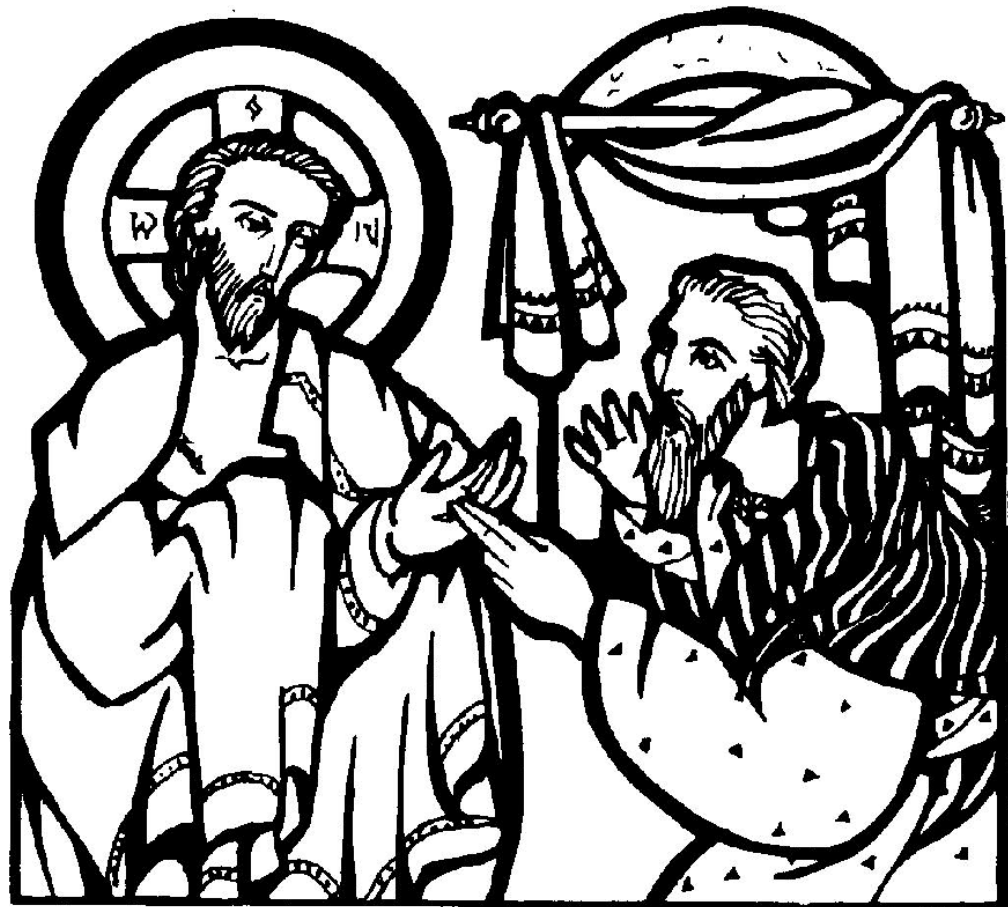


From the Divine Office for Thomas Sunday

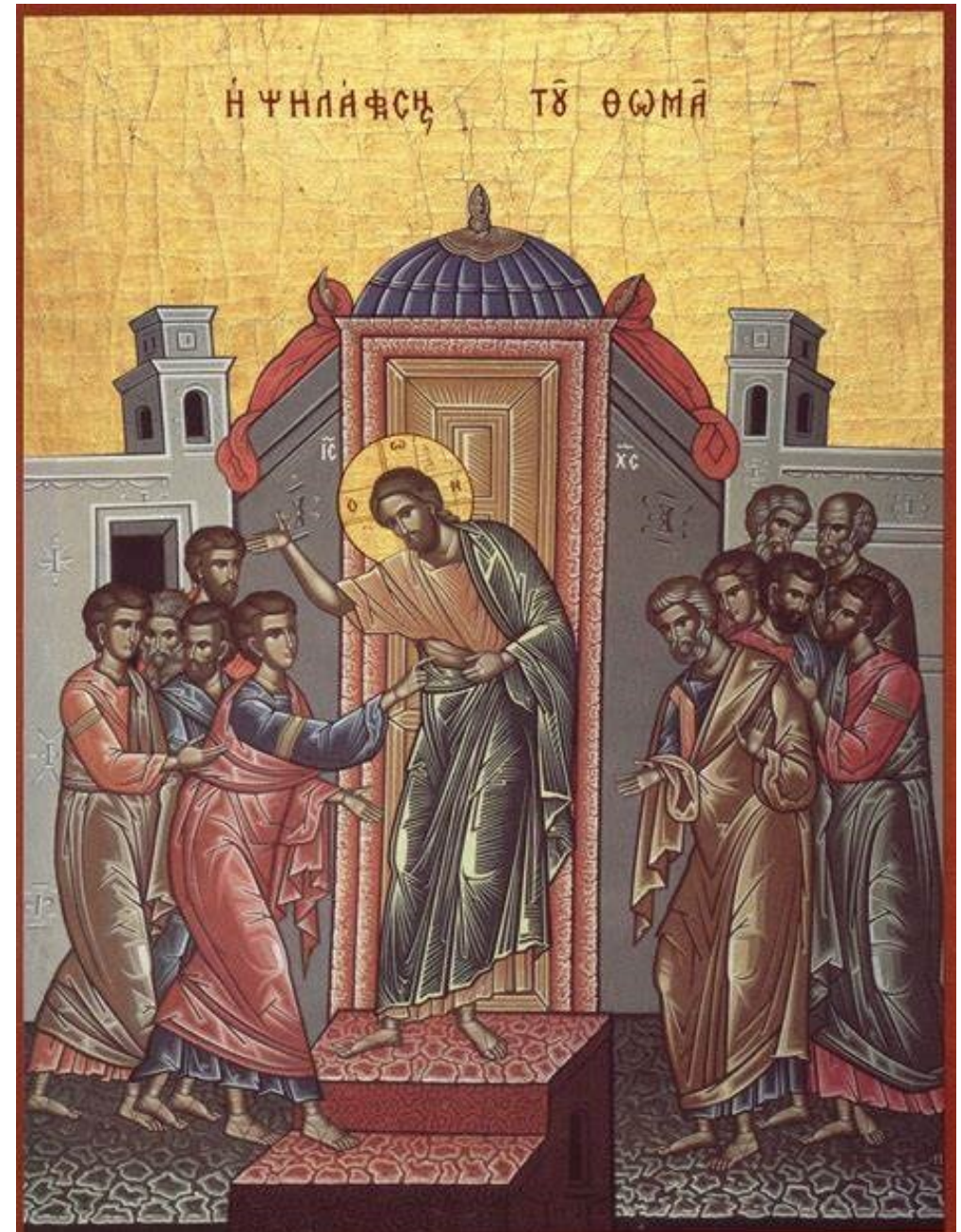
When all the doors were closed and disciples gathered, the Savior appeared in the place where they were assembled. Standing before them in their midst, He called Thomas and said to him, "Come, touch my wounds and see the nail-prints. Do not persist in unbelief, but forever proclaim with faith My Resurrection from the dead!" (Vespers)

Why did the hand of the apostle not melt away when he approached the burning side of the Lord? Who gave him the boldness to touch Him? Surely it was the One who was touched! If He had not given the power to that frail hand, how would it have been able to touch the wounds which made Heaven and earth tremble? Thomas received the grace of touching Christ and crying out, "You are my Lord and my God!" (Orthros)



THOMAS SUNDAY

APRIL 7, 2024



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Melkite Catholic Church
256 Hamilton St.
Worcester, MA 01604
Rectory: (508) 752-4174 Hall: (508) 755-2199
Email: olphmelkite@gmail.com
Rev. Bryan McNeil, Pastor
Rev. Deacon Elias Bailey
Email: Brymc56@comcast.net Cell: (774) 502-8547
Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

After “Blessed is the Kingdom...”

Christ is Risen from the dead and by His death He has trampled upon Death and has given life to those who were in the tombs (3 times)

Antiphon (Feast)

1: Shout joyfully to God, all you on earth.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

2: Sing praise to the glory of His name; proclaim His glorious praise.

Khallisna Ya-Bnallah, Ya Man qama min baynil-amwaat, nahnu muranneemeena Laka.

Haleloueya.

3: Say to God how tremendous are Your deeds! For Your great strength, Your enemies fawn upon You.

O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia

Entrance Hymn

Priest: In Your assemblies bless the Lord our God, from the wellsprings of Israel.

People: O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You, Alleluia!,

Troparion of St. Thomas (Tone 7) 3x

While the tomb was sealed You shone forth from it, O Christ our Life, and while the doors remained closed, You stood among Your Disciples, O Resurrection of all, and through them You restored a new spirit in us according to Your great Mercy.

Kondakion of Pascha (Tone 2)

Though You went down in the tomb, O immortal One, You overthrew the power of Hades and rose victorious, O Christ God, You greeted the ointment bearing women, saying: Rejoice! You gave peace to Your apostles, and to those who had fallen, resurrection.

Trisagion

All of you who have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia!

In the Roman world of the apostles’ day Lord was the title of the Emperor: the one who governed the lives of all his subjects. To call Jesus Lord was perceived by many as treason and caused the persecution of many, especially since the Christians often insisted that Jesus alone was Lord. The Roman world had many gods and goddesses; they could easily find room for one more. To claim, as we continue to do in our Liturgy, that only “one is holy, one is Lord: Jesus Christ” was another matter.

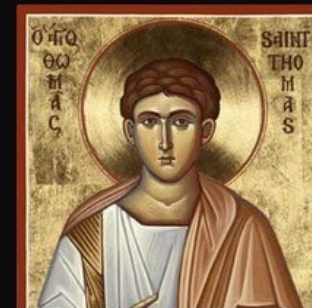
For a believer to claim that Jesus was Lord also meant that he or she was committed to Jesus’ way of life. The usual way of doing things in society was now subject to a new criterion for believers: the Gospel of Christ. This was perceived as unpatriotic by many Romans, to use a contemporary term. Christians didn’t give undivided allegiance to Rome – they had another Lord and another way of life.

Today in many societies Christians are perceived as second-class citizens because they do not follow the dominant culture. This was always true in Islam but is increasingly so in the secular west as well. In Great Britain, for example, Labour Party leader Andy Burnham has pledged to compel all faith schools to teach about gay rights, saying he has “no support” for religious schools who argue it may conflict with their teachings.

The consequence for Christians today is that we may be more frequently forced to choose between following the secular values of the state or the godly values of the Gospel. Choose your Lord.

Welcome to any visitors we have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.



Thomas the Apostle

He who is humble easily obeys everyone, fears to offend anyone, is at peace with everyone, is kind with all.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **Our Parishioners, living and deceased.** Requested by Nick Rahall & Rodney Haddad

April 14 +**Violet Gazal (1 yr.)** Requested by her family

April 21 +**Wendy Halal (1 yr.)**. Requested by her husband Nick and family

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Nick Rahall & Rodney Haddad

Next Sunday's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by the family of Violet Gazal

Please remember in your prayers: Lorraine Lian, George Arraj, Jr., Peter Abraham, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Charlotte Stockhaus, Richard Abraham, Sr., Frank Boyda, Carol Boyda, Bob Lynch, Joe Najemy, Michael Mooradian, Dennis Desplaines, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Billy Rahall, Dan Rahall, Lauren Abraham, Nicholas Haddad, Nicholas Halal, Elaine Foley, David Ahlin, Elio Kanaan, Sandra Hanlan, Susan Bailey, Jacqueline Ventriglia, those affected by the natural disasters throughout the world, the people of Gaza, and for peace in the Middle East.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 790
Coffee Hr.	\$ 25
Candles	\$ 39
Stole	\$ 20
Easter	\$ 420
Diocesan	\$ 75
TOTAL	\$1,344

God bless you for your generosity!

Just a reminder that we need \$2,000 per week to meet our financial obligations.



Thanks to all who worked so hard during Great Lent and Holy Week to make our celebrations both beautiful and spiritually fulfilling. Those who sang, those who read, those who baked or cooked/dyed the eggs, those who donated funds for the various items needed for our celebrations (flowers eggs, service books, etc.) Know that your contributions are much appreciated and never taken for granted! Christ is Risen! He is Truly Risen! Fr. Bryan

Below is a list of donations we received for flowers and other items **to date**:

Janice Abdelnour	
Antoinette Arraj	In memory George Arraj, Sr.
Susan Arraje	In memory of deceased members of Arraje & Hajjar families
Laurance & Seemon Aulo	In memory of Sadallah Al Kateb & those who died in the Iraq fire
Dumont Family	
James & Karen Esper	In memory of James & Catherine Esper, Carol Ann Esper Webster and Robert & Lorraine Nelson
Maria Filewicz	
Lisa Jagielski	In memory Alfred Jagielski
Joe & Lorraine Lian	In memory of Paul Hajjar, Terese Russell Jones
Sadie Mirante	
Mary Rizk	
Jean & Nadia Sakhat & Family	
Antonio & Karen Solitro	In memory Nick & Dora Barouk, Peter Solitro, Matteo & Lucia Solitro
Marilyn & Zenon Tencza	In memory Alice & George Joseph, Michelina & Stanley Tencza
Lauri Moossa & Michael Georges	

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!



The Confession of Thomas (John 20:19-31)

The Sunday after Pascha is informally called Thomas Sunday because of the Gospel read on this day, Jn 20:19-31. Many people assume this means that Thomas Sunday is the feast of St Thomas. In fact, St Thomas is remembered in the Byzantine calendar on October 6. What we remember today is rather St Thomas' confession of faith upon seeing the risen Christ, "*My Lord and my God!*" (v. 28).

The meaning of this event is spelled out for us by the Lord in the following verse: "*Jesus said to him, 'Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed'*" (v.29). And if we did not see the implications of that statement for ourselves, the Gospel concludes this passage by saying, "*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*" (vv. 30, 31).

Thomas' Confession

In our culture the exclamation "My Lord and my God!" sounds like a rather banal exclamation of surprise. We are used to hearing "Oh, God!" or "Jesus Christ!" used that way. In first-century Judea – and among many Orthodox Jews today – saying the name of God even in prayer would be considered presumptuous. Since the third century BC Jews have refrained from using the name of God even when reading the Torah. Only the high priest was permitted to read the name of God as written in the Torah, and only on Yom Kippur. Many Jews today simply say HaShem (the Name) when reading such passages or referring to God.

Claiming to be the Son of God was blasphemy in the eyes of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish council of elders in Jerusalem. The Gospel indicates that Jesus was condemned to death precisely for making this claim. "*And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!'* Jesus said to him, '*It is as you said... Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?'* They answered and said, '*He is deserving of death*'" (Mt 26:63-65).

Claiming to see Christ in glory caused the death of the first martyr, St Stephen, as well. Brought before the Sanhedrin he spoke of God's mercy toward Israel, and the elders listed. But then he said, "*'Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!'* Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him" (Acts 7:56-58).

Clearly Thomas' exclamation is presented in the Gospel as an act of faith in Jesus as Lord.

The Apostles' Teaching

From the beginning the Apostles taught that Jesus, risen from the dead, was Messiah and Lord. Believers were taught to make this their act of Christian faith: "*...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved*" (Rom 10:9). They ascribed to Christ the title Lord (*Kyrios* in Greek) which was used in the Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament, as the equivalent of God's un-pronounceable name. To call Jesus Lord meant that you were calling Him God: precisely the confession of Thomas.

Prokimenon

Reader: Great is our Lord, and great is His power, and to His wisdom there is no limit.

People: Great is our Lord, and great is His power, and to His wisdom there is no limit.

Reader: Praise the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever.

People: Great is our Lord, and great is His power, and to His wisdom there is no limit.

Reader: Great is our Lord, and great is His power,

People: And to His wisdom there is no limit.

Epistle: Acts 5:12-20

Alleluia Verses

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord, let us sing gladly to God our Savior!

Verse: For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods.

Gospel: Jn 20:19-31, Sunday of St. Thomas

Hirmos (Tone 7)

O shining Light, O Mother of God, honorable without compare, you are higher in dignity than any other creature. We magnify you with hymns.

Kinonikon (Tone 8)

Exalt the Lord, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, Zion! Alleluia!

After Communion—Christ is risen... (Once)

Instead of "Blessed by the name of the Lord..." Christ is risen (three times)

At the end of the Divine Liturgy

Priest: Christ is Risen!

People: He is truly Risen! (three times)

Priest: Glory to His Resurrection on the third day!

People: We adore His holy Resurrection on the third day!