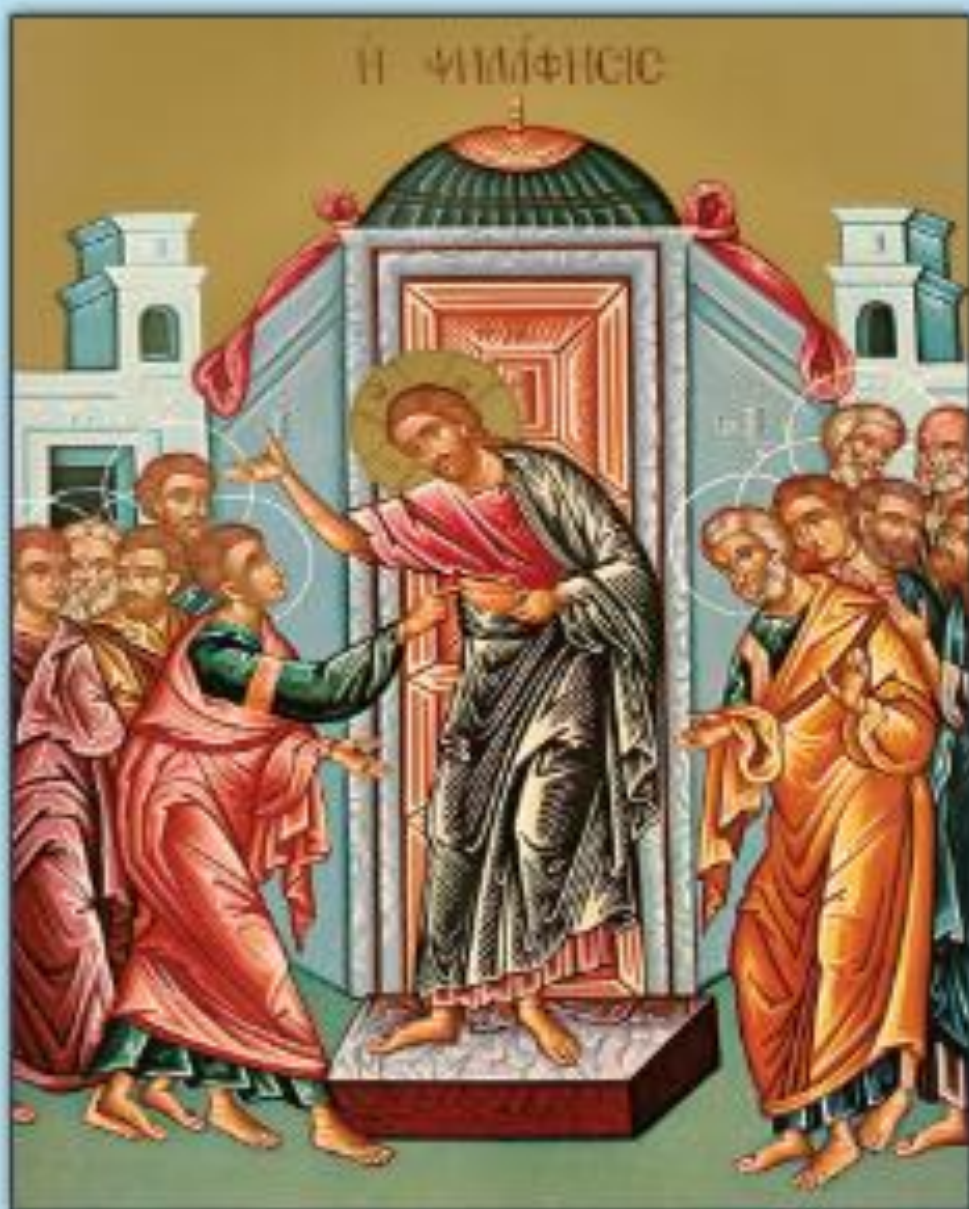


# THOMAS SUNDAY



*Icon of Saint Thomas and Christ*

# DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

12 APRIL 20256 ♦ TONE 01 EOTHINON 01 † SECOND SUNDAY OF PASCHA ♦ BELIEVING THOMAS SUNDAY

EVLOGITARIA OF RESURRECTION:

REFRAIN:

*Blessed are you O Lord, teach me your statutes.*

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST:

*Liturgy Book p. 29*

SECOND:

*Liturgy Book p. 32*

THIRD:

*Liturgy Book p. 38*

*Liturgy Book p. 180*

*Liturgy Book p. 38*

ENTRANCE HYMN:

In the assemblies bless God, the Lord, from Israel's wellsprings.

APOLYTIKIA:

*Thomas (thrice): 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: Pascha

*Liturgy Book p. 181*

INSTEAD OF THE TRISAGION: All of you who have been baptized...

*Liturgy Book p. 51*

PROKIMENON:

(Tone 1)

*Liturgy Book p. 54*

EPISTLE:

*Acts of the Apostles 5:10-20*

In those days by the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people (and with one accord, they all would meet in Solomon's portico; but of the rest, no one dared to associate with them, yet the people made much of them. And the multitude of men and women who believed in the Lord continued to increase), so that they carried the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and pallets, in order that, as Peter went by, at least his shadow would fall upon some of them. And crowds also came to Jerusalem from neighboring towns, and they brought the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits — and all of them were healed. But the High Priest rose up, and all his supporters (that is, the members of the Sadducean sect), and being filled with hatred, they laid their hands upon the apostles and threw them into the public jail. But during the night, an angel of the Lord opened the doors of the prison, and led them out, saying: "Go, and standing in the temple, speak to the people all the words of this life."

ALLELUIA:

(Tone 1)

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

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

GOSPEL:

*St. John 20:19-31*

When it was late, that same day, the first of the week, though the doors where the disciples gathered had been closed for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst and said to them, "Peace be to you!" And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples therefore rejoiced at the sight of the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be to you! As the Father has sent me, I also send you." When he had said this, he breathed upon them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side I will not believe." And after eight days, his disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being closed, and stood in their midst, and said, "Peace be to you!" Then he said to Thomas. "Bring here your finger, and see my hands; and bring here your hand, and put it into my side; and be not unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen me, Thomas, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed." Many other signs also Jesus worked in the sight 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.

HIRMOS:

*Liturgy Book p. 182*

KINONKON :

*Handout*

POST-COMMUNION HYMN:

*Liturgy Book p. 180*

INSTEAD OF 'BLESSED BE THE NAME ...':

*Liturgy Book p. 180*

# SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

Events in April

Sunday Morning, April 12

**SECOND SUNDAY OF PASCHA:**

**THOMAS SUNDAY**

*Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.*

*Paschal Potluck Brunch and EGG*

*HUNT following*

**THIRD SUNDAY OF PASCHA:**

**MYRRHBEARING WOMEN SUNDAY**

Saturday Evening, April 18

*Confessions: 3:00 p.m.*

*Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.*

*Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.*

Sunday Morning, April 19

*Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.*

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF PASCHA:**

**HEALING OF THE PARALYTIC**

Saturday Evening, April 25

*Confessions: 3:00 p.m.*

*Great Vespers: 3:15 p.m.*

*Divine Liturgy:*

Sunday Morning, April 26

*Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.*

## PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow up on us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

### DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Please find envelopes at the back of the church.

### **2026 WEEKLY COLLECTION**

April 5

Weekly Offering:	\$ 1945.00
Holy Land Collection:	\$60.0
<u>Candles:</u>	<u>\$ 20.50</u>
Total:	\$ 2025.50

*Thank you for your support!*

# “MY LORD AND MY GOD”

WHY WOULD THE APOSTLE THOMAS, who moments before had refused to accept the other apostles’ witness to Christ’s resurrection, suddenly proclaim that Jesus is “*My Lord and my God*” (Jn 20:28)? This question has been discussed since the Gospel of John was written.

A Multiple Choice question on the words of St Thomas when he saw the risen Christ might look something like this:

What St Thomas meant was:

- A – A simple exclamation (like OMG).
- B – That Jesus was God (the Father).
- C – That Jesus was the Son of the Father
- D – That Jesus was a god

Each of these answers has been offered by serious authors to explain the meaning of Thomas’ words. By themselves, this phrase could mean any of these things; in the context of John’s Gospel and the Church of its day, however, the answer becomes clearer.

St John’s Gospel, the only one to contain this narrative, is the last of the canonical Gospels to be written. In its final form it dates to the end of the first century AD, and manuscript fragments dating to c. AD 125 still exist. The author’s purpose in writing this Gospel is clearly stated in Jn 20:30, 31: “*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.*”

The aim of John’s Gospel, then, is to demonstrate that Jesus is the Messiah/Christ, the Son of God. In line with this aim, Thomas’ words here are not presented as an ordinary exclamation, but as an act of faith in Jesus as the Messiah. This rules out Answer A, above.

We are left, however, with another question: What might John have meant by calling Jesus “the Son of God”? This was not an unusual title for the Messiah – or for other important figures. It did not necessarily mean, however, what we mean by it. It was often a way of saying that the Messiah (or King or High Priest) was especially beloved or set apart by God.

When we look at the beginning of John’s Gospel, however, we see that John has a higher vision of Christ as Son of God. The Gospel begins with this famous passage: “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him*” (Jn 1:11-4, 14, 18). John describes the eternal Word of God, His only begotten Son, as having become flesh and dwelt among us. He is clearly depicting the Lord Jesus as divine, eternally existing, and uniquely in the bosom of His Father.

St Jerome (c. 347-420) taught that John wrote when those who denied the unique person of the Lord were gaining a hearing in the Church. “Gospels” were being written, purporting to contain the “secret” wisdom of Jesus, which resembled Egyptian philosophy rather than the Word of God.

We find similar statements in St Paul who describes the genealogy of Christ in this way: “...from them [the Israelites], according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen” (Rom. 9:5). From the time of the apostles and evangelists, Christians recognized Jesus as the unique and divine Son of God. John expressed this belief more firmly and unequivocally than other Scriptural authors.

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### **The Witness of Secular Society**

Jesus’ contemporaries in the wider society did not write about Him. They gradually began writing about His followers and thereby showed us what the first Christians believed about Him.

From AD 111-113 Pliny the Younger (Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus) was the Roman governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor. He wrote to Emperor Trajan for advice on how to deal with Christians, whose gatherings he described in part like this: “They recited a hymn antiphonally to Christ as to a god...” (*Epistles* book 10, letter 96). As a pagan, Pliny was used to the many gods and goddesses venerated in Roman religion as so he described the Christians as reverencing Christ as “a god.” The Christians would never have said it quite like that, but Pliny is nonetheless witnessing that Christians considered Christ as divine.

A similar witness from the pagan world is Lucian of Samosata (c. AD 115-c. 200), a popular satirist in the Greek world of Asia Minor, who frequently lampooned the gods and public figures of his world as well as those who revere them. In his *Passing of Peregrinus*, 11 he notes that “The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day – the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. ...it was impressed on them by their original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, deny the gods of Greece and worship the crucified sage and live after his laws.”

While Lucian does not call Jesus a god, he testifies that the Christians worship Him instead of the gods of Greece. For them He is clearly divine.

While Jesus never said, “I am God.” He did and said things that would lead us to believe and understand that He is God. It would take the next several centuries for all the local Churches to express clearly *how* the one God could have a Son, how that Son was like the Father and be both God and man.

At the First Council of Nicaea (AD 325), the description of Christ which we find in the Creed became the universal way of describing the Lord Jesus: “the only-begotten Son of God, Light from Light, true God from true God – begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made.”

Subsequent councils, which discussed how Christ is God and man, did not receive universal acceptance. This resulted in the break between the Greek and Latin Churches on one hand and the other Eastern Churches (Armenians, Copts, etc.) on the other. It is only in the modern era that Agreed Statements on Christology between these Churches have acknowledged a unity of faith in their different expressions.

# APRIL 30: ST. JAMES, THE SON OF ZEBEDEE

THE GOSPELS ARE UNANIMOUS in telling us that, out of His twelve chief disciples, the Lord Jesus had a special relationship with Peter, James and John. Along with Andrew, Peter's brother, they were the first called of the twelve. After calling Peter and Andrew to follow Him, Jesus invited James and his brother John, the sons of Zebedee, to do so as well. Jesus then visited the synagogue in Capernaum and He went to the house of Simon (Peter) and Andrew, taking James and John along with Him (see Mark 1:29-31).

The Gospels record that Jesus singled out Peter, James and John, making them His closest associates and favored companions. When the Lord was called to the house of Jairus, who feared for his daughter's life, "*He permitted no one to follow Him except Peter, James, and John the brother of James*" (Mk 5:37).

It was these same three disciples who witnessed the Lord's transfiguration on the mountain and who were closest to Him at the end of His ministry. "*Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?'*" (Mk 13:3, 4) It was the same three who followed Him into the Garden after the Last Supper. "*Then they came to a place which was named Gethsemane; and He said to His disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' And He took Peter, James, and John with Him...*" (Mk 14:32, 33).

## The Death of James

A few years after the death and resurrection of Christ, there was "*a great famine throughout all the world, which happened in the days of Claudius Caesar*" (Acts 11:28) who reigned from AD 41 to 54. This famine is mentioned by a number of contemporary writers, both Jewish and pagan, such as Josephus, Tacitus and Suetonius, who described the famine as "*the result of bad harvests that occurred during a span of several years*" (*Lives of the Caesars*, 18).

"*Now about that time [the time of the famine] Herod the king stretched out his hand to harass some from the church. Then he killed James the brother of John with the sword. And because he saw that it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to seize Peter also*" (Acts 12:1-3). James was thus the first of Christ's closest followers to die; Peter was freed from prison, however (see Acts 12:5-11), and went on to strengthen the Churches springing up throughout the Roman Empire.

St Clement of Alexandria, who lived in Jerusalem at the end of the second century, recorded an otherwise unknown anecdote concerning the death of St James. Eusebius included it in his History of the Church. "Concerning this James, Clement, in the seventh book of his *Hypotyposes*, relates a story which is worthy of mention; telling it as he received it from those who had lived before him. He says that the one who led James to the judgment-seat, when he saw him bearing his testimony, was moved, and confessed that he was himself also a Christian.

"They were both therefore, he says, led away together; and on the way, he begged James to forgive him. And he, after considering a little, said, Peace be with you, and kissed him. And thus they were both beheaded at the same time" (*History of the Church*, Book II, 9). The head of St James is reputedly buried in Jerusalem's Armenian cathedral, which is dedicated to St James the brother of John and also to St James the Just, the Brother of the Lord. In one of its

chapels, built in the fifth century, a red marble slab in front of the altar marks the place where St James' head is buried, on the supposed site of his beheading.

### **St James in Spain?**

According to the tradition of the early Church, St James died without leaving Jerusalem (cf. *Clement of Alexandria*, Stromata VI; Apollonius, quoted by Eusebius, Church History VI.18). Nonetheless, there is a highly revered tradition in the West that St James had brought the Gospel to Spain and then returned to Jerusalem where he died.

According to this tradition, sometime after Pentecost, Saint Peter cast lots with the Apostles to determine the portions of the world to which each Apostle would bring the Gospel. James was chosen to travel to Iberia. No certain mention of such a tradition is to be found in any early writings nor in the early councils; the first certain mention we find is in a ninth century martyrology by the Swiss Benedictine monk, Notker of St. Gall.

According to another Spanish tradition, on January 2 in AD 40, the Mother of God appeared to St James standing on a column on the bank of the Ebro River, instructing him to build a church there in her honor. This pillar is venerated today in the present Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar, in Zaragoza, central Spain.

Even more revered in Spain is the shrine of Santiago (St James) de Compostela in Spanish Galicia, reputed to be the resting place of St James' body. According to a tradition recorded in the 12th century Codex Calixtinus, St James' disciples were able to claim his body after his beheading. It was then supposedly transported miraculously to Galicia where it was buried in Compostela.

It is said that these relics were unearthed in the ninth century by a hermit and they became the focal point of an annual pilgrimage to Compostela, called the Way of St James, which has been held ever since.

In 1879 the saint's supposed remains at Compostela were unearthed again and in 1884 Pope Leo XIII issued a bull, *Omnipotens Deus*, declaring "in perpetuum" that these were indeed the remains of St James and his two companions, Athanasius and Theodorus. There is no historical documentation to support this assertion.

### **Vespers for St James (April 30)**

#### **At Lord to You I Call**

*You drew men up from the depths of vanity with a fisherman's rod of grace. You obeyed the commands of the Teacher, O worthy James, who enlightened all your thoughts and revealed you as an Apostle and holy preacher, for you expound His incomprehensible divinity, O most blessed one.*

*The illumination of the Spirit descended on you in the form of fire and made you a divine vessel, O blessed one, dispelling with power the darkness of godlessness and enlightening the world with the brightness of your all-wise words, O preacher of mysteries, O leader of the Apostles, James, the eye-witness of Christ.*

*You illumined those lying in the darkness of ignorance with the lightning flash of your preaching, O glorious James. You revealed them to be sons through faith of the Master and God whose passion and death you imitated with zeal. You became an heir of glory, O wise one, as one speaking from God, and a most faithful disciple. Come, let us praise James with hymns of psalms: the preacher of heavenly mysteries and expounder of the Gospel; for he was revealed as a river of the mystical Paradise, watering spiritual furrows with heavenly streams, revealing them to bear fruit to Christ God, who, by his prayers, grants cleansing, enlightenment, and great mercy.*

# ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

Melkite Greek-Catholic Church

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## PRAYER INTENTIONS

Clergy:

**Rev. Ken Herman, Presbyter**

Victim Assistance Coordinator:

**Report Sexual Abuse: 1.800.479.5910**