

SUNDAY OF SAINT THOMAS



Icon of Our Lord's Appearance to Saint Thomas

A REFLECTION ON OUR READINGS FOR THIS WEEKEND

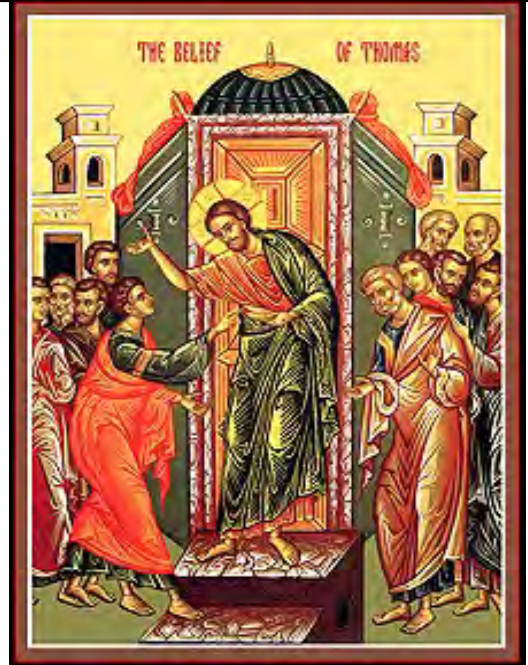
On this weekend after the Feast of Pascha - Easter - we celebrate the Anti-Pasch also known as the Sunday of St. Thomas. Our readings this weekend are again taken from the Acts of the Apostles and John's Gospel.

As you may know, Acts was written by St. Luke - a continuation of his Gospel - and captures the early history of the Church. The passage that we hear this weekend is entitled "Signs and Wonders".

The passage begins: *Through the hands of the apostles, many signs and wonders occurred among the people.* The followers of Jesus were able to continue performing the "signs and wonders" that Jesus did which highlights the fact that we too can become more like Jesus if we put our minds and hearts to the task. We may not be able to perform "signs and wonders," but we surely we can imitate Him in the way that we meet the challenges of life.

The passage continues by saying: *more and more believers, men and women in great numbers, were continually added to the Lord.* It is reported that the apostles were able to cure the sick and cure those who were troubled by unclean spirits.

The Gospel passage we hear relates the story when Jesus appeared to His apostles and St. Thomas questioned Jesus' Resurrection. This story is important, I believe, because it highlights the fact that even some of the immediate followers of Jesus at first doubted that He had been raised from the dead. Humans are naturally skeptical that such a thing could



be possible. Even though Jesus raised several people from the dead and the apostles, after Him, also raised people from the dead, it is not within the human experience that a person can come back to life by Himself. This story is included in our worship to "help us believe" that Christ destroyed Death and that there is life after the grave.

So on this weekend we ask ourselves several very important questions: (1) *Do I believe that Jesus rose from the dead?*; (2) *Do I believe that this event revealed that human life is immortal?*; and (3) *Do I still fear death?* If I do, what does that say about my beliefs? What can I learn from this event?

St. Michael's Parish News

A Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church in Dearborn Michigan



OUR NEW REALITY

I would assert to both of the parishes that I serve, our new reality is that we cannot “congregate” as community. I would adhere to the state guidelines which indicate that we should not gather in “groups.” I understand this and, I think, I agree with this.

St. Michael’s is currently “live-streaming the Sunday Services each week. It’s not always the way that we would like since the technology is new to us. Hopefully with each coming week this will become better. I truly appreciate all who have used the current technology solutions to follow our services. We’re working on it.

I do not believe that this is going to change in the immediate future so we will have to continue to rely on this way of worshipping God (I don’t want to in any way compromise the health of the people who worship with me).

We soon will have DVDs available of our services. If you would like one, please notify me: wruchgy@gmail.com or call. We’re trying to find ways that people, who don’t have Internet connectivity, can continue to pray with us. We DVDs will be available in the near future and we will provide player for our senior members. Thank you for understanding.

LIVING THE NEW LIFE

Probably one of the most exciting things about our faith and religion is that it gives us hope and truly allows us to see life in a new and exciting way. Life is all about growth and personal



transformation - its all about our growing in our “likeness” of God as seen in the Person of Jesus Christ. Its not about keeping laws! Its not about avoiding Hell and gaining Heaven! Its about growing as a child of God.

In the West, unfortunately, it is all about avoiding Hell and gaining Heaven which is, essentially, about keeping certain laws which, I might say, Jesus never endorsed. In the East its about looking at Jesus and trying, with all that is within us, to grow to be more like Him knowing that our God does not expect us to be perfect or to achieve this likeness in one lifetime.

In the West it seems that people think in terms of this earthly lifetime as being the determining factor how we will spend the rest of eternity. That is not how the East sees it. This earthly lifetime is given us to help us along the way to union

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OUR LIVES AS UKRANIAN GREEK-CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS

What does it mean to be an Ukrainian Greek-Catholic in this present world. Although I am not an Ukrainian and was not raised as a Greek-Catholic, God led me to this Church. So what does it mean for men and what should it mean to any who embrace the Geek-Catholic Faith as their religious home and the source of their faith.



To be a Ukrainian Greek-Catholic means to be Greek-Catholic and not Western or Roman Catholic. It means to look to the Eastern Fathers of the Church and to base our spirituality on the Eastern Way of Christianity. It means to be in Union with Catholicism, as expressed by the Roman Church, and, at the same time, to embrace the theology and spirituality that informs the Greek, or Byzantine, Church. In essence it means to be catholic and orthodox at the same time (I put both of these words in the lower because orthodox means right believing and catholic means “universal”. Neither word really means the true faith).

So as a Ukrainian Greek-Catholic, I adhere to the theology of the Eastern church and as a Catholic I adhere to a union with the Roman Church. One is not right and the other wrong. We have the ability to achieve the true faith

because we embrace both the Eastern and Western approach to Christianity. We want to be a part of the “universal church” and, at the same time, to be apart to the “right-believing” Church. It is a difficult position to be in, I agree. But it is

a very important position since it truly represents the “right” position.

In many ways the Eastern and Western churches separated for political reasons. Once it became political, it dogmatically became untenable. In so many ways, the dogmatic issues that separate East from West are purely semantic with regards to dogma. **PROBLEM:** who is dominant and in charge which, I truly believe, Jesus would have abhorred. Since He never wanted His approach to life to be exclusive.

What is important, however, is that we don't see one side, Eastern or Western, as “right” and the other “wrong.” We're all trying to fathom what the truth is and what is truly trying to reveal to us. I find that the Eastern approach strongly appeals to me. It seems more logical and, obviously, more reasonable to me. What is God trying to reveal to us? What is the meaning and purpose of life? What do you think?

PLANTING THE WORD OF GOD IN THE HEART

As I shared in the last issue of this particular article, it is essential that we incorporate into our disciplined life of spiritual growth, a real and true trust in the “way of Jesus.” We must see that His way of living is the way that God has called us to live.

Neglect of bodily discipline makes men like animals who give free rein and scope to their bodily passions. But excess makes men like devils and fosters the tendency to pride and the constant recurring of other passions in the soul.

Those who abandon bodily discipline truly become subject to gluttony, lust and anger in their crudest forms. These are the vices that stymie any possible spiritual growth.

God knew, when He created us, that if he also gave us free will and the ability to choose certain human passions, than we would then have to make a choice. God only wants “free human beings” to return His love and to freely choose a path of free personal grown and transformation.

Those who practice immoderate bodily discipline, use it indiscreetly, or put all their trust in it, seeing in it their

own merit and worth in God’s sight, fall vain-glory, self-opinion, presumption, pride, hardness and obduracy, contempt for their neighbors, detraction and condemnation of others, rancor, resentment, hate, blasphemy, schism heresy, self-deception and diabolic delusion.



Let us give due value to bodily ascetic practices as means and instruments truly indispensable for acquiring the virtues, but let us beware of regarding these instruments as virtues in themselves so as not to fall into self-deception and deprive ourselves of spiritual progress through a wrong understanding of Christian activity.

Although we have gone through the rigors of the Great Fast, this does not mean that we should abandon the actions that we incorporated into our lives during the Fast. They are meant to help us spiritually grow and become children of our Creator-Father.

So it is critical that we continue certain ascetical practices outside the Great Fast. Occasional fasting, frequent prayer, almsgiving and concern for others is something that should be a part of our lives.

Schedule of Services

St. Michael the Archangel
Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
6340 Chase Road
Dearborn, MI 48126

Rev. Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Pastor

Rectory: (313) 582-1424
Cell: (313) 580-4412
WRuchgy@gmail.com

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Sundays @ 10:00 AM
Ukrainian & English

Weekdays @ 8:00 AM
English

SACRAMENTS

Penance

By Appointment

Baptism & Matrimony

*In most instances membership
required for six months*

Funerals

*Membership of an immediate family
member required*

Parish Life Council

Bob & Corinne Boyko
734.451.1893

John & Janet Dicky
586.755.3129

Daria Drobny
313.791-0292

Robert Krokosky
248.734.7078

Leo & Mary LaDouceur
313.278.7378

Gordon Malaniak
734.564.9817

Rev Deacon Leonard Mier
313.584-6795

Greg & Esther Petrovich
734.453-4354

Rafic Vawter
313.624.9867

Sunday, April 19 - St Thomas Weekend
10:00 AM + Divine Liturgy Live-Streamed

THOMAS WEEK

Monday, April 20 - Theodore the Hairshirt Wearer, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Tuesday, April 21 - Januarius & Others, Bishop—Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Wednesday, April 22 - Theodore Sykeot, Venerable
No Service Scheduled

Thursday, April 23 - George, Great-Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Friday, April 24 - Sabbas, Martyr
No Service Scheduled

Saturday, April 25 - Mark, Apostle-Evangelist
No Service Scheduled

Sunday, April 26 - Weekend of the Myrrh-Bearers
10:00 AM - Divine Liturgy Live-Streamed

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with God. This does not mean that we should lessen our attempts to grow during this lifetime. This time is a critical step in our eternal struggle to grow in our relationship with our Creator-Father. So we must do all that we can, during this current lifetime, to spiritually grow in our likeness of Jesus.



Although I firmly believe that we will have an eternity to grow in our likeness of Jesus, it is critical that we take the opportunities, expressed in the current challenges of life, to grow in His likeness. We cannot pass up this opportunity to become more like Jesus. Why? Because we are also called, like Jesus, to witness to the Kingdom of God right now - we are called to help our fellowmen, by the way that we live, to seek this kingdom.

<http://www.stmichaelarchangel.org> - and - [Facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelugccdbn)



THE EASTERN HERALD

СХІДНИЙ ВІСНИК

The Weekly Newsletter of Very Reverend Canon Wayne J. Ruchgy, Ph.D.
Vol. 67 No 16 St. Thomas Weekend - Anti-Pasch April 18-19, 2020

THE IMPACT OF THE RESURRECTION

All of the feasts that we celebrate in the Church are meant to help us grasp the meaning and purpose of life and to have a greater awareness of how God intends humans to live in order to find true, interior peace. He came Himself in the Person of Jesus, His only-begotten Son, to reveal to us how to live life. By no means did Jesus have an easy life. But He truly showed us that it is possible to live according to some basic principles and not get distracted from those principles by the challenges of life and by how people may treat us. It is all a matter of deciding how we truly want to live. Do we want to be children of our Creator-Father? Do we want to personally change? Do we see that the main purpose of earthly life is to engage in actions that will bring about personal transformation?

If we don't believe this, then we must ask ourselves: *What is this earthly life all about? Why were we*

created in God's image and given the potential to grow in His likeness as seen in the Person of Jesus?

Life is really not as mysterious as we would like to think that it is. Life is all about "growing" and "changing" and becoming a spiritual person. There can really be no other purpose for us being here.

The Resurrection reveals to us that if we try to live as Jesus lived, we will be able to truly comprehend that life is eternal - is immortal. Why? Because human life is a sharing in the very Divine Life of God. Therefore it cannot have an end. It must be eternal and immortal.

As we celebrate this great feast during the next 50 days, let us truly challenge ourselves to come to a deep understanding of what is revealed through this event and then embrace it with our whole strength. I can assure you that you will never be sorry if you approach life and religion in this way.



The Good News within Our Heart

Once, a famous violinist came out on the stage and made the unfortunate discovery that there was something wrong with his violin. He looked for a second and then saw that it was not his famous and valuable one. He felt paralyzed for a moment, then turned to his audience and told them, "Ladies and gentlemen: I will show you that the music is not in the instrument but in the heart."

He played as he had never played before and the music poured forth until the audience was overcome with enthusiasm and the applause almost lifted the roof off the building. Indeed, the man had revealed to them that the music was not in the machine but in his own heart.

Today, the joy of the Resurrection is still within our hearts. And, we must take to heart

the words that Our Lord spoke to His disciples when He appeared to them after His resurrection: "As the Father sent Me, so I send you ... " (John 20:21) Indeed, the Lord Himself sends us, like the apostles, to proclaim to the world that "He is risen!"

We proclaim Our Lord's resurrection not just in hymns and inspired songs, but by the very manner in which we live our lives. "Get rid of all bitterness, all anger, harsh words, slander and malice of every kind," says Saint Paul. "In place of these, be kind to one another, compassionate and forgiving, just as God has forgiven you in Christ!" (Ephesians 4:32) May the joy of the resurrection remain within our hearts every day of the year!