

Saint Thomas the Apostle

We first meet Thomas when Jesus calls the twelve to follow Him, warning them of persecution and tribulation to come, and telling them they must depend on God for their sustenance. Thomas, like the other eleven, accepts this demanding responsibility. That in itself shows their love and loyalty to Christ. So many others abandon Jesus after hearing the "hard sayings" that He asks the twelve, in John 6:67, "Will you also go away?"

Thomas shows his good intentions at another significant moment. When Jesus tells the apostles (John 11: 7) that he plans to return to Judea and Jerusalem, they remind Him that the people there recently wanted to stone Him. They ask incredulously, "Are You going there again?" Only Thomas, out of the whole group, pledges his loyalty and urges the others to be loyal by saying, "Let us go also, that we may die with Him." His impulse is to overcome fear and be true to his Lord. But of course, Thomas will not live up to his well-meaning words any more than Peter will fulfill his promise to accompany Christ to prison and to death.

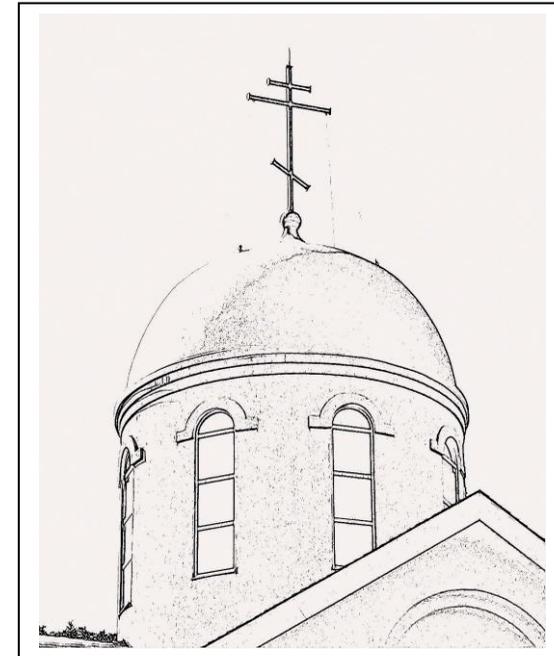
Thomas is mentioned again in John 20:24-29, eight days after Christ has appeared to the other apostles. We are not told why Thomas wasn't present at Christ's first appearance, just as we don't know who his twin was, though he is called "the Twin." We do know that when the others tell him they have seen Christ he is skeptical, and announces that he requires graphic physical proof if he is to believe.

For eight days Thomas has to wait to see Christ, and during those long days he is not buoyed by the hope and certainty of the others who have already seen Him. Yet Thomas waits. He is rewarded by Christ's act of deep love. The Lord gives him permission to "reach your hand here and put in into My side." By saying this, Christ gives Thomas what he personally needs to confirm his faith. It is this act of loving understanding, rather than any actual touching, that empowers Thomas to proclaim, "My Lord and My God!"

History tells us that Thomas, having been shown such love and understanding of his personal need, grew into a great apostle. He traveled far, probably farther than any other apostle, to preach and teach. He was a great builder of churches and is called the patron saint of architects.

Mary Magdalene needed only to hear the Lord say her name, that morning at the tomb, to know Him (John 20:16). Thomas needed much more. Christ fulfilled each of their needs, and they went on to be His powerful witnesses far beyond Palestine. That's what can happen to needy people when they respond sincerely to the One who, as our prayers tell us, knows what we need even before we ask.

WEEKLY



BULLETIN

Today is the beginning of our salvation, the revelation of the eternal mystery. The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace. Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos: Rejoice O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you!

Troparion of the Annunciation to the Theotokos

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE ANNUNCIATION

A Parish of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey of the Orthodox Church in America

360 Van Zile Road, Brick, New Jersey 08724

Phone: (732) 458-9032

Email: orthodoxbrick@gmail.com

Fax: (732) 295-0007

Website: www.orthodoxbrick.org

Very Rev. Fr. Gary Joseph Breton, *Rector*

Very Rev. Fr. Sergius Kuharsky, *Retired Attached Priest*

Very Rev. Fr. Paul Kucynda, *Retired Attached Priest*

Rev. Fr. Alexander Smida, *Attached Priest*

Rev. Fr. Michael Pejovic, *Attached Priest*

Matthew Petrides, *Senior Warden*

Reader Matthew Hascha, *Choir Director*

May 9, 2021
ANTIPASCHA. 2nd SUNDAY OF PASCHA
St. Thomas Sunday

Tone 1. Prophet Isaiah (8th c. B.C.). Martyr Christopher of Lycia, and with him Martyrs Callinika and Aquilina (ca. 250). Translation of the Relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker from Myra to Bari (1087). Ven. Shio of Georgia (6th c.).

Today's Readings:

Epistle: Acts 5:12-20

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Upcoming Service Schedule:

Today – **9:00am Divine Liturgy**

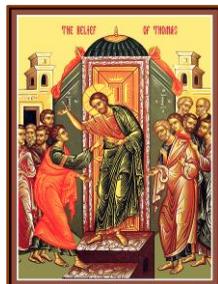
Saturday – **6:00pm Great Vespers**

Next Sunday – **9:00 Divine Liturgy**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Epistle: Acts 6:1-7

Gospel: Mark 15:43-16:8



St. Thomas Sunday

Many thanks to the singers, readers, servers, the beautifiers of the temple, and all who made Holy Week, Pascha, and Bright Week especially joyful! May God grant you Many Years!

Saint Andrew's Camp Building Project

Archbishop Michael requests that all the faithful of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey support St. Andrew's Camp, the youth camp of our diocese. The most pressing need for the camp is a new facility that will house a kitchen, dining hall, and activities center. Funding for this project had been started, but it was slowed by the pandemic. Right now, a donor has proposed a matching donation for all funds raised for this project through June, 2021.

In response to this request, our parish will take special collections for the next three weeks beginning today. Please be generous in your support for the youth of our diocese. This new facility will provide a wonderful base from which the youth may be fed and encouraged to live their faith and spread it into the world.

Please pray for vocations to the Holy Priesthood!

Annunciations

TODAY – We are continuing a modified and controlled **Coffee Hour** ministry. The Parish Hall is set up to accommodate social distancing. Masks are required when traveling around the hall, but not when sitting and partaking of the refreshments. The hall will be sanitized after the Coffee Hour.

TODAY – There is **no Church School** today. Next Sunday, the older group will meet for their session.

TODAY – **Parish Calendars** for the month of May are now available. Please check the calendar for upcoming services and events. Changes to the calendar are announced in the weekly parish bulletin and/or by email.

A Happy, joyous, and blessed **Mother's Day** to all mothers, grandmothers and godmothers. May God grant you Many Years!

Now that Pascha has come, we will begin to revisit the **Coffee Hour Ministry** and how we will go forward with it. Please stay tuned for more information.

Grocery Gift Cards are available for purchase. Please contact Matushka Mary by email (matmaryb@gmail.com) or by phone at (848) 333-7075 to make arrangements.

Stewardship Donations may be brought to the church or mailed to the church at 360 Van Zile Road, Brick, NJ 08724. On-line donations are possible by visiting our website for a link. Many thanks for continuing to support your parish in these challenging times.

Diocesan parishes are now permitted to make service books and paper bulletins available to the faithful. The usual service books used in our parish will be available for service attendees. Reader versions of the services will continue to be available for download from the diocesan website, www.nynjoca.org.

MANY YEARS

Birthdays this week

Today – Mary Breton

Monday – Paul Hanas

Tuesday – Manya Shark

Friday – Gary Paxton

Saturday – Olga Pasick

Special Prayers

We pray for **all** our parish family members, but we pray especially for those who are ill and afflicted. Among them are **Zoran Pejovic; Betty James; Manya Shark; Deryl Tczap; Rdr. John Economou; Margaret Makara; Tom Kopec; Ann Marie and Dennis Gahr, and Dorothy Studier.**